"Castulo, Jaen, Spain, vol 2, The Olivar architectural complex"

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jewelry are fortunate to have been similarly illustrated.

In 1971 (and published in 1979), and again in 1985,

plex, located on the eastern side of town, first excavated

Iberian or Roman buildings, most of these excavations

Series 425 in 1988. Even if they sometimes dealt with

site since the late 1960s until the early 1990s, and re-

district, the city is often mentioned in the literary sourc-

ological report from excavations in a necropolis, a few

excavations of the Olivar complex (221-308): an archae-

by five chapters of varia that have nothing to do with the

remains belonged to a large bath complex that was built

under the Principate and thoroughly restored in the Lat-

er Empire.

The book begins with a general introduction on the

city, its location, and history from the Bronze Age to the

Middle Ages, with a strong focus on the six centuries

during which it was under Roman rule (1–34). This sum-

mary is sometimes precise and useful as it takes advan-

tage of the wealth of literary material about the town,

but the authors have a tendency to want the archaeolo-

gical evidence to correspond with the historical frame pro-

vided by the written sources (e.g., the reign of Diocletian

is described as a time of splendid civic constructions de-

pendent solely on the word of Lactantius!).

The main body of the text follows and consists of the

archaeological report itself: after a presentation of the

previous excavations and a general view of the stratogra-

phy (35–49), it gives an accurate and detailed descrip-

tion of the structures that were discovered within each

zone (a box-grid system was chosen for the excavation;

50–139). Finally, a summary gives an overview of the se-

quence of occupation of the area, period by period (140–

66) with a few plans that ascribe the different structures
to each phase (figs. 23–29).

The Late Bronze Age and Iberian phases are only at-
tested by ceramics, coins, and a few stretches of some

walls. The remains from the Roman period that seem to

precede the bath complex (some structures and canaliza-
tions) do not seem to belong to a large building. The

monumental baths would then have been built during the

Flavian period, with a natatio, open spaces, probable
gardens, and well preserved suspensurae. In the first half

of the fourth century, these spaces were reused and re-

stored, but soon abandoned as can be deduced from two

coin hoards from the late fourth century that were dis-

covered within these “public” places. Despite the pres-

ence of a Christian community in Castulo (according to

the Council of Elvira), there are few structures that can

be ascribed to the new cult, and during the Arab occupa-

tion of the site, most of the buildings were covered with

sand to level the ground.

The book ends with five appendices (167–219) about

the coins that were found during the excavations, a study

of the ancient fauna, and a catalogue of the different
types of ceramics from the site. These are then followed

by five chapters of varia that have nothing to do with the

evacuations of the Olivar complex (221–308): an archae-

ological report from excavations in a necropolis, a few

notes on coins, inscriptions or artifacts that were found

in Castulo, and a catalogue and study of the epigraphy

from Castulo. Eventually, there are indexes to the fig-

ures, plates and tables, and a bibliography (309–34).

In general, the archaeological report on the Olivar

structures is commendably precise, and these excavations

must have been very hard to carry out in the absence of

any clear stratigraphy; the main author (M.P. García-Ge-

labert) is aware of the difficulties but bravely tries to

interpret the finds in a coherent fashion. However, even

if the report enables us to have a good understanding of

the phases of construction, their precise dating does not
seem well grounded; for instance, the Flavian dating of the main phase is based only on a few ceramics that were found in the foundation trench of a wall. But these are not described and are vaguely presented as *sigillata* without any mention of their origin, and there seems to be only one recognizable form which is not even identified in the text (according to the drawing, it looks like a *Drag. 37*): this is certainly not enough to speak of a Flavian construction! Moreover, instead of bringing the famous but undated “Q. Torius Culleo” inscription (*CIL* 2.3270) into the picture, it would have been more useful to cross-reference the main text to the catalogue of ceramics that is present in the appendices (182-204), as it has been successfully done for the coins. Lastly, it must be pointed out that among the Varia chapters, the long one about the epigraphy of Castulo (256-308) is not really needed since a more complete presentation of these inscriptions (and others that are not included here) can be found in the province of Jaén volumes of the *Corpus de Inscripciones Latinas de Andalucia*, published in 1991.

To sum up, this report is a very welcome addition to the bibliography on Castulo, especially because of the special care the authors took in describing the structures, although the dating might have been improved by a more careful treatment of the finds. Let us hope that the administrative problems surrounding these excavations will be solved and that we will be able to learn more about the buildings of this important native town that became a *municipium* in Roman times.

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**BOOKS RECEIVED**


BROWN, MICHELLE P., and CAROL A. FARR, eds. *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*. (Studies in the Early His-