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Q5(b)

Rhodesian Man

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 1 · 10 marks · Rhodesian man.

(d) Rhodesian man.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on Rhodesian Man
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Rhodesian Man is the 1921 **Kabwe** skull from Zambia.

Woodward named *Homo rhodesiensis*.

It is a heavy-browed archaic *Homo* of the Middle Pleistocene.

Many now file it with **heidelbergensis** or a related grade.

It is a fossil, not a racial label for living people.

Introduction

Rhodesian Man is the **Kabwe** skull from Zambia, once Northern Rhodesia. It is a robust archaic *Homo* fossil, not a living race.

Body**The find**

- **A. S. Woodward** named ***Homo rhodesiensis*** in 1921 from **Broken Hill (Kabwe)** mine.
- The skull has a huge **supraorbital torus**, a low vault, and a cranial capacity in the later ***Homo* range**.
- Dates are debated; many now place it in the Middle Pleistocene.

How it is classified

- Older texts kept a separate species. Many workers now sink it in ***Homo heidelbergensis*** or a broad archaic grade beside **Bodo** and **Saldanha**.
- Dental disease on the specimen is famous; it is pathology, not a type character.
- It is African archaic *Homo*, relevant to the later rise of ***H. sapiens***, not a 'missing link' cartoon.

Flow diagram

Kabwe Broken Hill -> Rhodesian Man

Rhodesian Man -> Archaic *Homo heidelbergensis* grade

Archaic *Homo heidelbergensis* grade -> Later *sapiens* debate

Conclusion

- **Rhodesian Man is the Kabwe calvaria:** a Middle Pleistocene African archaic Homo. The name is historical; the biology sits with heidelbergensis-grade fossils.

Facts & figures

Kabwe

Broken Hill mine; the type skull of Rhodesian Man.

Woodward

Named Homo rhodesiensis in 1921.

Bodo

Ethiopian archaic skull often compared in the same grade.

Heidelbergensis

The lumping species many textbooks use for such African and European archaics.

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