

ZAMBIA'S QUEST FOR THE RETURN OF BROKEN HILL MAN SKULL

A PRESENTATION TO THE 20TH SESSION OF THE
INTER-GOVERNMENTAL
COMMITTEE FOR PROMOTING THE RETURN OF
CULTURAL PROPERTY TO ITS
COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OR ITS RESTITUTION IN
CASE OF ILLICIT APPROPRIATION

By
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

September 2016





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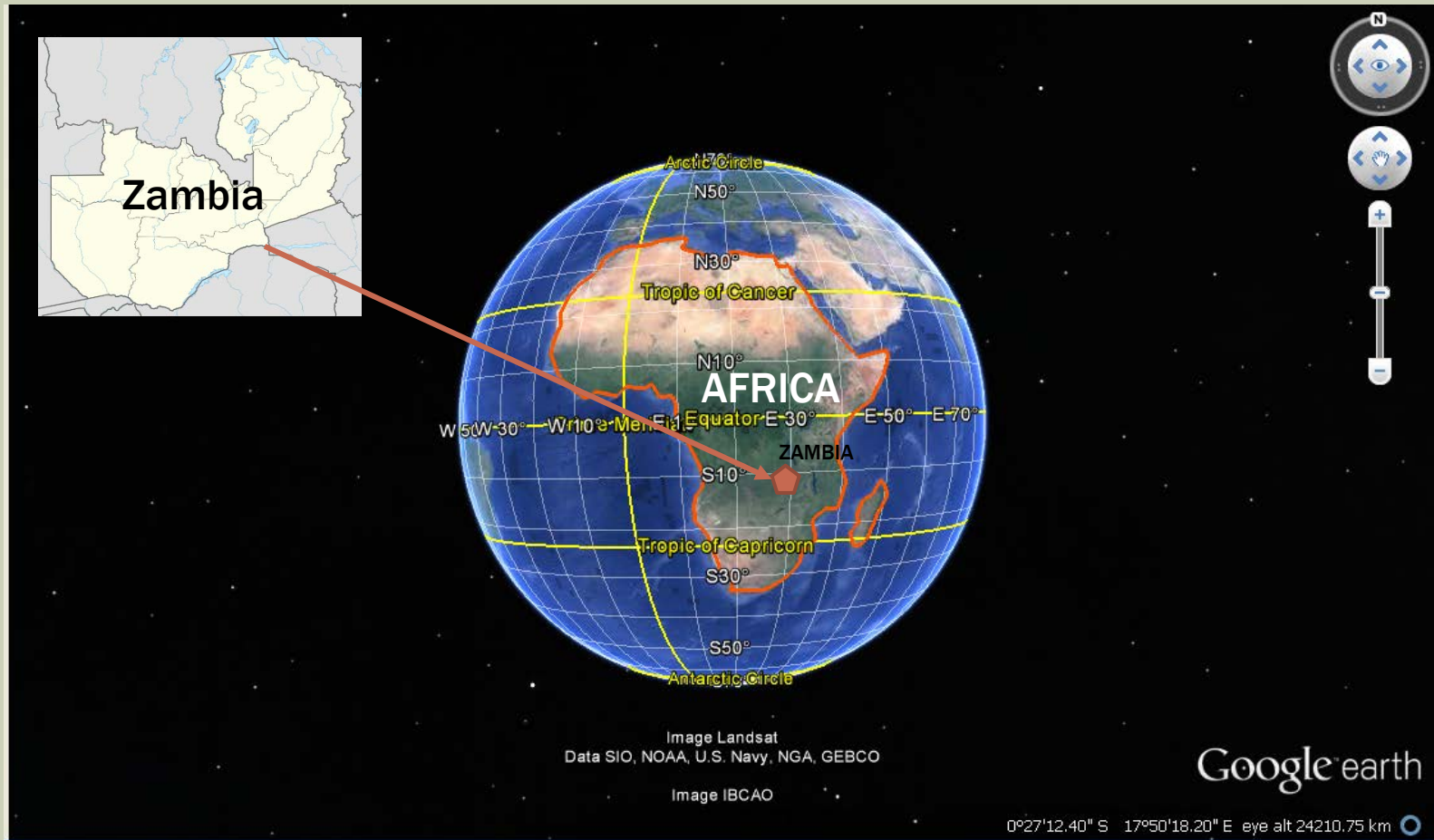
INTRODUCTION



