

**Bart Wagemakers (ed.),** *Archaeology in the 'Land of Tells and Ruins: 'A History of Excavations in the Holy Land Inspired by the Photographs and Accounts of Leo Boer.* Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2014. £14.95-£49.95. Pp. xv + 264, incl. numerous photographs and plates. ISBN 978-1-78297-245-7.

The editor of this volume had a chance meeting with Leo Boer in 1989, ten years before the latter's death. In the early 1950s Boer had gone from his native Holland to Rome to study theology at the Gregorian University and then to work for a doctorate at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. During this period, he went for the year of 1953–54 to study at the *École Biblique* in Jerusalem, taking some 700 good quality photographs of the many sites he visited and also writing a 140-page diary. (The full catalogue of the photographs, each carefully numbered and labelled, is included as an appendix in this volume.) He returned to Holland as a priest in 1955 and worked for over a decade in the church and as a professor at the Major Seminary in Valkenburg. In 1968, however, he was granted a priestly dispensation 'because for me the meaning of the priesthood has almost faded away in the way my life has changed', though he remained a committed churchman. Without giving up his interests in theology and lecturing, he found work in the building trade, and some years later he married. His rolls of film, undeveloped though fully documented, were stored away in his garage and more or less forgotten.

Part of all this came to light during the ten years or so of Wagemakers' friendship with Boer, and upon his death Wagemakers followed up by retrieving the canisters of film and working on them systematically. They show views of many parts of the Holy Land that are now irretrievably changed, and in some cases the photographic documentation of sites where excavations were then in progress retains scientific value. He participated for a short while in the excavation at Qumran under Roland de Vaux of the *École Biblique*, and also visited Jericho, meeting Kathleen Kenyon during one of the seasons of her excavations there. (As a matter of personal interest, I note that these excursions from Jerusalem were already being organized by Father Lemoine, whom as a student I accompanied on his last ever week-long trip to the Sinai in 1974.)

In the present book (following the editor's full introduction to Boer's life and work) nine of the sites visited are discussed by twenty-one scholars. The nature of the coverage varies slightly from one to another, but they all try first to describe the site at the time of Boer's visit, presenting a selection of his photographs (seventy in all) and sometimes comparing the view then with another photograph taken more recently from the same spot. Second, there are full descriptions of the whole history of archaeology at the site both before and after Boer's visit, and this has an independent value as, along with much that will be broadly familiar to specialists, there are also frequent details of smaller expeditions that are less well known but

which have an interest (including sometimes the personal) all of their own. Third, distinctive features of some of the sites are also discussed, such as the work taken to conserve what has been found and to open up the site for public education and tourism, the importance of modern scientific analyses of remains, and (at Jericho) the pioneering research of I. W. Cornwall in archaeoanthatology during Kenyon's excavations - a chapter inspired in part by the fact that Boer had a good photograph of the skeletal remains *in situ* which started off the whole process.

The sites treated are: Jerusalem, Khirbet et-Tell (including the question of whether this site is or is not biblical Ai), Samaria, Tell Balata (Shechem), Jericho, Qumran, Caesarea, Megiddo, and Bet She'an. The level of technical detail varies but the style of presentation is nearly always accessible. It provides exactly the kind of survey which the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society seeks also to present in its public lectures, and the format - double columned with photographs and plates on nearly every page - makes it an attractive volume. The editor is surely to be congratulated for having succeeded in rescuing Boer's valuable material from oblivion and, along with some specialized journal articles, for conceiving and overseeing this book which combines presentation of the older and fortuitously preserved material with a modern survey of several major sites which will be of interest and value to us all.

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