

## INTRODUCTION

[T]he new poetry seemed to have achieved no progress in the eye of the public since the experiment of *The Germ* in 1850. Then at last came Christina Rossetti with her brilliant, fantastic, and profoundly original volume of *Goblin Market* in 1862, and achieved the earliest popular success for Pre-Raphaelite poetry. Swinburne never failed to recognize the priority of Christina; he used to call her the Jael who led their host to victory.<sup>1</sup>

Literary scholars and the reading public have long appreciated Christina Rossetti's "brilliant, fantastic, and profoundly original" poetry. Over the last twenty-five years, renewed interest in women writers and in the pre-Raphaelite movement has spurred a full-scale reassessment of Rossetti's work that has firmly established her status as a major Victorian poet. Rossetti's writing in other genres—including short fiction, essays, and devotional writing have also attracted considerable scholarly attention. The reevaluation of Rossetti's work has yielded an abundance of new and important scholarship, including a critical edition of Rossetti's poems by Rebecca Crump (1979-1990), biographies by Georgina Battiscombe (1981), Kathleen Jones (1991) and Jan Marsh (1995), numerous critical studies including the important early essay collection *The Achievement of Christina Rossetti* (1988), and an edition of Rossetti's letters by Antony Harrison (1997-2004). Scholarly efforts to understand Christina Rossetti within her contemporary context have also flourished, including any number of critical and biographical studies of the Rossetti family (and of Christina's role and relationships within it), as well as wider considerations of Christina's place within the pre-Raphaelite movement, Victorian women's writing, writing for children, and Victorian religious and devotional literature.

Far less attention has been paid to the production and circulation of Rossetti's published work within (and beyond) the varied material and cultural contexts of Victorian print culture. Although interest in Rossetti's printing and publishing history is growing, as can be seen in books such as Lorraine Jantzen Kooistra's groundbreaking *Christina Rossetti and Illustration* (2002), purely bibliographical study of Christina Rossetti's work has scarcely advanced beyond the enumerative list compiled by J. P. Anderson and included within Mackenzie Bell's 1898 biography, *Christina Rossetti: A Biographical and Critical Study*. The few bibliographical sources currently available to Rossetti scholars—including the bibliography in Lona Mosk Packer's *Christina Rossetti* (1963), William Fredeman's landmark *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study* (1965), *A Bookman's Catalogue: The Norman Colbeck Collection* (1987), and *Christina Rossetti in the Maser Collection* (1991)—are neither comprehensive in their listing of Rossetti's works nor fully descriptive, and do not provide an adequate foundation for scholarship. It is high time for a scholarly bibliography of the Pre-Raphaelites' Jael.

The contribution of a descriptive bibliography is different in kind from other forms of scholarship, which—if they treat printing and publishing history at all—either treat a small group of

1. Edmund Gosse, *The Life of Algernon Charles Swinburne* (London: Macmillan, 1917), 136-137.

works in detail, or provide an overarching narrative that sacrifices detail in order to provide an interpretive overview. Still, all scholarship that takes up printing and publishing history, including descriptive bibliography, shares a common goal: to document, and (in varying degrees) to interpret, the transformation of one—or many—clusters of words and images, by various people and through various technical, institutional, and social processes, into published artifacts. What is distinctive about bibliographical scholarship is its tendency to take up the stories of books and other printed artifacts from a different angle that is at once more widely and more narrowly focused than that of other modes of scholarship. The wide angle of this descriptive bibliography thus takes into account not only Christina Rossetti's books, but the publication of her works in anthologies, in periodicals, in hymnals and in musical settings, and even on postcards, enameled boxes, and tea canisters. Item by item, detail by detail, this book's primary goal is to document, as fully as it can, the shape and range of Christina Rossetti's impact upon Victorian print culture, so as to offer a comprehensive (if not definitive) record of the primary sources that are crucial to scholarship on the production, reception and circulation of Rossetti's work.

One of the joys of bibliographical research is discovery, pure and simple. No one completes a work such as this one without uncovering more publications than one expected or imagined; for Victorian writers especially, advances in printing technology and the expansion of publishing genres and reading audiences make the discovery of new publications, sometimes in unlikely or unusual places, a virtual certainty; and the larger field of printed materials that ultimately emerges from bibliographical research can also change what we think we know about publications we discovered years before. The bibliography appended to Mackenzie Bell's biography of Rossetti included some 74 periodical publications and twelve appearances in anthologies (excluding hymnals and translations); in this bibliography, each of those categories includes over 100 entries, as well as eleven hymnals published within Rossetti's lifetime and nearly 200 musical settings published before 1900. The examination of multiple copies of Rossetti's works has also yielded new insight into the extent of her revisions and corrections to her published works. I discuss some of those discoveries in the first part of this introduction; still others are presented in my notes to various entries.

