

MARIA ROSETTI: NEW GENEALOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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Recent archival and genealogical searches¹ at the Priaulx Library in Guernsey (the Channel Islands), where Maria Rosetti was born as Marie Grant in the parish of St. Peter Port on 14 September 1819, allow a revision of previously known data. Her parents were the Scottish-born Lieutenant Edward Effingham Grant and Marie Le Lacheur,² a local woman from an old Guernsey family of Huguenot descent whom he had married in 1817 in the Town Church, the same church in which Marie and her four younger siblings were to be baptized. The young Marie Grant had four siblings: Effingham (b. 1820), Sophia (b. 1821), Ann Mayer (b. 1822), and Eliza Marian (b. 1824), all named after their father's relatives. According to the 1841 census, Eliza Marian, then seventeen, was still living in Guernsey in the home of a French merchant called Josué Massoneau and his wife, Margueritte. She married William Sarchet in Guernsey in 1855.

Marie Grant's mother, Marie Le Lacheur, was the youngest of eleven children. Her mother, Ester Vaudin, was from a Huguenot family, long established in Guernsey and Sark, and her father came from the old Guernsey family of Le Lacheur of the Forest.

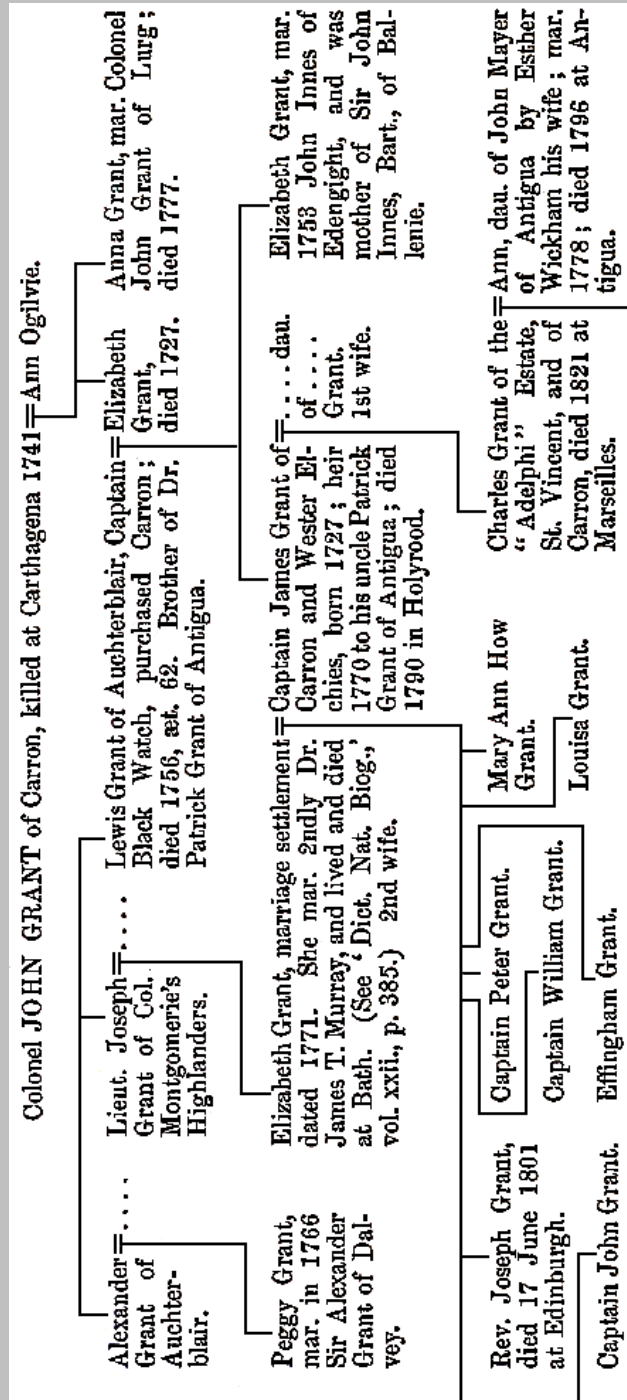
A Scotsman whose family originally came from Edinburgh, Maria Rosetti's father was born in England at Markyate in Hertfordshire on 25 July 1795. Although he was of Scottish descent and born in England, his family had become planters in Antigua and St. Vincent (in the West Indies) and were involved in the sugar trade. Possibly as a result of the decline of the sugar trade and the consequent deterioration in the family fortunes, the young Edward Effingham joined the 8th West India Regiment of Foot as a Lieutenant at the age of seventeen, presumably on purchased commission. The regiment, created in the eighteenth century to patrol the troubled waters of the Caribbean, was stationed in Trinidad, not far from the Grant family residence. As Dinah Bott from the Priaulx Library writes, 'the officers tended to be Scots or Irish, the foot soldiers black, and the conditions in which they served less than ideal, yellow fever killing a great many.' Edward Effingham Grant later joined the Royal African Corps, where he served from 1819 to 1832. The Royal African Corps was originally made up of criminals and discharged soldiers, but by 1819 had been reformed and

