expository preaching in the vernacular. Levy strives to set these realities in a judicious balance. Accordingly, this study considers the way in which Wyclif's larger opus of works in logic, metaphysics, political theory, and biblical commentary develops inexorably over his career toward a theology in which, admirably for the Protestant view, Scripture in its plain sense is elevated to the place of supreme theological authority, but also in which, disastrously for the Catholic, Wyclif's insistent literalism concerning Christ's words in the institution (*hoc est corpus meum*) lead him to renounce, formally, the doctrine of transubstantiation. Levy is at pains to show what many accounts, however, do not, namely that rejection of the scholastic arguments for transubstantiation as incompatible with the plain sense (for Wyclif the *intentio auctoris*) of the scriptural phrase in its canonical light does not in fact lead Wyclif to reject belief in the "real presence" of Christ in the sacrament. Indeed, Wyclif, deeply pious, went to some lengths to protect and defend the real presence as such.

As is well known, Wyclif was a metaphysical realist. This was not unusual at Oxford; since Grosseteste and Ockham it had been the dominant position there. But Wyclif pushed the implications of metaphysical realism along a trajectory of affective piety that connects his thought to a number of late medieval "Augustinians" for whom spiritual "purity," as Levy puts it (52), (or "holiness of thought and work," as both Walter Hilton and Chaucer describe it) is deeply determinative of reliability in one's intellectual vision. Levy draws attention to this, not as he might, to explain Wyclif's concerns for spiritual rectitude as a condition for office (*De domino; De domino civilo*), but rather to get at Wyclif's evident distrust of any attempt at theological thought not grounded in a vital practice of faith and biblical obedience.

Levy seeks to show how Wyclif's metaphysical realist convictions prohibit his accepting the "annihilation of substance" idea that the conventional doctrine of transubstantiation requires. He then ties this feature of Wyclif's thought to his high view of Scripture and its perspicuous revelation of divine intent in the words of institution as that is situated logically among other dicta of the *lex Christi*. At each step Levy contextualizes helpfully in relation to prevalent theological discussion and normative consensus. The result is a nuanced, yet more accurate reading of Wyclif on what are, after all, his central ideas. And in the process Levy reveals to us an historical irony of the sort his mentor—and other Catholic theologians of course—have found upon reexamining the thought of Martin Luther. As Levy puts it, "perhaps the greatest problem is that Wyclif himself does not see how close his own position regarding 'true and real' presence is to that of his adversaries" (325). Many others before Levy have failed to appreciate the proximity; his book should help make that misunderstanding less conventional.

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Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents. By **Helen Hills**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. xii + 268 pp. $60.00 cloth.

Helen Hills's *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents* offers a very important exploration of the complex nexus between sacred architecture, gender relations, and lineage politics in the dynamic world of seventeenth-century Naples. Trained as an architec-

tural historian, Hills provides rich visual images in the book, including photographs of convents and their accoutrement, architectural plans, and urban maps to bolster her arguments about conventual building strategies and the family politics that undergirded them. While *Invisible City* will obviously be of greatest interest to students of the history of art and architecture, the book should also appeal to a wide range of readers beyond that discipline. The book is well written, meticulously researched, ambitious in scope, and largely successful in execution.

In the introduction, Hills lays out a layered, but cohesive theoretical framework through which to explore convents' building strategies within the wider lens of gender and elite power politics in early modern Naples. She is principally interested in showing how Neapolitan nuns sought to negotiate (and validate) their status as "noble virgins" through a complex dance of social exclusion, urban expansion, and utilizing available channels for political and architectural patronage. Hills argues that by studying Neapolitan convents, we can gain deeper insight into the complex gender and social class relationships that colored early modern Naples (and perhaps beyond). Far from rendering gender as an undifferentiated category of analysis, Hills demonstrates that elite Neapolitan nuns' virginal identity was self-consciously exclusive to members of their social caste and relied in large part upon the strategic deployment of familial privilege and pressure.

Leaping confidently into the ongoing debate over whether early modern religious women were passive victims of male ecclesiastical power or active participants in their own destinies, Hills engages the work of Italian scholars such as Gabriella Zarri and Elisa Novi Chavarria, staking out a nuanced position that remains attentive to the limitations placed upon elite religious women, while also acknowledging how these actors deployed complex strategies to resist such limitations. One of the true strengths of the book is its very willingness to play with the tensions inherent in early modern religious women's life experiences and institutional prerogatives.

Hills structures her monograph to capture the complex (and sometimes competing) social, spiritual, and political forces that framed Neapolitan convent life. In chapter 1, Hills offers a convincing portrait of how the seventeenth-century growth of Neapolitan convents was intertwined with political turf battles among the old and new nobility, between secular and religious authorities, and even among the religious themselves. She shows how convent building programs represent yet another dimension of the Neapolitan nobility's desire to assert its hegemony in the imperial city, providing nuns with opportunities for greater authority, while also reminding them of their dependence upon noble patronage.

While shifting decidedly away from the sweaty realm of urban power politics in early modern Naples, the second chapter offers an extended overview of the theological and historical discourses on virginity with Roman Catholicism, with just the briefest mention of the Neapolitan context. And yet, this chapter (which could easily work as a stand-alone essay for students of early modern religious history, or the history of gender) serves to lay the essential groundwork for Hills's subsequent discussion of noble virginity and the architecture of devotion. Exploring a range of sources from the patristic writings to the Tridentine decree on *clausura*, Hills reminds us that virginity was not simply the *sine qua non* for religious women, but also lay at the heart of early modern elite notions of female honor.

Chapter 3 interrogates the complexities of yet another early modern institution, the dowry system, as a window onto the often fraught relationship between the prerogatives of the Neapolitan nobility and the spiritual demands of post-Tridentine Catholicism. In some of the most interesting evidence in the chapter, Hills shows how the new nobility patronized convents through the payment of inflated dowries to secure their female relations a place in the most honorable of these institutions. For men like Nicolò Giudice and his cloistered daughters "money was traded for social standing" (86).

If the first three chapters of *Invisible City* establish the social and political frameworks within which convents grew and gained in power, chapters 4 and 5 concentrate more specifically on how elite convents sought to exercise their authority within the constraints placed upon them by the gender of their inhabitants. In chapter 4, Hills shows effectively how numerous strategies were employed by nuns, their male relatives, and patrons to justify convent expansion and patronage projects of various kinds. She shows how financial sources like the *vitalizi*, or the independent annuities that many wealthy nuns received, were much in demand by convents as they sought to pursue their projects (108). But expansion did not come without a price, as chapter 5 makes clear. Female religious houses fought pitched legal (and occasionally, extralegal) battles with secular authorities, male religious houses, and one another to gain the most advantageous locations, expand in size and grandeur, or simply gain the greatest visibility. Hills narrates one of the best stories of the lengths to which some female religious would go to expand in the case of the *Santa Casa degl'Incurabili* who, in 1728, broke through a garden wall and occupied a male religious house next door for nearly two weeks (132–33).

In the final chapter of *Invisible City*, which will perhaps be of greatest interest to students of architectural history and visual culture, Hills considers what she calls "power optics," or the tension between the visibility of convent architecture and decorative elements and the necessary invisibility of convent inmates and their protected bodies. Her valuable concluding chapter both restates this wonderful study's primary themes and argues again for the parallels between the fortress-like buildings that Neapolitan nuns built and their fierce defense of their own noble virginity.

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One King, One Law, Three Faiths: Religion and the Rise of Absolutism in Seventeenth-Century Metz. By **Patricia Behre Miskimin**. Contributions to the Study of World History, 90. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002. xxiv + 153 pp. $62.95 cloth.

Dissent from a traditional norm, the coexistence of opposing religious groups, the intimate juxtaposition of differing faiths in the age of absolutism have for recent historiography an attraction that can only be heightened by association with the process of secularization. In her study of seventeenth-century Metz, Patricia Miskimin presents a veritable laboratory case that is both exemplary in its manifold crosscurrents, yet unique in its local peculiarities. For with its fifteen Catholic parishes, Metz in 1600 included as a third of its population a Protestant presence as well as a cohesive Jewish community, actually the largest in France—the three faiths openly coexisting, even