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Interview with William Carruthers, author of *Flooded Pasts: UNESCO, Nubia, and the Recolonization of Archaeology*

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In this episode from the New Books Network podcast, William Carruthers is interviewed on his recent book, *Flooded Pasts: UNESCO, Nubia, and the Recolonization of Archaeology*.

> *Flooded Pasts: UNESCO, Nubia, and the Recolonization of Archaeology* (Cornell UP, 2022) examines a world famous yet critically underexamined event—UNESCO's International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia (1960–80)—to show how the project, its genealogy, and its aftermath not only propelled archaeology into the postwar world but also helped to "recolonize" it. In this book, William Carruthers asks how postwar decolonization took shape and what role a colonial discipline like archaeology—forged in the crucible of imperialism—played as the "new nations" asserted themselves in the face of the global Cold War.
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> As the Aswan High Dam became the centerpiece of Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egyptian revolution, the Nubian campaign sought to salvage and preserve ancient temples and archaeological sites from the new barrage's floodwaters. Conducted in the neighboring regions of Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia, the project built on years of Nubian archaeological work conducted under British occupation and influence. During that process, the campaign drew on the scientific racism that guided those earlier surveys, helping to consign Nubians themselves to state-led resettlement and modernization programs, even as UNESCO created a picturesque archaeological landscape fit for global media and tourist consumption.
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> *Flooded Pasts* describes how colonial archaeological and anthropological practices—and particularly their archival and documentary manifestations—created an ancient Nubia severed from the region's population. As a result, the Nubian campaign not only became fundamental to the creation of UNESCO's 1972 World Heritage Convention but also exposed questions about the goals of archaeology and heritage and whether the colonial origins of these fields will ever be overcome.
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> (Source: New Books Network)

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Archaeology.'" *New Books in Environmental Studies*, 5 March 2023. Mp3, 01:19:40.

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