## Contents

Acknowledgments  ix  
List of Abbreviations  xi  

**Chapter 1**  Introduction: Antecedents of the Victorian “Goddess Story”  1  

**Chapter 2**  “Gods of the old mythology arise”: Charlotte Brontë’s Vision of the “Goddess Story”  24  

**Chapter 3**  Feminist Reincarnations of the Madonna: Anna Jameson and Ecclesiastical Debates on the Immaculate Conception  49  

**Chapter 4**  Invoking “all the godheads”: Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s Polytheistic Aesthetic  73  

**Chapter 5**  Eve, the Female Messiah, and the Virgin in Florence Nightingale’s Personal and Public Papers  98  

**Chapter 6**  Ariadne and the Madonna: The Hermeneutics of the Goddess in George Eliot’s *Romola*  121  

**Afterword**  143  

Notes  145  
Bibliography  155  
Index  171