Government of the Republic of Zambia 2016



INTRODUCTION





INTRODUCTION

The Broken Hill Man Skull/Kabwe Man/Kabwe Cranium:

- is Zambia's indigenous and earliest archaeological finds, which was discovered in Kabwe (formerly Broken Hill) is located in Zambia's Central Province;
- was found on June 17th, 1921 by Tom Zwigglar, a Swiss Miner along with an upper jaw of another individual, a sacrum, a tibia and two femur fragments;
- was given a new species named known as *Homo rhodesiensis* (Rhodesian man) by Arthur Smith Woodward;



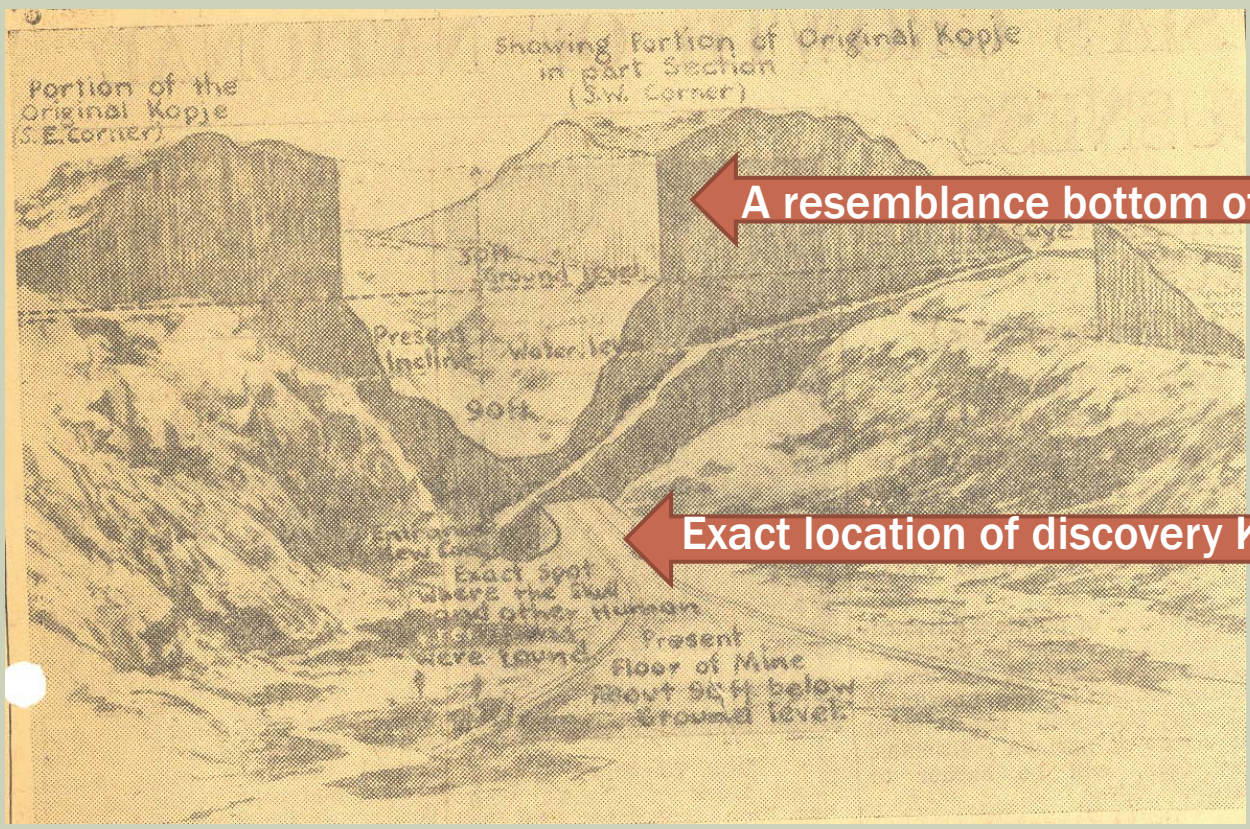
INTRODUCTION

- The Cranium was in a fresh state of preservation, having merely lost its animal matter and with the least mineralization;
