

ROSSETTI'S USE OF
BONNARD'S *COSTUMES HISTORIQUES*:
A FURTHER EXAMINATION, WITH AN APPENDIX
ON OTHER PRE-RAPHAELITE ARTISTS

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That Camille Bonnard's *Costumes historiques* was a design source book for the early drawings and paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti was first established by Roger Smith and Leonné Ormond in a pair of articles which appeared in *Costume* nearly two decades ago. The book presented apparently authentic reproductions of the portraits, frescoes, tableaux, miniatures, sculptures, etc. of the Middle Ages. Bonnard, who actually went to see and gather original materials, made commentaries on the colour plates, which were engraved by Paul Mercuri.

Students of Pre-Raphaelite clothes and costumes, such as Stella Mary Newton, Jennifer Harris, Elaine Shefer, and Keiko Nohzawa, have built on the pioneer work of Smith and Ormond, but the full extent of the influence of Bonnard on Rossetti and the other Pre-Raphaelites has not been either fully recognized or adequately documented. Following a brief introduction surveying Rossetti's use of Bonnard, his specific borrowings are listed in a catalogue which, if it errs on the generous side, as source studies are prone to do, nevertheless documents one of the most important known sources of Rossetti's early costume designs.

Rossetti was probably first introduced to Bonnard by Ford Madox Brown, who, among those in the Pre-Raphaelite circle, had the earliest access to the book in 1845. Brown's own borrowings are readily recognizable in at least two of his early works: *Chaucer at the Court of Edward III* (completed 1851) and *Wycliffe Reading His Translation of the New Testament to His Protector, John of Gaunt* (1847-48)(Smith, 29).¹ In 1848, Rossetti adapted two of Brown's borrowings from Bonnard figures in his *Retro Me Sathana* (1848). William Michael Rossetti records that about a year earlier his brother began an oil painting of a similar subject in which three figures were depicted in medieval costume – an aged churchman, a young lady, and the devil in human shape with a tail, slinking behind them baffled