

Uncovering the Past

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UNCOVERING THE PAST

► A History of
Archaeology

WILLIAM H.
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Uncovering the Past is an absorbing history of archaeology that traces the study of ancient material culture from its beginnings as a hobby for Renaissance scholars to the sophisticated modern discipline we know today. Professor William Stiebing devotes the first part of his chronicle to the exploits of the colorful, dynamic excavators of archaeology's "Heroic Age." One may wonder whether the adventures of Indiana Jones are really far-fetched after reading Steibing's account of Giovanni Belzoni's removal of the seven-ton colossus of Ramesses II, which was dragged by wooden platform and transported by boat from Egypt to London; or of clergyman John Peters' skirmish with Arab tribesmen, who surrounded his excavation site and finally pillaged and burned his camp; or of Heinrich Schliemann's quest to prove the authenticity of Homer's Iliad by searching for ancient Troy in Turkey.

The second part of the book shifts the focus to modern archaeology, describing how new methodologies and techniques such as area surveys, statistics, carbon-14 dating, and computer visualization are turning the former pastime of dilettantes into a rigorous science.

Uncovering the Past is an excellent introduction to archaeology, both for those who enjoy its romance and those who seek an accurate survey of its history and current status.

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