(unnamed in the sources) as expert witness. The findings ultimately sided with the scuola in denying him his old post, for his playing technique was deemed to have caused great damage to the instrument.

Scarcity of detail in the confraternity records is a problem. At most of the scuole, the chief officer was expected to contribute handsomely to the musical festivities from his own pocket, and for these personal disbursements there are usually no records. The significance of the missing information is underscored in the records of San Rocco, which did file the personal payments. An English traveller, Thomas Coryat, witnessed the celebrations for the feast of San Rocco in 1608, and the pay slips for that year confirm his otherwise seemingly exaggerated description of the lavish musical resources and expert performances.

The most notable absence from these confraternity records is actual music. This poses something of a paradox (the book is after all subtitled "Music at the Venetian Confraternities"), but it also underscores a significant point – the Venetian confraternities were not patrons of music in a creative sense. With a few exceptions, they did not commission new works, actively promote rising and established composers, influence musical trends, or acquire and maintain important collections of music. What the confraternities did do, however, was significantly *support* the musical activity of the city. In doing so, they made accessible to the Venetian people musical spectacles of excellent quality, provided necessary extra sources of income for Venice's musicians, and brought resources for regular music making to many of the local parish churches.

Music historians have long noticed the musical activities of confraternities, but as yet not many book-length studies have emerged on the subject. Works such as Glixon's are invaluable, however, for deepening our knowledge of the wider range of music making within a given locale, and for revealing the flexibility of musical interaction between elite institutions and less exalted organisations like the confraternities and parish churches.

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Hills, Helen. *Invisible City. The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. xii, 268 pp., 10 colour plates, 44 b/w figures. ISBN 0-1951-1774-3

As Helen Hills notes in her introduction to this impressive work, "it has become customary to view the conventual system in stark terms, either idealized as a place of comparative freedom and independence for women or stigmatized as a place of imprisonment" (10). By exploring the nuances of what she terms "competing

religious, social, and political discourses" (16) her work serves as a refreshing corrective to much of the previous scholarship focussed on these binary oppositions. Using as a conceptual tool the Foucauldian idea of "the optics of power" what results is a meticulously researched and well-crafted analysis of the complex interrelationships between gender, social class, and monastic architecture.

In order to arrive at how this "optics of power" functions, Hills wisely sets her stage carefully and by degrees. The first few chapters provide the much-needed background and context for the complex analysis contained in the latter chapters. The first chapter examines the explanatory factors behind the "untrammeled" seventeenth-century explosion of Neapolitan convents by providing a brief sketch of urban politics, social tensions, and religious reform in rapidly changing Neapolitan society. Chapter two provides a nuanced discussion of the theory and practice of virginity, the post-Tridentine enforcement of enclosure, and notions of aristocratic honour.

Chapter three builds on the previous two by examining the role played by convents in the lineal strategies of the aristocracy. As she saliently notes, placing a daughter in a convent advantaged the aristocracy in a multitude of ways. By going beyond the explanatory factor of profession as a strategy practised in the interest the patrimony she uncovers an economy of exchange between aristocratic families and the convents they patronized and placed their daughters in. Nuns, therefore, not only promoted the honour of the lineage, a factor in itself important to social distinction, but acted as lineal representatives in institutions which possessed a great deal of political and social clout.

Chapter four focuses more intimately on convents as a continuation of aristocratic life and the role of the conventual dowry in programs of expansion. Due to "power blocs," wherein multiple members of a lineage patronized and inhabited one institution sometimes over the course of several generations, familial and ecclesiastical interests often competed with one another. Expensive ornamentation functioned not only to advertise a family's religious devotion, but to advertise the exclusivity of the convent. So too, the nuns' own patronage of building or artistic programs, while often invisible to the outside observer, acted to enhance a nun's status within her institution.

Chapters five and six more fully explore the "optics of power." Chapter five explores this concept by examining conventual strategies for dominating the urban landscape and chapter six by analysing the strategies for dominance within the conventual church. The results of their struggles for dominance projected the nuns to front and centre and, as is articulated the conclusion, "convent architecture does not simply provide a public representation of an idealized social body; it stands in metonymically for that body which is made publicly invisible through that very architecture" (163).

What results from this masterful synthesis is a model for excavating the complexities of premodern convent life and suggestions of intriguing possibilities for future research. The extensive selection of plates included will prove particularly useful for those unfamiliar with the visuals of monastic architecture, as will the glossary of terms on page 229.

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Porotto nella storia, ed. Marica Peron. Ferrara: Liberty House, 2003. vi, 299 pp., b/w and colour illustrations. no ISBN [Contains: Franco Cazzola "Presentazione" pp. i–vi; Adriano Franceschini "Note per la storia di Porotto e del suo territorio" pp. 1–171; Marcella Marighelli "Il Boschetto degli Ammorbati" pp. 173–201; Marica Peron "Istituzioni e strutture pubbliche in Porotto nei secoli XIX e XX" pp. 253–277; Lucio Scardino "Un pittore di Porotto: Pier Augusto Tagliaferri (1872–1909)" pp. 279–299.]

This book contains five chapters that narrate the history of Porotto, a small town near Ferrara. The survey covers several centuries and portrays the people of Porotto in their interacting with the church, the village institutions, the places, and the land.

In "Note per la storia di Porotto e del suo territorio" Adriano Franceschini illustrates the history of Porotto from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century. The author provides the reader with an extraordinarily vivid, wide, and detailed account of Porotto's history and territory. His research goes far beyond this small village and draws the connections between the community of Porotto and nearby cities, especially Ferrara and Bologna. What is underlined here is the strong interrelation between Porotto and the watercourses in its vicinity, mainly the Po and the Reno rivers, which in fact changed the geophysical environment and caused severe economic, social, and ecological changes throughout the centuries.

The second chapter describes the birth and upkeep of the "Boschetto degli Ammorbati ", a lazaretto situated on a small island on the Po river. The lazaretto was made possible in 1464 by the generosity of Peregrino Punzinella who, before dying from the plague, left all his possessions to the city of Porotto for the construction of an "edificium et hospitale dignum pro pestiferatis." Thanks to her methodical research, Marcella Marighelli is able to reconstruct the history of this "Boschetto." In the first part of her analysis, she illustrates in detail how the hospital was erected, expanded, and restored throughout the years until 1631 when it was finally sold to a doctor, Cesare Fogliani. The second part of her work is mainly dedicated to Pietro Castagno, a mid-sixteenth-century charlatan known