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A Rossetti Family Chronology

Alison Chapman and Joanna Meacock

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2007 978-1-4039-1219-0

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First published 2007 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10010

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ISBN 978-1-349-51095-5 ISBN 978-0-230-62727-7 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9780230627277

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Chapman, Alison, 1970–

A Rossetti family chronology / Alison Chapman and Joanna Meacock.
p. cm. – (Author chronologies series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4039-1219-X (cloth)

1. Rossetti, Christina Georgina, 1830–1894–Chronology. 2. Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 1828–1882–Chronology. 3. Rossetti, Maria Francesca, 1827–1876–Chronology. 4. Rossetti, William Michael, 1829–1919–Chronology. 5. Rossetti, Gabriele, 1783–1854–Chronology. 6. Poets, English–19th century–Chronology. 7. Authors, English–19th century–Chronology. 8. Rossetti family–Chronology. 9. London (England)–Intellectual life–19th century. I. Meacock, Joanna, 1975– II. Title.

PR5238.C475 2007

821.8–dc22

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2006049403

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General Editor's Preface

Most biographies are ill adapted to serve as works of reference – not surprisingly so, since the biographer is likely to regard his function as the devising of a continuous and readable narrative, with excursions into interpretation and speculation, rather than a bald recital of facts. There are times, however, when anyone reading for business or pleasure needs to check a point quickly or to obtain a rapid overview of part of an author's life or career; and at such moments turning over the pages of a biography can be a time-consuming and frustrating occupation. The present series of volumes aims at providing a means whereby the chronological facts of an author's life and career, rather than needing to be prised out of the narrative in which they are (if they appear at all) securely embedded, can be seen at a glance. Moreover whereas biographies are often, and quite understandably, vague over matters of fact (since it makes for tediousness to be forever enumerating details of dates and places), a chronology can be precise whenever it is possible to be precise.

Thanks to the survival, sometimes in very large quantities, of letters, diaries, notebooks and other documents, as well as to thoroughly researched biographies and bibliographies, this material now exists in abundance for many major authors. In the case of, for example, Dickens, we can often ascertain what he was doing in each month and week, and almost on each day, of his prodigiously active working life; and the student of, *say*, *David Copperfield* is likely to find it fascinating as well as useful to know just when Dickens was at work on each part of that novel, what other literary enterprises he was engaged in at the same time, whom he was meeting, what places he was visiting, and what were the relevant circumstances of his personal and professional life. Such a chronology is not, of course, a substitute for a biography; but its arrangement, in combination with its index, makes it a much more convenient tool for this kind of purpose; and it may be acceptable as a form of 'alternative' biography, with its own distinctive advantages as well as its obvious limitations.

Since information relating to an author's early years is usually scanty and chronologically imprecise, the opening section of some volumes in this series groups together the years of childhood and adolescence. Thereafter each year, and usually each month, is dealt with separately.

Information not readily assignable to a specific month or day is given as a general note under the relevant year or month. The first entry for each month carries an indication of the day of the week, so that when necessary this can be readily calculated for other dates. Each volume also contains a bibliography of the principal sources of information. In the chronology itself, the sources of many of the more specific items, including quotations, are identified, in order that the reader who wishes to do so may consult the original contexts.

NORMAN PAGE

Editorial Preface

The Rossettis were a dynamic and exciting cosmopolitan family, at the forefront of some of the most important artistic, literary and cultural movements in the nineteenth century. This chronology concentrates on the major figures Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti, giving information about literary composition and artistic output, publication and exhibition, reviews, finances, health, relationships, intellectual and social milieu, and detailing literary and artistic influences, reading habits and gallery attendance. It also includes a wealth of information about other immediate family members (such as Gabriele, Frances, Maria Francesca and William Michael Rossetti, Elizabeth Siddal and Lucy Madox Brown), as well as family friends (especially the Heimann, Brown and Scott families), the Pre-Raphaelites and other literary and artistic friends, and consumers of the Rossettis' output (buyers, publishers, reviewers). Such a broad scope evinces the vibrant intellectual and artistic community in which the Rossettis lived and, in particular, the interrelationship of Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's environment and work. The *Rossetti Family Chronology* thus offers detailed information about the Rossettis' network, revising traditional stereotypes of their lives, passed down through contemporary biographies and reminiscences, and challenging the critical tendency to approach their work separately.

Contemporary information about the Rossettis, from which we derived most of the material for the chronology, presents in one respect an embarrassment of riches. We have accessed letters, diaries, account books, manuscript poetry, periodical essays, biographies and early critical work as the basis of our research, from both manuscript and published material. Where information comes from a number of different sources and, where these sources are contradictory, we give full information in the references. This is particularly important with the Rossetti circle because it has attracted a perhaps unprecedented amount of mythologising, rumour and speculation. Often there is no factual primary evidence for an incident and we clearly mention where this is the case, leaving it to the reader to interpret events.

A key methodological challenge for the Rossetti family chronologer is the issue of the archive. Although we concentrate on primary and contemporary material there are significantly different levels of documentation

offering insights to the central figures. The nature of the record represented in this chronology will necessarily reflect this intrinsic bias of the surviving material, although we have taken some steps to redress the balance that we outline below. As the last surviving sibling, William was a crucial family record keeper and archive preserver, and his diary frequently details his reorganisation and dissemination of poems, paintings, letters, papers and other memorabilia. We have noted some important examples of this activity in the chronology entries. William was also the major early editor and biographer of Dante Gabriel and Christina, and although his work is critical for biographical and artistic access to his siblings, his biases and prejudices necessarily colour his editing and reminiscences. Furthermore, his habit of selling or giving away manuscripts, autographs, pictures, photographs and other family objects is largely responsible for the scattering of the Rossetti archive across various libraries and private collections, as well as the difficulty of knowing what precisely has been lost, and presents an additional difficulty to the Rossetti scholar.

There are significant gaps in the primary Rossetti material that we rely on for our chronology. Dante Gabriel frequently destroyed his own correspondence, worried that it would get into the wrong hands. Important links in his relationship with Elizabeth Siddal are still missing, perhaps lost forever because, according to William, Dante Gabriel burnt the remaining correspondence with Siddal after her death in 1862 (Fredeman 1:xxi). Although William was more systematic in his record keeping and retained many incoming letters, there is evidence that he also destroyed sensitive material and, in later life, family material that he considered of no interest. Further, William's own letters and narratives often contrast with, and sometimes contradict, the memoirs of such figures as William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and William Bell Scott. Few letters survive from or to Maria, and we know that she destroyed a large bundle of private papers before she entered All Saints Sisterhood (Harrison 3:59). Christina seems to have habitually destroyed her incoming correspondence, although her own surviving letters are fairly extensive. Another significant gap is the Pre-Raphaelite Diary: not only was it begun in 1849, a year after the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, but Dante Gabriel seems to have ripped out sections that he was reluctant to make public, probably regarding himself and Siddal. WMR estimates losses as amounting to about a fifth of the entries but Fredeman argues that about 30 per cent is missing and even more mutilated (PRBJ xvii–xxi). Nevertheless, despite the incomplete, patchy and sometimes contradictory evidence about the Rossetti family, many additional crucial documents still survive. Most important, for this chronology,

are: William's general, travel and séance diaries (running with some gaps from 1866 to 1913), his biographical manuscripts and financial records; extensive poetry notebooks and manuscripts by Christina (partially dated) and her financial records for 1874 to 1894; Dante Gabriel's notebooks, poetry manuscripts and private documents (largely undated); and Frances's diaries (1816–17, 1881–82, 1883–86) and family letters.

Despite Dante Gabriel Rossetti's increasingly reclusive behaviour in later life, there remains a particular abundance of published and archival source material referencing his social, artistic and literary activity, presenting a distinct challenge to chroniclers such as ourselves. Describing his brother's involvement with Moxon's 1857 Tennyson edition, William Michael wrote that 'He assumed the easy attitude of one born to dominate' (Layard 51). We were aware of the real danger of allowing Dante Gabriel to overwhelm the chronology, eclipsing his siblings. Wanting the chronology to represent each individual fairly, however, difficult editorial decisions had to be made regarding what Dante Gabriel material to omit. While interesting, details of his social engagements, many musings on literature and art, and correspondence with friends had to be kept to a minimum. Instead, the entries on Dante Gabriel focus on his creativity, critical reception, key friendships and relationships, travel, negotiations with publishers and patrons, and involvement with committees, companies and societies.

While the material for Dante Gabriel Rossetti is extensive and wide-ranging, the available information about his sister Christina Rossetti is often more limited. Antony H. Harrison's complete edition of her letters (1997–2005) illuminates Christina's familial and social network, her negotiations with publishers, and her literary, religious and political concerns, especially during periods of illness or nursing duties when her contact with others was often only made through letters. The correspondence, however, is not as voluminous, gossipy and revealing as Dante Gabriel's, often displaying her reserve and her commitment to the domestic diurnal experience which critics such as Mary Arseneau argue are crucial to her sense of community and theology. While there also exists a range of other contemporary sources on Christina, especially William Michael's largely unpublished diary, they are simply not as extensive as the material on Dante Gabriel. While entries for Christina are sometimes of a more domestic character than Dante Gabriel's, we have tried to provide as much available material as possible about Christina's life and work, focusing on her sense of her vocation, her literary activities, important friendships and influences, her relationship with her mother and sister, and the influence and interference of her brothers

in her career. Often we provide information about her life and network that has not previously appeared in biographies or critical studies, in particular her extensive contacts with and opinions about other women writers and artists, her finances, and as complete a range as possible of periodical publications and reviews of her work. Furthermore, to counter the bias against Christina in the available primary material, especially that filtered down through William Michael, we have introduced important information about spheres of activity that William would have known little about. In particular, we include entries from contemporary accounts that touch on Christina's domestic and religious circles, and that also flesh out the lives and activities of Maria and Frances.

Every effort has been made to give William Michael and Maria Francesca their full place alongside their more canonical siblings. The chronology gives a full sense of their importance in the lives of the Rossetti family, while also including entries on their own vocations and interests. In particular, William Michael's involvement in both Christina and Dante Gabriel's affairs, both before and after their deaths, is detailed, alongside the extraordinary range of his other activities, including his periodical reviewing, editing, travel, and his extensive social and intellectual circles. While material on Maria Francesca is scarce, we detail as much information as possible on her teaching and writing, her religious, domestic and social life, and her importance to her siblings, often through unpublished primary sources.

Our editorial practice is to denote uncertain dates with a question mark (?), to give possible alternative datings with slashes (e.g. 9/16) or to mark them circa (c.). We give limited interpretative information, and as much as possible try to let events and sources speak for themselves. Composition dates for Christina Rossetti's poems are accessed largely through R. W. Crump's magisterial variorum edition (1979–92), which gives the dates from Christina's poetry manuscripts and notebooks, or based on the comments of William Michael Rossetti; references indicate which source we use. Precise dating of Dante Gabriel's poetic compositions is less straightforward. We have largely followed William Michael's datings in his authoritative *Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (1911), excepting instances of contradiction or specification in personal letters, notebooks and diaries. Pictorial dating comes from Surtees's 1971 catalogue raisonné and Fredeman's *Rossetti Cabinet* (1991). The headnotes to each year provide key information about the Rossetti family's activities, summarising important artistic and literary output. These headnotes also give details of biography, finances and reviews; when a specific date is known, however, the information is provided in a separate entry.

Acknowledgements

A Rossetti Family Chronology is supported by a British Academy personal research grant, for which we are very grateful. We wish to acknowledge our debt to the scholarship of R. W. Crump, William Fredeman, Roger W. Peattie and Virginia Surtees, whose magnificent work in cataloguing and editing the Rossettis over the years has made our book possible. In our research we have been fortunate in the support, advice and generosity of many colleagues, friends and libraries. In particular, we wish to thank warmly Jan Marsh, who generously gifted us her rich and voluminous Rossetti research notes, as well as Jane Cowan and Antony H. Harrison, who kindly allowed us a preview of forthcoming volumes of their editions of the correspondence of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti respectively. We are also thankful to the following libraries: Special Collections, University of British Columbia; Centre for Whistler Studies, University of Glasgow; Special Collections, Princeton University Library; and the British Library Manuscript Division. The following friends and colleagues provided research support, advice, information and encouragement, and made our research a truly Rossettian collaborative achievement: Richard Cronin, Alex Dick, Liz Hancock, Margaret Macdonald, Garry and Barb Miles, Adam Robertson and Nigel Thorp. We are especially grateful to the anonymous reader for important advice and generous guidance at a late stage of the book's preparation, as well as to Paula Kennedy, our commissioning editor, for her patience and support throughout. Finally, but above all, we wish to gratefully acknowledge Robert Miles, who provided both sympathy and good dinners at crucial stages, and Ian Meacock, who was hugely encouraging, and stepped in when called upon as a willing research assistant.

