

REVIEWS

THE RECOVERY OF WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT: A REVIEW ARTICLE

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William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné by Judith Bronkhurst. New Haven: Yale UP, 2006. 2 vols. 800 pp. + 150 colour plates, 150 b/w illus. ISBN 978-0-300-10235-2. Set with Slipcase \$275.00.

William Holman Hunt: Painter, Painting, Paint by Carol Jacobi. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2006. xv, 287 pp. + 24 colour plates, 48 b/w illus. ISBN 0-7190-7288-3. \$89.00; £55.00.

Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision edited by Katharine Lochnan and Carol Jacobi. Exhibition catalogue. Toronto and New Haven: Art Gallery of Toronto and Yale UP, 2008. 221 pp. + 100 colour plates, 100 b/w illus. ISBN 978-0-300-14832-9. \$75.00.

A curious two-minute video on the BBC website on the recent Holman Hunt exhibition in Manchester (“Hunt exhibition to open”) starts with detailed close-ups of his religious works.¹ The video’s narrator reminds us of Hunt’s own claims to truth value (“like all the Pre-Raphaelites..., Hunt wanted his work to look as authentic as possible”) and of the Christian Hunt’s interest in Judaism and Islam. A Jewish man (identified as “Peter Kurer, Jewish family”) compares his recent trip to the Holy Land to Hunt’s portrayal in *The Finding of The Saviour* (1854-55; 1856-60) and concludes that anyone would recognize the building in Hunt’s painting as a synagogue (despite Hunt’s imitation of the reconstructed 14th-century Alhambra in the Crystal Palace to represent Jewish architecture from the time of Christ!). The museum’s interactive room, we are told, “helps the younger generation find meaning in Holman Hunt’s art.” A woman in a headscarf (hijab) (“Rozina Chaudrey, Muslim family”) insists that all the families’ comments on the paintings are similar, despite spectators’ religious differences. She stands before *The Light of the World* (1851-52, 1852-53, 1858, 1886) with a Christian man (“Alan Saunders, Christian family”) who declares that this is a painting “which most Christians would relate to.” Hunt’s contemporaries found it hard to decipher his typical esoteric imagery and blend of very diverse texts in the painting, but its symbolic content of a figure with