Readers unfamiliar with descriptive bibliography will find it helpful to consult the second part of this introduction, in which the format and content of entries are explained in some detail.

## 1. Overview

### Section A: Separate Works

As is fitting for a writer known primarily as a poet, Christina Rossetti's career both began and ended with books titled *Verses*. The first *Verses*, privately printed in 1847 by her grandfather Gaetano Polidori when Christina was sixteen, would become a prize for collectors even during her lifetime<sup>2</sup>; the second, an 1893 collection of poems culled from her devotional writings published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, remained in print for over 30 years, with a "new edition" published in 1925. While the latter *Verses* confirmed Rossetti's emergence as one of the century's leading writers of religious poetry, 1893 also marked a different milestone in Rossetti's career with the first separate publication of her most celebrated poem, *Goblin Market*, illustrated by Laurence Housman. Here too, the close of Rossetti's career hearkened back to its beginning: her first published volumes, *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (1862) and *The Prince's*

2. In 1882, a copy was advertised in a bookseller's catalogue for 5 guineas (*The Letters of Christina Rossetti* 3: 16; henceforth *Letters*).

*Progress and Other Poems* (1866), for which Dante Rossetti provided both illustrations and binding designs, brought critical acclaim and served as the basis for collected volumes in Britain and America. After *The Prince's Progress*, Rossetti would not produce another new book of poems until 1881, with *A Pageant and Other Poems*; in the meantime, however, she published fiction (*Commonplace and Other Stories*, 1870; *Speaking Likenesses*, 1874) and three of her seven volumes of devotional poetry and prose (*Annus Domini*, 1874; *Seek and Find*, 1879; and *Called to Be Saints*, 1881). The last two decades of Rossetti's life saw the publication of three more devotional volumes (*Letter and Spirit*, 1883; *Time Flies*, 1885; and *The Face of the Deep*, 1892) and the 1893 *Verses*. In England, Rossetti's publishers included Macmillan, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, F. S. Ellis, and Routledge; in the United States, her publisher was Roberts Brothers. Posthumous editions of her work were published by Thomas Mosher, Eragyn Press, and others.

This section of the bibliography attempts to provide a comprehensive list of separate works wholly or primarily by Christina Rossetti through 1900, and selected separate publications after that date. Nearly 40 editions and subeditions are described, including William Michael Rossetti's important editions of Christina Rossetti's writings: the *Poetical Works* and his selection of Christina's *Poems* for Macmillan's Golden Treasury series (both published in 1904), as well as his edition of Christina's *Family Letters* (1908). Later collections of Christina Rossetti's poems by other editors are not included, with the notable exception of Rebecca Crump's exemplary variorum edition of the poems. Also excluded are a great many publications of Rossetti's works in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (and beyond) that deserve more attention than could be given within this volume, the most obvious being the further history of "Goblin Market." However, most works first published before 1900 that remained in print in the early twentieth century, such as the Little, Brown reprintings of the Roberts Brothers editions of Rossetti's poetry, and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge's reprintings of several of Christina Rossetti's devotional works, are noted.

Rossetti's 1847 *Verses* provides a particularly compelling example of the Rossetti family's collaborative writing and publishing process, and of the value of examining multiple copies of Christina Rossetti's books. In 1981, Mark Samuels Lasner discovered several copies of *Verses* which contained hand corrections and annotations.<sup>3</sup> Half of the twenty copies of *Verses* I examined for this bibliography (and five additional copies identified via surveys of libraries with copies of the book) turned out to have at least one hand correction; many had more than one. Even within the same copy, the corrections often appear in several different hands, sometimes in pen and sometimes in pencil, which suggests that the books were marked by different people, at different times. Clearly "the dear G. P. booklet," as Christina fondly termed it (*Letters* 4: 224) held a special place within the Rossetti family. It represented Christina's first collection in print; it also represented the combined talents and collaborative efforts of the entire family: grandfather Polidori's press work, Christina's text and (in one copy, now lost)<sup>4</sup> illustrations, and various critical and aesthetic responses of other family members, including Dante, who also illustrated a copy of the book (now held at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin) with pencil designs, including a frontispiece portrait of Christina.

