

THE CHRIST COLLOQUY Andrew Grattan

Book V *Mary*

In *The Christ Colloquy*, I have placed April Child above Dante's Beatrice Portinari. April, also a new form of Shakespeare's 'dark lady' of the sonnets, is now the most important woman in World Literature, Beatrice being reassigned to secondary status. I am also introducing the new figure of Ruth, assigned to tertiary status, in the triad. Ruth, a Marian microcosm to April's Marian macrocosm, serves as a bridge to creation, honouring all professional women, who, in the phrase of St. Augustine, are "in the world, but not of the world". In Book V *Mary*, Our Lady elevates Ruth to Marian handmaiden, (the last and the least handmaiden) due to her fidelity to monasticism, and acceptance of the lay state on account of her mathematical intellectual gifts, bestowed solely for practical application in the world. Ruth thus links Our Lady with all professional laywomen. Ruth also unites the wooden church pew with the wooden library shelf of April, and the wooden choirwood shelf of Andrew, completing discourse on the wooden Cross in the new "sixth gospel". Andrew, as a new disciple, and Ruth, as a new handmaiden, interact as anti-types to Samson and Delilah and the medieval couple Heloise and Abelard. In the gospel of Matthew, Ruth is one of five women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus, along with Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba and Mary. She is highly important, journeying to Bethlehem, birthplace of Jesus, with her mother-in-law, Naomi.

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'As Jesus said to me: 'Woman this is your son, and to John,
Disciple, this is your mother, I call you Ruth, new genealogical
Handmaiden of mine, consanguine daughter of Bethlehem,

Sister to unIsrealite Ruth, of a Naomi mother-in-law, but
A new exodus of Moab, from a brook, though created least,
And place you join, the marvellous posy of April and Beatrice,

Chrysanthemum, rose and bluebell, no hushed secret of Fatima,
But barley beautiful with Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba; and I, thrust
You to open converse with the world, for embracing oblate lay state

In unswerving fidelity and service, to Cummings apron monasticism,
Prodigiously intellectual, not discalced, as that shoe was taken off, so
Not Boaz betrothed, to glean in fields, but formworked, to engineer

Construction; no mother to Jesse to provision a David, king of the
Psalms, ancestor of Jesus, but stunning psalms yourself, and a full sweet
Psalter spreading, when away from this place of Gethsemane, to decorate

Surrey hills, in your professed profession, dialoguing with all accomplished women in the world'.