Photography and Archaeology
Frederick N. Bohrer

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- Photography and Archaeology examines some of history’s most famous archaeological excavations, as well as lesser-known and previously unpublished finds, and the ways these sites have been represented in photographs.

- Discusses many photographers including Maxime du Camp, Francis Frith, Ernst Herzfeld, Aaron Levin, Roger Wood, Jeff Wall, and Marilyn Bridges.

- Beautifully illustrated with 100 fine archaeological images, many published here for the first time.

Through photographs we preserve the past, and looking for the past is the very job of the archaeologist. But what are we looking at in an archaeological photograph? Archaeological photography is often largely deserted, to be scanned with a forensic gaze, towards finding evidence of what once took place. At the same time, photographs of excavated sites and artifacts have revealed stunning ancient works, shot as works of art. In Photography and Archaeology, Frederick Bohrer examines some of history’s most famous archaeological excavations, as well as lesser-known and previously unpublished finds, from the Mediterranean, Middle East, Asia, Europe and the Americas, and the ways these sites have been represented in photographs.

Bohrer shows how the development of photography in the nineteenth century made archaeology available to a much wider audience, and he discusses how these images revealed the material traces of the past, as well as their meaning and use today.

Spanning the dual histories of both photography and archaeology, the book makes evident how what we know of the archaeological past has always been related to how it has been photographically represented and circulated: in scholarly papers, popular accounts, scientific archives, museum catalogues and numerous other formats. Bohrer concludes that such images possess contending, if not mutually exclusive, properties. While photography seems to guarantee documentary objectivity, it also fundamentally alters the archaeological object, transforming it into a work of art. Along the way, he discusses archaeological examples and images by photographers including Maxime du Camp, Francis Frith, Ernst Herzfeld and others, to more contemporary photographers such as Aaron Levin, Roger Wood and Marilyn Bridges.

Beautifully illustrated Photography and Archaeology will be of interest to archaeologists, art historians and photographers, as well as anyone concerned with, or captivated by, archaeology’s ongoing engagement with the past.

Frederick N. Bohrer is Professor of Art at Hood College, Maryland, and the author of Orientalism and Visual Culture: Imagining Mesopotamia in Nineteenth-century Europe (2003).