- The Remains were sent to UK by Mr. Ross McCartney, the Managing Director of the Rhodesia Broken Hill Development Company for investigations
- The discovery area is also famous for the first Lead and Zinc mining sites;
- To date the site where the remains were discovered remain a protected heritage site pursuant to the National Heritage Conservation Commission Act Cap 173 of the Laws of Zambia



INTRODUCTION

A diagrammatic sketch of the workings at Broken Hill Mine



A resemblance bottom of Kabwe Coat of Arms

Exact location of discovery Kabwe Cranium

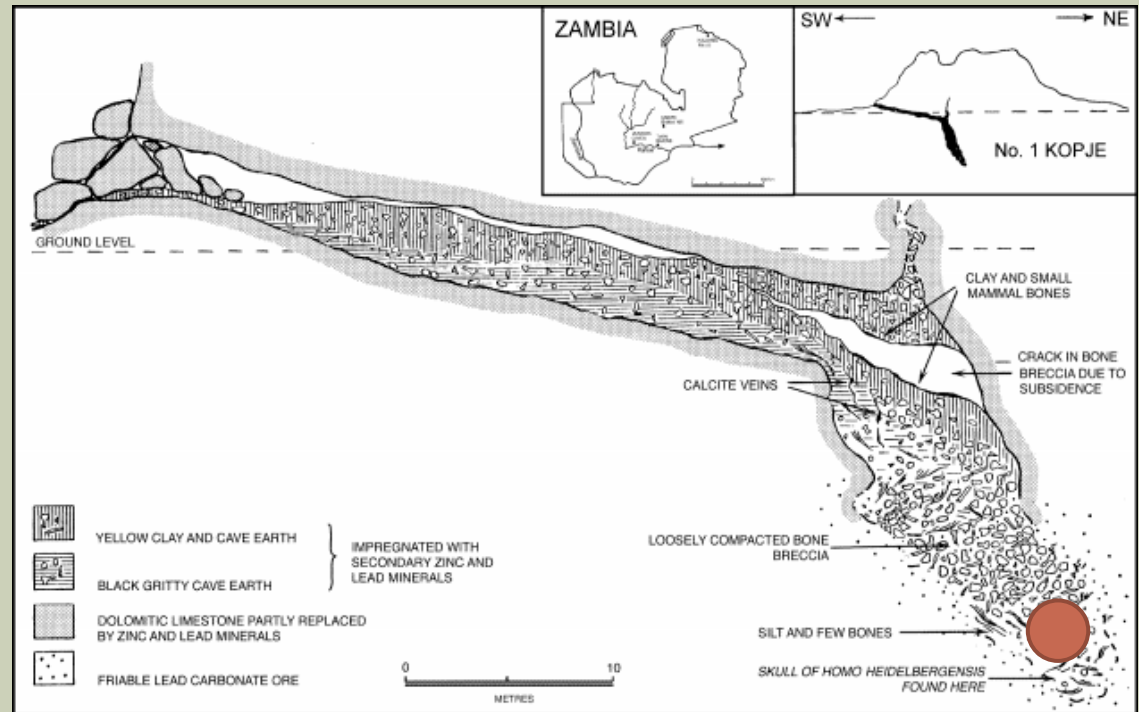
Source: Bulawayo Chronicle Friday 4th June, 1948



