

Archaeology Chester @ArchaeologyChe1 Fri Jun 10 20:17:36 +0000 2022

Yesterday, a racist came onto our thread and said that "archaeology used to be a white male swashbuckling adventurous profession". (Yes, we can hear your groans from here) So here are some amazing people that defined the field, but aren't talked about enough■

(And side note, any white male swashbuckling archaeologists were pretty much all awful...)

1. First up, the greatest fossil finder of all time and THE reason we know so much about hominids, Kamoya Kimeu. In the Kenyan Leakey digs he used his local landscape knowledge to identify fossils and called on his ancestors to direct him to fossils

© Leakey Foundation <https://t.co/O9SoxEHNO>



©MPK-WTAP

His skills as a researcher and linguist supported his extensive knowledge of the landscape and fossils, leading him to become Curator of Prehistoric Sites for the National Museums of Kenya and winning the La Gorce Medal. The study of evolution would not be the same without him!

2. Not to forget the entire 'Hominid Gang' who made the Leakey explorations successful. Find out more here: <https://leakeyfoundation.org/fossil-finders-hominid-gang/>

© Leakey Foundation <https://t.co/FvBfS0zy0a>



3. Dr Kiyoko Ozeki was born in Japan at a time when women rarely pursued Higher Education, but when she came to archaeology in her 50s she focused on the Jomon period a pioneer in Jomon experimental archaeology

© Kyodo news <https://t.co/P33dlih8NN>



Through her experiments, she was able to prove that angin textiles were used during the period, demonstrating that the weaving technology used was older than previously thought. Gaining her PhD at 88 with no other degrees, she's still teaching and experimenting!

4. John Wesley Gilbert, sometimes known as the first African American archaeologist, was a classical archaeologist and the first person to map out the ancient Greek city-state of Eretria in 1890 <https://t.co/NY6nU9UuyL>



The first African-American to receive a Masters from Brown, he pioneered strategic approaches to archaeology and helped develop many of the fundamentals of archaeological practice

5. Prof. Margaret Adebisi Sowunmi, environmental archaeology pioneer and founder of both the first environmental archaeology and palynology lab in Africa in the 1960s AND a founding member of the West African Archaeological Association

©WAAA <https://t.co/MPeoFZLTLI>



Her work continues to be groundbreaking, alongside her commitment to teaching the next generation of archaeologists she highlights the importance of human-environment relationships at a crucial time in the climate crisis

6. Going way back to THE FIRST archaeologist, King Nabonidus of Babylon and Mesopotamia. Less interested in the admin of being a ruler, Nabonidus would often go on retreats to research and explore the ancient ruins across his empire

<https://t.co/rHvloHg9QP>



Nabonidus used archaeology to create origin myths for himself and his people by connecting them to previous Assyrian Kings as 'royal ancestors'. The politicisation of archaeology is nothing new!

7. Here, we see local workers in Palestine working tirelessly at an excavation while the 'swashbuckling white men' watch on, contributing little and exploiting the labour and skills of these forgotten archaeologists

© Palestine Exploration Fund <https://t.co/UkfTHogs3p>



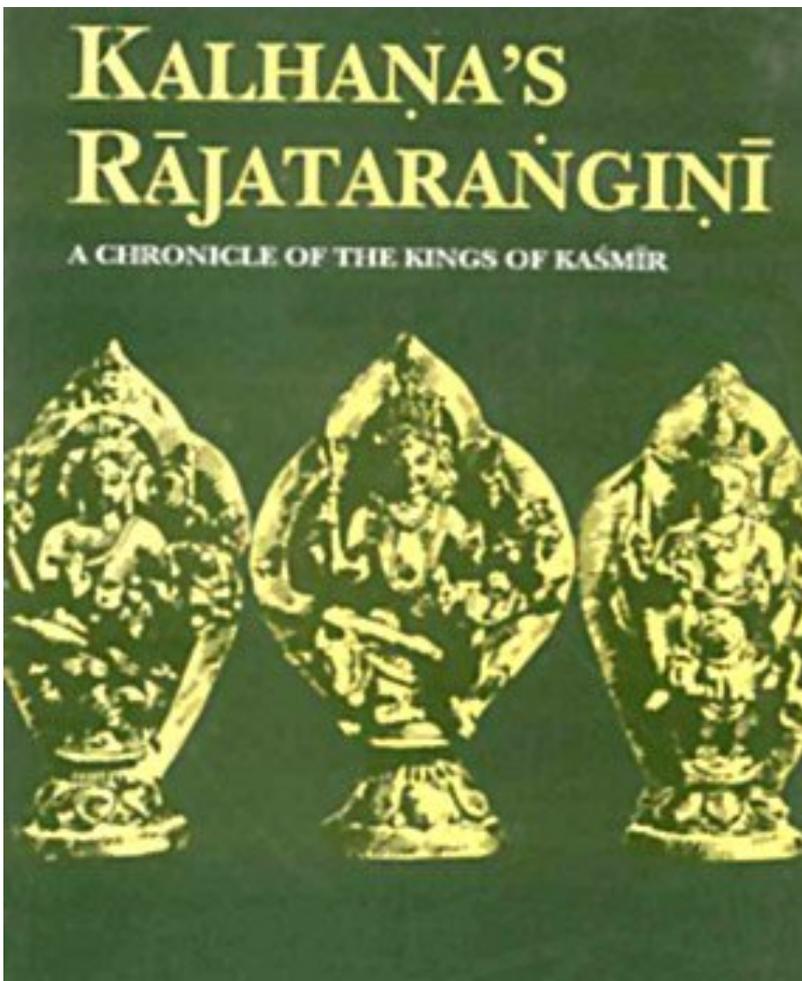
Palestinian workers, like many local and indigenous groups located near to colonial excavation sites, were vital labourers that contributed greatly to the field, but are often unrecognised and unnamed.

8. Post-depression US saw the need for jobs and social action, and from this grew the Works Progress Administration. Here, African American women are taking part in finds washing from one of over 70 archaeological sites excavated in Kentucky in a 4 year period <https://t.co/AbudKbp5s5>



It is important to note that these excavations were conducted on Native American sites with little regard for the wishes of descendant communities, and there is evidence that funerary sites were destroyed in the process. Archaeology was still run by and for white people

9. Kalhana, a 12th Century historian and archaeologist undertook buildings surveys, recorded local traditions, and studied coins and manuscripts to create the Rajatarangini, one of the earliest histories of India <https://t.co/rmifK6Fbwb>



His inclusion of various forms of evidence and multiple perspectives shows good practice by 21st century standards, let alone 12th!

These are people/ groups who dispell the racist myths about archaeology, but there are many more out there. Sadly, many contributions from global majority archaeologists have been lost due to their exclusion from site records for racist and elitist purposes

These people had to work within the confines of a colonial, racist, patriarchal discipline, as do scholars today. Archaeology remains a white discipline, and this whiteness shapes our understanding of the past

Do seek out the brilliant scholars working to change this by challenging the theories, methodologies, and practices that reinforce exclusive and oppressive regimes, and highlighting excluded contributions to the field including [@SbaArch](#) [@ESBAArchaeology](#) [@trowelblazers](#) and more