List of Abbreviations

Names

AB	Alice Boyd
ABG	Anne Burrows Gilchrist
ABH	Amelia Barnard Heimann
ACS	Algernon Charles Swinburne
AG	Alexander Gilchrist
AM	Alexander Macmillan
AMH	Anna Mary Howitt (later Watts)
AT	Alexander ('Aleck') Tupper
BLS	Barbara Leigh Smith (later Bodichon)
BRP	Bessie Raynor Parkes
CAH	Charles Augustus Howell
CBC	Charles Bagot Cayley
CFM	Charles Fairfax Murray
CG	Caroline Gemmer
CGR	Christina Georgina Rossetti
CMB	Catherine Maddox Brown
CP	Charlotte Lydia Polidori
DG	Dora Greenwell
DGR	Dante Gabriel Rossetti
EBB	Elizabeth Barrett Browning
EBJ	Edward Burne-Jones
EES	Elizabeth Eleanor ('Lizzie') Siddal (later Rossetti)
EH	Ellen Heaton
EMB	Emma Matilda Brown
EP	Eliza Harriet Polidori
FGS	Frederick George Stephens
FJS	Frederic James Shields
FMB	Ford Madox Brown
FMLR	Frances Maria Lavinia Rossetti (née Polidori)
GBJ	Georgiana Burne-Jones
GCT	Georgiana Cowper-Temple, Lady Mount-Temple (née Tollemarche)
GFW	George Frederic Watts
GGH	George Gordon Hake
GP	Gaetano Polidori

GPB	George Price Boyce
GR	Gabriele Pasquale Giuseppe Rossetti
GT	George Tupper
HFP	Henry Francis Polydore
HP	Henrietta Polydore (HFP's daughter)
HTD	Henry Treffry Dunn
JAH	John Aldam Heaton
JEM	John Everett Millais
JLT	John Lucas ('Jack') Tupper
JM	Jane Morris (née Burden)
JPS	John Pollard Seddon
JWM	John Westland Marston
KH	Frances Catherine ('Kate' / 'Kitty') Howell
KT	Katharine Tynan
LMB	Lucy Madox Brown (later Rossetti)
LNS	Letitia Norquay Scott
MFR	Maria Francesca Rossetti
MMP	Maria Margaret Polidori
MS	Marie Spartali (later Stillman)
OMB	Oliver Madox ('Nolly') Brown
PBM	Philip Bourke Marston
RB	Robert Browning
RMM	Richard Monckton Milnes, Baron Houghton
TGH	Thomas Gordon Hake
THC	Thomas Henry Hall Caine
TPR	Teodorico Pietrocola-Rossetti
TS	Thomas Seddon
TWD	Walter Theodore Watts-Dunton
VCP	Valentine Cameron Prinsep
WA	William Allingham
WBS	William Bell Scott
WCT	William Cave Thomas
WFCT	William Francis Cowper-Temple, 1st Baron Mount-Temple
WHH	William Holman Hunt
WJS	William J. Stillman
WM	William Morris
WMR	William Michael Rossetti

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Works by CGR

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- FD *Face of the Deep: A Devotional Commentary on the Apocalypse* (London: SPCK; New York: Young, 1892).
- GM *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1862).
- LS *Letter and Spirit: Notes on the Commandments* (London: SPCK, 1883).
- P *A Pageant and Other Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1881).
- PP *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1866).
- SF *Seek and Find: A Double Series of Short Studies on the Benedicite* (London: SPCK, 1879).
- SL *Speaking Likenesses* (London: Macmillan, 1874).
- SS *Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book* (London: Routledge, 1872).
- TF *Time Flies: A Reading Diary* (London: SPCK, 1885).

Works by DGR

- B&S *Ballads and Sonnets* (London: Ellis, 1881).
- EIP *The Early Italian Poets* (London: Smith & Elder, 1861).
- HL *The House of Life* sonnet sequence.

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Family Tree