HISTORY OF DISCOVERY

Bone Cave as it were in 1921 during the Discovery

A nearly complete skull now attributed to *Homo heidelbergensis* (Rightmire 2001), was discovered in 1921 during quarrying when the remainder of the cave system was cleared

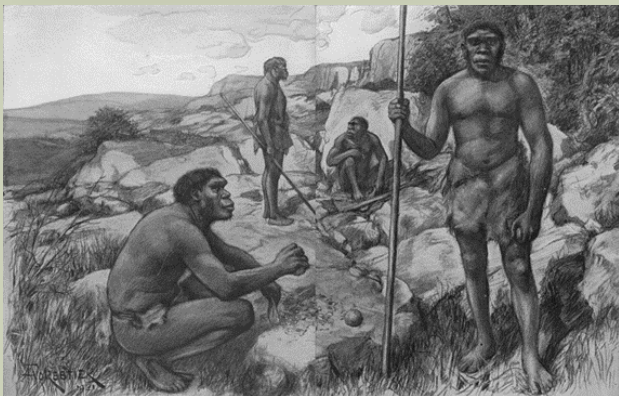


A reconstructed section through the deposits of the main cave in No 1 Kopje showing the slumped back passage and the likely location of the hominid remains. Two of the putative bone tools were apparently found in the lower passage deposits. Source: Clark et al 1947



FEATURES OF THE SKULL AND OTHER DISCOVERIES

A skull of *Homo Rhodesiansis* discovered by Tom Zwiglaar during mining a Kabwe cave in a 100ft hill in 1921 now in the Natural Museum in London- United Kingdom



Source: Wikipedia



FEATURES OF THE SKULL AND OTHER DISCOVERIES

FEATURES OF THE SKULL OF THE BROKEN HILL MAN:

- Is massive and has very strongly developed brow ridges
- Has a flat sloping forehead region with a marked constriction behind the brow ridges
- Has a protruding back and is flattened below and has a strongly marked edge of bone for the attachment of the neck muscles
- Has an usually large and elongated face
- Has a wide palate and a blown out cheek bone
- Has a round perforation that could have been caused
- By a pointed wooden spear



FEATURES OF THE SKULL AND OTHER DISCOVERIES

OTHER DISCOVERIES

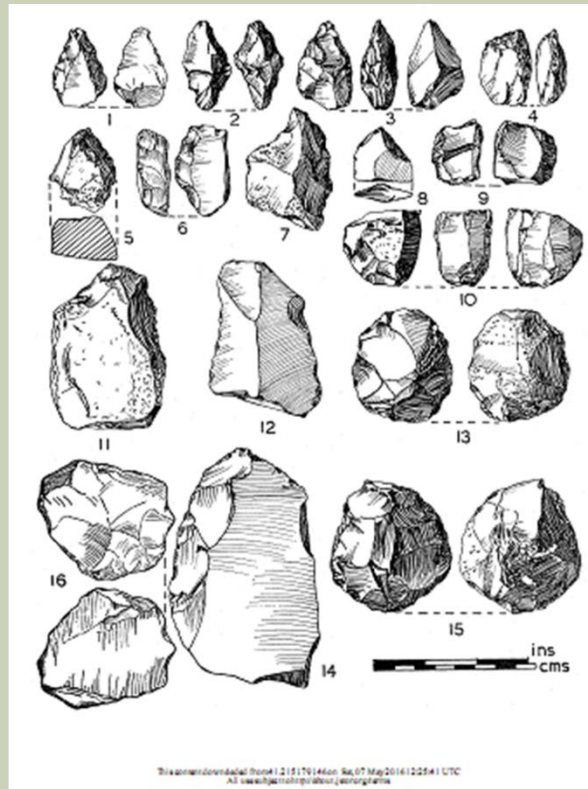


Figure 1. Anterior (A), posterior (P), medial (M), and lateral (L) views of the Broken Hill E691 left tibia.