3. See his comments in "Christina Rossetti's 'Common Looking Booklet': A New Letter About Her *Verses* of 1847," *Notes and Queries* (October 1981): 420-421. Another corrected copy was recently described by William Baker ("Christina Rossetti" An Unpublished Letter and an Unrecorded Copy of *Verses*," *Notes and Queries* (June 2010): 221-223).
4. William Michael Rossetti describes Christina's illustrations in his notes to the *Verses* poems included in his edition of Christina's *Poetical Works* (1904).

This bibliography also provides some new insight into the nature and scope of Rossetti's corrections and revisions to her published works. In 1962, Lona Mosk Packer drew attention to hand corrections made by Macmillan on page 71 in some copies of *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* (1866), but Macmillan's hand-corrections are actually more extensive than Packer realized.<sup>5</sup> The Boston Public Library holds a presentation copy of the book from Christina Rossetti to Philip Bourke Marston; this book, probably an author's proof, contains manuscript corrections, presumably by Christina Rossetti, on pages 37, 55, 71 and 89.<sup>6</sup> In examining published copies of the book, I found not only the hand corrections noted by Packer, but also the additional corrections present in the Boston Public Library copy. Another significant instance of revision in a Macmillan book occurred after Christina's death, in William Michael Rossetti's *Poetical Works*, an important collection of nearly all of Christina's published poetry. Scholars still consult the 1904 first printing of *Poetical Works*, unaware that the 1906 printing includes a variety of corrections requested by William, primarily (but not exclusively) in his editorial comments.

Rossetti's devotional works provide further examples of previously unnoticed authorial corrections and revisions, including some corrections that never appeared in printed texts. In one of Princeton's copies of Rossetti's first devotional volume, *Annus Domini* (1874), Rossetti has written several corrections, including a stanza added to the poem "Alas my lord"; none of the corrections appear in the British printing, and only one appears in Roberts Brothers' American printing.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, this was the usual course of events with Rossetti's later devotional books, all published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). The various notations present in copies owned or presented by Rossetti show that she often discovered errors or had ideas for revisions after a volume had gone to press, but comparison with the later printings shows that she rarely succeeded in incorporating the changes into the printed text.

Rossetti's corrections for *Letter and Spirit* (1883), found in a copy of the book now owned by the Delaware Art Museum,<sup>8</sup> may not have been incorporated simply because later printings were not called for; Rossetti had slightly better luck with two later volumes, *Time Flies* (1885) and *The Face of the Deep* (1892), both of which were frequently reprinted. Rossetti's annotations to *Time Flies*, a devotional calendar within which her family relationships and personal associations figure prominently, reveal how deeply she cared about this book, testimony both to her devout religious faith, and to the treasured network of family and friends within which that faith was expressed and nurtured. Several extant corrected and annotated copies of the book bear witness to the personal relevance of the entries. Copies with annotations and hand corrections by Christina Rossetti are held at the British Library, the Delaware Art Museum, and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin; another copy, with annotations by William Michael Rossetti, is owned by Mark Samuels Lasner.<sup>9</sup> In the Delaware and Texas copies, Rossetti's notes identify many of the people and events referred to in the book. The personal significance of the copies is evident in the inscriptions and mementos within them: the Delaware copy, which Christina had given to her mother Frances Rossetti in 1885, also includes a small paper pocket in which Rossetti placed two trefoils given to her by her friend Lisa Wilson. The Texas copy,

5. See Packer, "Christina Rossetti's 'Songs in a Cornfield': A Misprint Uncorrected," *Notes and Queries* n.s. 9 (March 1962): 97-100.

6. I wish to thank Stuart T. Walker of the Boston Public Library for alerting me to this copy.

7. Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Princeton University Library, 5866.786, Ex copy 1.

8. Delaware Art Museum, Helen Farr Sloan Library and Archives, Bancroft PR5237 .L5.

9. British Library, shelfmark 12357.bb.36; Delaware Art Museum, Helen Farr Sloan Library and Archives, Bancroft PR5237 .T4; Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, BV 4832 R74 1885. I would like to thank Mark Samuels Lasner for allowing me access to this and other materials in his collection.