

ticelli's mythological paintings and his religious, which are not treated (7): "In Botticelli's late style of painting (1490-1510), his works are influenced by the religious and intellectual preachings of Savonarola. His paintings reflect strong spiritualism through the use of local colors and frenetic line, as in the *Pietà* (Milan, c. 1500)."

For those interested in pursuing the philosophical dimension of Rossetti's "Medievalism," I recommend another study which is

not specifically about him but which will do much to put a good deal of what Cheney has to say about the Nous and World-Soul in focus: Stephen Gersh, "Platonism—Neoplatonism—Aristotelianism: A Twelfth-Century Metaphysical System and Its Sources," *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

Nathan Cervo

Tim Hilton, *John Ruskin: The Early Years*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London. 1985. 301 pp. £ 12.95. \$22.50

Hilton's book on Ruskin's early career, though somewhat breezily written, shows great finesse throughout as well as sound scholarship. As is inevitable, the author leans heavily on published material—especially Lutyens and the numerous volumes of Ruskin's correspondence—but he has also made skilful use of MSS sources which up to now had lain unused, or only peripherally used, in a variety of archives (e.g. the Bodleian, the National Library of Scotland, the collection of Ruskin papers at Bembridge). Hilton's approach is distinguished by a rare impartiality with respect to the cast of characters he had to portray. His concern was to be at once accurate and fair, and in this he has succeeded admirably, without ever sounding Olympian (or, what would have been worse, merely bland, tepidly "neutral"). That kind of distributive empathy is something of a *novum* in Ruskin scholarship, which even in its best examples has tended towards an open or covert taking of sides; most signally in the treatment of John James Ruskin, the Ruskin-Effie-Millais triangle, the development of Ruskin's religious beliefs or attitudes, and the role played by Ruskin in the fortunes of the PRB—a subject frequently discussed but

generally put away by previous investigators. Furthermore, Hilton makes clear, for the first time, how Ruskin's taste could embrace (simultaneously, not successively) such extreme opposites as Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites, and how he was able to resolve his ambivalence about both the practice and the value of landscape painting on the grounds of historical evolution (p. 166).

Perhaps the most welcome of Hilton's rectifying maneuvers is his treatment of John James Ruskin, whose image has suffered continuous distortions—both eulogistic and dyslogistic, but chiefly the latter. In these pages JJR emerges as a man strong-willed and often unbending, but possessed of a mind that was complex and by no means lacking in subtlety (or humility or charity), as well as a man highly vulnerable in his psychic constitution: in short, a credible and even sympathetic human being, who bears little resemblance to the heavy-armored, bigoted monster, utterly engrossed with himself and his brilliant son, that too many Ruskin scholars in the past have been content to parade before our astonished eyes.

P.S. A bagatelle, Tim: I demur to your characterization of Sydney Dobell as a "poetaster". Dobell was a fine if erratic poet, at one time stupidly ridiculed and now shamefully neglected.

Francis Golfing