Artefacts from around No 1 Kopje in 1921 and post 1921 respectively from left to right (Source: Wiley)



VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BROKEN HILL MAN TO ZAMBIA

To Zambia, the value of Broken Hill Man is that:-

- he appears in many scientific publications discussing the human evolutionary process showing the important contribution of the skull to the study of human evolution.
- that considered in the context of human development, the skull bridges a very important gap in human evolution being the best example available among “early” Homo sapiens or “archaic” Homo sapiens having a complete cranium with outstanding features such as the large brow ridges.



VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BROKEN HILL MAN TO ZAMBIA

To Zambia, the value of Broken Hill Man is that:-

- The Broken Hill Man cranium is grouped together with crania from five other countries; these are, South Africa, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Greece and France. These have benefited international recognition in research.
- The Cranium is of great sentimental value especially regarding Human development which is a continuous process, from the first tool makers, with the Broken Hill Man regarded as being an intervening ancient “Zambian”.



VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BROKEN HILL MAN TO ZAMBIA

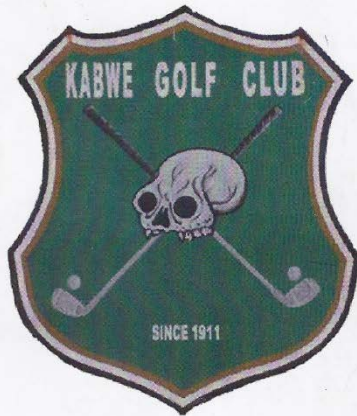
To Zambia, the value of Broken Hill Man is that:-

- It is among the best examples of the process associated with all the changes that have taken place in technology and human society including the evolution of the human species. Zambia therefore has been deprived of being part of that process
- It's absence deprives Zambians of research in human origins leading to inadequate public interest that is needed to pursue this fascinating study of human origins.



VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BROKEN HILL MAN TO ZAMBIA

KABWE GOLF CLUB
(formerly Broken Hill Golf Club)



CENTENARY PRESENTATION
1911 - 2011

The skull is part of the Kabwe Golf Club Symbol (Logo)



THE LAW CONTEXT AT THE TIME OF REMOVAL

BUSHMAN RELICS PROCLAMATION

- At the time of removal, the ‘**Bushman Relics Proclamation**’ (Northern Rhodesia Ordinance No. 15 of 1912) was the only legal framework that protected bushmen and other prehistoric remains
- This law required that certain categories of items/objects of antiquity nature could only be taken out of the territory under a permit from the Administrator of the British South Africa Company (B.S.A.Co).



THE LAW CONTEXT AT THE TIME OF REMOVAL

BUSHMAN RELICS PROCLAMATION

- Being part of the remains under protection of this Ordinance, the Remains of Broken Hill Man required a permit for their flight outside the Zambian (then the Northern Rhodesian) Territory. So far there is no evidence that a permit was granted for the Company or its agents to export the Skull outside the Territory.
- By virtue of this Ordinance, any bushman relic or remains required a permit before removal.



THE LAW CONTEXT AT THE TIME OF REMOVAL

- Section 1 of the Ordinance defines “Bushmen relic” to mean *“any drawing or painting on stone or petroglyph of the kind commonly known or believed to have been executed by the Bushmen or other aboriginals and shall include any of the anthropological contents of the graves caves, rock shelters, middens or shell mounds of such Bushmen or other aboriginals.”*
- The same section defines Ancient Ruins *“as any building constructed either of stones packed loosely or otherwise which is known or is believed to have been erected by the people who preceded the Native tribes now in occupation of the Territory or any material which has been used in the construction of such a building.”*



THE LAW CONTEXT AT THE TIME OF REMOVAL

- Section 2 (1) prohibited any removal of such relic or ruin from the territory without the permit from the Administrator.
- Section 2 (2) provided that *any person (includes legal person) desiring to remove any relic or ruin requires prior authorization of the Administrator*
- Section 3 penalized anyone who contravenes Section 2. By virtue of the Ordinance, the export of the remains of Broken Hill Man required a grant of an export permit issued under the hand of the Colonial Administrator.



VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BROKEN HILL MAN TO ZAMBIA

- Initially scholars assigned the Skull to the Middle Stone Age with a period ranging between 300,000 and 125,000 BC
- Presently researchers (Rightmire 1998) have placed the Broken Hill hominids in the early Middle Pleistocene between 400-700 ka, whereas McBrearty & Brooks (2000:481) argue that they could be as old as 0.78-1.3 Ma based on correlations with Olduvai Bed IV



VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BROKEN HILL MAN TO ZAMBIA

- The cranial capacity ranges from 1225 to 1300 cubic centimeters and is associated with the late Acheulian materials with associated flake tools.
- Generally scientifically accepted that *Homo Rhodesiensis* as a the local (African) representative of *Homo heidelbergensis* and therefore anatomically the direct ancestor of modern humans



PREVIOUS REQUESTS MADE FOR THE RETURN OF BROKEN HILL MAN

- Several attempts have been made by the Government of the Republic of Zambia for the return the skull.
- The Zambian Parliament has also on several occasions requested for the return of the Skull to its rightful home.
- April, 1974, Government made a request to the British Natural History Museum for the return of the skull.
- In June, 1974, the British Museum responded saying “the finds from Broken hill were donated to the British Museum (Natural History) in 1921 by the Rhodesia Broken Hill Development Company.



PREVIOUS REQUESTS MADE FOR THE RETURN OF BROKEN HILL MAN

IN MARCH 2000 THE LAST ATTEMPT MADE FOR THE RETURN OF BROKEN HILL MAN

- Another attempt was made in 2000 while the last one was made in 2002.
- By 2002, from the correspondence it was clear that the British Museum has no intentions of releasing the skull to Zambia



PREVIOUS REQUESTS MADE FOR THE RETURN OF BROKEN HILL MAN

- The then British High Commissioner to Zambia, Mr. Alistair Harrison, was quoted saying: *“that there is law that forbids the British Museum returning archaeological finds in its custody”*.
- He confirmed being aware that the Zambian Government had made request of the skull but that this cannot be granted; but the British Government was willing to make replicas of the Broken Hill Man Skull at no cost to any Zambian institution.



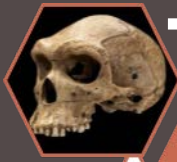
GROUNDS FOR OPPOSITION TO THE RETURN OF BROKEN HILL MAN (KABWE NAN)

The most frequently used defences against the return of the remains of Kabwe Man is:

- The remains of Kabwe Man were a donation made to the Trustees of the British Museum

Other defences commonly cited but not exclusive to the remains of Broken Hill Man include:

- Museum/Natural History Museum serves as a World Heritage Museum or universal museum-equating it to a World Heritage Site accessible to all.



THE RETURN OF BROKEN HILLMAN: THE QUEST

- The return of the objects to their countries of origin would open the flood gates for requests for repatriation or return and eventually empty most of the world's greatest museums.
- They have better Security, Exhibition and Storage facilities.
- Proponents of this often cite the absence of secure and well managed museums in Africa and the unsuitable, harsh humid climatic conditions in Africa to such artefacts.



JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RETURN

- The skull is part of Zambia's cultural heritage which defines the earliest origins of humankind in Zambia and one of the earliest discoveries on the continent of Africa.
- Zambia has been deprived of the deserved services and glory which she could have attained arising from research on the Skull in its context as well as the tourism service it offers



JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RETURN

- **The Zambian people want the skull back so that it can form part of their archaeological repositories**
- **However, Zambia is capable providing safety and proper storage of the Skull.**
- **Majority of Zambians cannot afford to meet the huge travelling expenses to go view appreciate and study their heritage**



WAYFORWAD

- We urge the Government of Great Britain to consider returning the this Zambian hominid fossil, Kabwe Man, Broken Hill Man, *Homo rhodesiensis* which ascribes it to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia).