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JULIEN SCHOEVAERT, *LES BOUTIQUES D'OSTIE: L'ÉCONOMIE URBAINE AU QUOTIDIEN*, I^{er} S. AV. J.-C. – V^e S. AP. J.-C. (Collection de l'École française de Rome 537). Rome: École française de Rome, 2018. Pp. xviii + 310, illus., plans. ISBN 9782728312948. €39.00.

Julien Schoevaert's book on the shops of Ostia is based on his doctoral dissertation, and combines a printed in-depth analysis with an extensive online catalogue. Notwithstanding their omnipresence in the harbour city, these retail structures have hitherto attracted only a few scholars, in part due to their poor preservation. While G. Girri, author of the previous standard title *La Taberna nel Quadro urbanistico e sociale di Ostia* (1956), focuses mainly on typological aspects of the shops, S. tries to 'question des activités qui y avaient lieu, de leurs évolutions et de leur insertion dans le tissu urbain' (4).

The prologue forms the theoretical basis of the work (7–50): S. analyses the polysemy of the term *taberna*, the Latin word often equated with shops (9–20), and defines the latter as 'pièces pourvues d'un seuil à rainure longitudinale, situées en rez-de-chaussée, accessibles directement ou indirectement depuis la voie publique et ne possédant pas de fonction non-commerciale manifeste' (37). Subsequently, S. identifies 1,263 shops matching this definition partly or completely, thus establishing a quantitative approach. Two additional introductory chapters (3 and 4) explain the difficulty of dating the structures (39–43), and comment on the archival documents used by S. (45–50).

The following section concentrates on the physical appearance and architectural development of Ostian shops (51–115). S. opens this part with a re-examination of their domestic use (ch. 5, 55–78) which seems not to fit very well into this part of the book. More appropriate are the following chapters (6 and 7), focusing on the remarkable spread and the immediate architectural contexts of shops during Ostia's heyday in the second century A.D. (79–102), as well as on their manifold destinies in later times (103–15). For S., the so-called crisis of the third century and structural changes in the region resulted in a decline of Ostia's shops in the later third and fourth centuries, leading to an irretrievable 'fin des boutiques' (113) early in the fifth century.

The next part of the book deals with the urban economy (117–203). Of greatest significance is ch. 8, analysing the numerous activities that took place in the shops, among which the sale of food and the textile industry are best attested (121–60). An examination of other types of commercial buildings in ch. 9 (161–86) leads S. to suppose 'deux sphères économiques relativement indépendantes' (179): the retail represented by shops, and the wholesale trade represented by huge warehouses and suchlike. Ch. 10 throws light on the shop owners and tenants, placing them on the lower levels of the social structure (187–202).

The last section gathers a couple of quite different considerations, centring around the role of the shops in the Ostian streetscape (205–69). Ch. 11 points out that shops were often connected with porticoes or – especially in Late Antiquity – spilled out into streets and sidewalks (209–32). The uneven distribution within Ostia of the shops in general, but also of specific activities, seem to attest an orientation towards the consumer (233–53). Consequently, the final ch. 13 concentrates on different strategies that seem to have been employed by the owners and tenants to attract consumers (255–69).

A concise conclusion in French sums up the most important results and puts them into a broader historical context (271–2). Unfortunately, S. omitted to include English and Italian summaries. While the latter absence is compensated by Carlo Pavolini's preface (xi–xviii), the former constitutes a real deficit in view of current standards.

I leave aside the discussion of minor details, to highlight some more crucial points. The structure of the book seems somewhat confusing and incoherent, maybe due to the many different aspects that S. tries to address (e.g. ch. 5). Frequent comparisons with oriental and modern cities, though

interesting, are ahistorical and ineffective. Two other criticisms concern methodology. In accordance with traditional scholarship, S. identifies shops mainly through their position along the streets, and through the existence of a large opening with the characteristic threshold. This remains, however, a presupposition that could have been questioned more resolutely: why should we not imagine a shop with another type of entrance? The chief problem, however, has to do with S.'s quantitative approach. Ostia is only partially excavated, and we still do not know how many and which kind of structures might hide in the unearthened parts. In addition, and in defiance of ch. 3, the dating of many Ostian buildings remains, at least from the third century A.D. onwards, highly problematic. Both of these considerations — the possible existence of several other shops, and the unreliability of absolute dating — lend a very provisional character to the numerous statistics and conclusions. Evidently, this uncertainty is not S.'s own fault, as he could neither excavate the lost parts of the city nor study each of the 1,263 shops in detail. The author could, however, have made a greater effort to highlight the limitations of his approach.

These critical comments apart, S.'s study is an interesting and highly commendable book on an often neglected category of evidence, that draws a vivid picture not only of the shops, but of Ostia's economy and urban landscape as a whole, using a rich body of archaeological, epigraphical and literary evidence. There is no doubt that S. will succeed in his aim of provoking thoughts and further discussion on the topic.

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FRIEDERIKE FLESS, STEPHANIE LANGER, PAOLO LIVERANI and MICHAEL PFANNER, *VATIKANISCHE MUSEEN, MUSEO GREGORIANO PROFANO EX LATERANENSE. KATALOG DER SKULPTUREN, BD. IV: HISTORISCHE RELIEFS* (*Monumenta artis Romanae* 40). Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2018. Pp. 191+96 p. of plates; ill., plans. ISBN 9783954903078. €125.00.

The Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik is committed to the documentation, research and publication of Greek and Roman sculpture. It acquires, newly commissions and hosts an unparalleled wealth of excellent photographs of sculptures in public and private collections (not least many English country houses), including the extraordinary archive of the late Gisela Fittschen-Badura. Their publication series *Monumenta artis Romanae* is dedicated to poorly known or published collections, which, through these lavishly illustrated books, are catapulted into the limelight.

The catalogue in question is the sixth volume on sculptures in the Vatican Museo Gregoriano Profano, a collection that is as important as it is (or was) poorly published. It contains twenty 'historical reliefs', a contentious term here understood as depictions that refer to historical events, and significantly including some tomb reliefs. It comprises both little known or unpublished items (mostly fragmentary) and some of the most controversial reliefs that have been discussed for decades, such as the 'Ara of the Vicomagistri' (1, Liverani), the 'Cancellaria Reliefs' (2, Langer and Pfanner), the 'Belvedere Altar' (7, Fless), the 'Manlius Altar' (9, Fless) or the relief with a decastyle temple in the background (12, Langer and Pfanner). Objects are exquisitely documented in photographs and drawings. Catalogue texts cover provenance, preservation, detailed descriptions, critical discussions of previously proposed interpretations and, where possible, new interpretations, and include extensive bibliographies where applicable. All authors are experts in the field and the standard of treatment is impressively learned throughout.

The volume's highlights are those entries that include new and detailed documentation of the reliefs' preservation and technical details, which contribute markedly to our understanding of the objects. For instance, that the inscription on the 'Manlius Altar' (9, Fless) is a secondary feature makes all the difference for its interpretation, which can no longer be derived from supposed links with Manlius. The altar was originally dedicated to an unknown divinity, and was re-dedicated to Manlius as a statue base only in a second phase of use. This result is exciting, and invites further consideration of how the monument would have been 'read' after its re-dedication. The detailed documentation of the heavily restored relief with togate men in front of a decastyle temple (12,