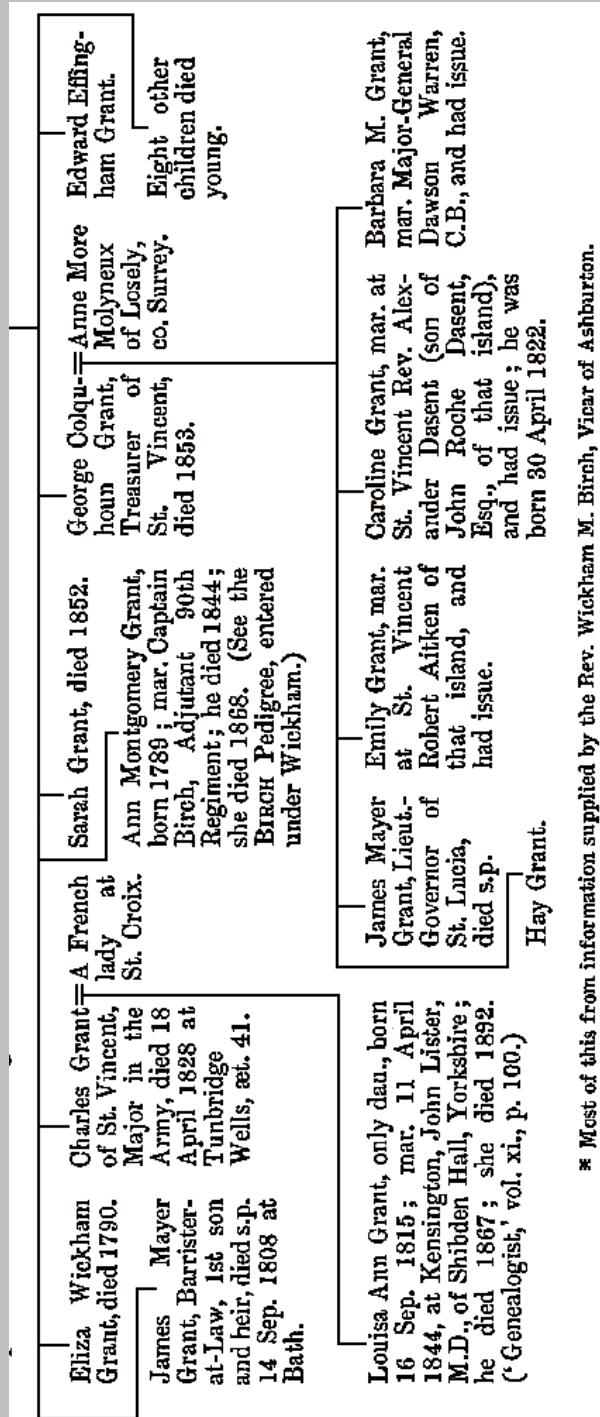
¹ I am grateful to Jean Vidamour from the Priaulx Library (Guernsey), who originally found the birth records of the Le Lacheurs and the Grants on the island, and to Dinah Bott for the new information she uncovered, and which I am presenting here. Cf. the entry on Maria Rosetti, *Maria Rosetti. From St. Peter Port to the revolution*, on the website of the Priaulx Library at <http://www.priaulxlibrary.co.uk/priaulx-library-services-case-study.asp>. This new material is incorporated in my study *A Circle of Friends – Political Exile and the Creation of Modern Romania, 1848-1859* (awaiting publication).

² Rather than 'Levasseur' as previously known in the historiography. Paul Cernovodeanu, *Insertii britanice în societatea românească*, in "Arhiva Genealogică," n.s., I (VII), 1995, 3-4; Mihai Sorin Rădulescu, *Elita liberală românească, 1866-1900*, București, 1998, pp. 97-98.

APPENDIX³

PEDIGREE OF THE FAMILY OF GRANT OF CARRON, NORTH BRITAIN, AND OF THE ISLANDS OF ANTIGUA AND ST. VINCENT IN THE WEST INDIES*





* Most of this from information supplied by the Rev. Wickham M. Birch, Vicar of Ashburton.

³ Vere Langford Oliver, *The History of the Island of Antigua*, vol. III, London, 1899, p. 426.

regularised, seeing action in Sierra Leone and undertaking journeys of exploration into the African interior.

As is well known, Marie Grant married C. A. Rosetti in Plymouth on 31 August 1847. The recent genealogical finds confirm older assumptions that Marie's father, Edward Effingham Grant, was related to the Grants of Carron, a Scottish clan from Grantown on Spey, whose coat of arms was later incorporated into the Rosetti family's heraldic insignia. The family tree of the Grants of Carron, included in the Appendix, mentions Edward and his siblings, and reveals in part how this branch of the clan came to reside in the West Indies, having previously lived at Holyrood House in Edinburgh. Here is some of the convoluted family history that Dinah Bott discovered: 'The family ancestry is far from straightforward, but both Charles Grant of the Adelphi Estate in St. Vincent, Edward's father, and his grandfather, Captain James Grant of Holyrood, left their estates deeply in debt and their children penniless. This large family, many of whom married cousins and other more distant relations, included several distinguished members, but those who were down on their luck seem to have turned to Antigua and the several estates of Dr. Patrick Grant, a surgeon who willed his leases to his nephews, one of whom was Edward's grandfather. Curiously, although Edward married Marie Le Lacheur in Guernsey in 1817, a Charles Grant of Antigua married Elizabeth Guilbert, daughter of John, in St. Peter Port in 1799; they had a son, John Charles, whose godmother was another Marie Le Lacheur; and it may be that Edward, who had many Grant cousins, came to Guernsey to visit him. Edward's mother died in 1796 in Antigua and his father, Charles Grant, returned to England; he appears to have remarried, but whether he is the Charles who married in Guernsey is as yet unknown. He eventually died in Marseilles in 1821.'⁴

It is generally accepted in Romanian accounts of the Rosettis that Constantin met Marie Grant around 1844 in the household of the Odobescu family in Bucharest, where she worked as a governess. This employment was probably secured for her by her brother Effingham,⁵ who was, throughout the 1840s, secretary to Robert G. Colquhoun, the British Consul General in the Wallachian capital city. The new finds show that the Grants and the Colquhouns were related through Sir James Grant (b. 1679), who had married an heiress, Anne Colquhoun, on condition he took her name. One of Marie's uncles was a George Colquhoun Grant who became Treasurer of St. Vincent in Antigua. This family and diplomatic link might explain the circumstances in which Marie's brother, Effingham Grant, was appointed to his post in Bucharest in 1838. The British Consul held him in high regard and never lost an opportunity to recommend him to the Foreign Office. On one such occasion, he described him as a reliable young man 'who joins to a thorough knowledge of Office Routine, a perfect knowledge of French, Italian, German and Wallachian Languages.'⁶ Effingham Grant, it is well known, married Zoe Racoviță, Dinicu Golescu's grand-daughter, in 1850, and became one of Romania's prominent entrepreneurs.

⁴ For more details, see the entry on Maria Rosetti on the website of the Priaulx Library.

⁵ Effingham Grant was born in Guernsey on 10 December 1820 and joined the British Consulate in Bucharest in 1838.

⁶ Direcția Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale – București, PRO/FO 78/697, Private letter to John Bidwell, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Bucharest, 18 May 1847.