

The Rossettis at Texas

Virginia Surtees prefaces her catalogue raisonné of the paintings and drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (Clarendon Press, 1971) with the assertion that it "includes all Rossetti's pictures and drawings known to me." As she has attempted the enormous task of describing and locating the numerous sketches, drawings, finished pictures, and duplications, it is not surprising that certain Rossetti sketches and studies have escaped her net. It is, however, unfortunate that at the time of compilation she was apparently unaware of the Pre-Raphaelite holdings at the University of Texas Humanities Research Center. William E. Fredeman has called the Center "one of the most important public repositories of Pre-Raphaelite manuscripts in North America." (Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study, Harvard, 1965) In addition to manuscripts, however, the collections of the H.R.C. contain graphic works by various Pre-Raphaelites, including important Rossetti studies for Dante's Dream, Mary Magdalene, La Pia, and Lady Lilith. Though Mrs. Surtees describes these studies, she nevertheless lists their present whereabouts as "unknown." The Center's series of six Rossetti stained glass cartoons for St. George and the Dragon Mrs. Surtees does not mention at all. The purpose of this note, then, is to "locate" the following Rossetti studies and thus to correct the Rossetti catalogue raisonné.

1. Study for Dante's Dream - Surtees 81B, R.I.A., p. 44. The description given by Mrs. Surtees under this entry is exact, though the correct measurements are 39½" x 16 5/8" (left side x bottom). The drawing came to Texas from the Thomas Edward Hanley Collection in April 1960.

2. Study for Mary Magdalene - Surtees 250A, p. 148. A bust portrait of a red-haired woman looking upward with an ointment container in her left hand, a strand of hair in her right. 24" x 20". Sold by Dr. Jacob Schwartz to the House of El Dieff, and subsequently purchased by the H.R.C. in December 1960.

3. Study for La Pia de' Tolomei - Surtees 207F, p. 120. For a reproduction and description of this important study for Rossetti's last major oil painting, see Lucien L. Agosta, The Library Chronicle of the University of Texas at Austin, number 8, Fall 1974, pp. 38-40.