**Felix Robert Roffe, 1814–1887 [Draft]**

One of a family of London engravers, of whom the father was Robert Cabell Roffe (1780–1839) and the four sons Alfred Thomas (1803–71), William Callis (1817–1902), Albert Henry (1819–91) and Edwin (1825–91): a previous Edwin was an infant death and there were also five daughters.

Felix was credited with some engravings but he described himself in census returns from 1851 on, an ‘artist [and] painter in watercolours’. He was born at 59 Ossulston Street, Somers Town, London, and baptised on 27 March 1814 at old St Pancras church. The family had moved to no. 48 by 1825 and Alfred and Edwin were still there at the 1871 census (when it had been renumbered 135 Ossulston Street).

In 1834, Felix was awarded a Society of Arts [TBC] silver medal for ‘a copy in water-colours of figures’. In 1841 he was in Clarendon Street (Victoria?) and in 1851 at 6 Charles Street (Mayfair?), by then with his wife Mary (31), daughter Mary Agnes (3) and son Robert John (8 months). By 1861 they had added Alfred Joseph (then 7) and Francis Bernard (4) and were at 16 Leverton Street, Kentish Town. In 1871, at nearby 4 Falkland Road, Mary Agnes was listed as a teacher of singing and Robert John a landscape painter. On Felix’s last census appearance ten years later, at 18 Grisbach Road, Upper Holloway, he was noted as a ‘Painter (Artist) Figures’, Mary Agnes a ‘Musician’, Robert John still a landscape painter and Alfred also a ‘Painter (Artist) figures’.

Roffe was a skilled draughtsman, mainly known for making preparatory drawings for engravings by his brothers and others. Most were of three-dimensional artworks, from relief medallions to full-size statues and he was often expressly credited in reviews as artist for the resulting prints as well as on them. A number appeared in *The Art Journal* and other publications and in 1892 the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A) purchased 56 drawing by him ‘of the works of eminent sculptors’. He also painted watercolour figure subjects and did some work as a watercolour copyist of paintings, perhaps to assist their engraving in some cases. The NPG has his watercolour portrait in peer’s robes of John Singleton Copley, 1st Baron Lyndhurst (lawyer son of the painter), and the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery, Bournemouth, his copy of ‘Home! after service’ by Frank W.W. Topham (1879). It is not known if this was used for making the print published in *The Art Journal* in 1882 but some reduction may have been since the engraver, Auguste Danse, was a Belgian mainly working in Brussels.

When Roffe died at 9 Leighton Grove, Kentish Town on 27 June 1887, he was also recorded as formerly of 57 Barclay Street, Clarendon Square (neither on a modern London map) and late of 81 Corinne Road, Tufnell Park. Probate on estate of £85 was granted to his widow, Mary, as sole executrix.

Graves lists Roffe’s brother, Alfred, as a ‘miniature painter’, indicating the scale of ‘Portrait of an artist’ which was his sole RA entry in 1822, submitted from 59 Ossulston Street. His ‘David’, a miniature or watercolour, was shown at the SBA in 1829 (from no. 48).

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