

# *The Philosophy of Woman of St. Thomas Aquinas*

KRISTIN M. POPIK

*In this second part of a two-part condensation of her dissertation on St. Thomas' philosophy of woman, Kristin Popik takes up the question of the woman's position in marriage, the family, and society as a whole. For a complete philosophical background to St. Thomas's conclusions here, the reader is referred to F&R IV, 4, in which Dr. Popik treats the Thomist-Aristotelian biological theory of female inferiority in reason and moral virtue. Perhaps the Scriptural assertion of male leadership reflects rather the reality of man's more active or aggressive nature as opposed to the greater passivity or gentleness of the woman, a psychological distinction which might be interpreted as reflective of ultimate biological sexual differences. Such an interpretation would preserve the notion of the male's obligation to create external conditions suitable to family life and the woman's duty to order and harmonize the family's domestic affairs within the conditions delineated by the male. Here the roles would arise from differences rather than fundamental inequality. In any case, a study of Aquinas' thought on this and other aspects of the problem serves to clarify the issues and remind us of certain basic principles which are generally obscured in the current feminist debates. As always, subscribers who do not read Latin may be assured that the substance of the offset quotes appears in the surrounding English text. This method of quotation, and other typographical features peculiar to this issue, are explained by the two-part series' projected distribution under separate cover to a European audience.*

## **Part Two: The Role of Woman**

An understanding of St. Thomas' theory of the subjection of woman to man requires not only a knowledge of his teachings about the nature of woman, but also a familiarity with his political philosophy. The woman's subjection to the man is natural for St. Thomas not only because of her inferiority but also because the nature of any society, including the family, demands that it have a ruler to whom all other members are subject. In addition, Aquinas' political theory of the society, the state, and civil rule is necessary to understand the nature of woman's subjection, its limits, and its distinction from other types of subjection, for example those of the slave and the child. St. Thomas follows Aristotle in distinguishing societies into three types on the basis of the needs supplied by each.<sup>1</sup> The domestic or economic society of the household supplies daily needs and exists for the sake of sharing daily acts such as eating and warming oneself at the fire: "Nihil aliud est domus quam quaedam communitas secundum naturam constituta in omnem diem, idest ad actus, qui occurrunt quotidie agendi."<sup>2</sup> The neighborhood or village, made up of many households, exists for the sake of performing non-daily acts together, such as buying things; and the city or state, formed of many villages, provides all the things sufficient for life and for living well; it is the properly political society, it aims at the highest good and is ordered to the virtuous and political life of its members.<sup>3</sup> Since by themselves men cannot supply all the things which they need for life, it is natural for men to live together in these three types of societies in order to do together the acts necessary for life and in order to live well.<sup>4</sup>

Because every society is directed to a common good, it is necessary for every society that it have a ruler, someone who directs the acts of the individual members to the common good. By himself, each member considers and works towards his own good; so if the members are to work for the common good (which is necessary even to have a society), there must be a director who thinks of the common good and directs the members towards it:

Socialis autem vita multorum esse non posset, nisi aliquis praesideret, qui ad bonum commune intenderet: multi enim per se intendunt ad multa, unus vero ad unum. Et ideo Philosophus dicit, in principio **Politic.**, quod quaecumque multa ordinatur ad unum, semper invenitur unum ut principale et dirigens.<sup>5</sup>

The naturalness of rulers in every society is argued by St. Thomas also from the fact that some men are naturally fitted for rule: ". . . si unus homo habuisset super alium supereminentiam scientiae et iustitiae, inconveniens fuisset nisi hoc exequeretur in utilitatem aliorum. . . ."<sup>6</sup> Since a ruler is required by the very nature of society, Aquinas says that there were rulers and subjects even before the fall in the original state of innocence. Domination and subjection are not the result of sin, but are natural to man as a social being. Man by nature lives in social groups and social groups require rulers; rulership and subjection then are part of human nature and intended as part of the human condition and necessary to it.<sup>7</sup>

But this natural type of political rulership of a society must be distinguished from the mastership of a lord over his slave, which is not part of human nature and which does result from sin. The free man who belongs to a society and thus is subject to a ruler still has disposal of himself — he exists because of and for himself, he is free. A slave on the other hand is ordered to the benefit of another, his master. All of his actions are done not for himself but for his master. The ruler of free men in a society directs them to their own good or to the common good of the society; the master of a slave rules the slave for his own (the master's) good. The subjection of slaves, and the lordly dominion over others for one's own good, are the result of sin and are hence not natural to man in that respect. The dominion of a ruler of a society and the civil subjection of free men in a society to his rule is for the common good of the whole, and hence is part of the nature of man.

Dominium accipitur dupliciter. Uno modo, secundum quod opponitur servituti: et sic dominus dicitur cui aliquis subditur ut servus. Alio modo accipitur dominium, secundum quod communiter refertur ad subiectum qualitercumque: et sic etiam ille qui habet officium gubernandi et dirigendi liberos, dominus dici potest.

Primo ergo modo accepto dominio, in statu innocentiae homo homini non dominaretur: sed secundo modo accepto dominio, in statu innocentiae homo homini dominari potuisset.

Cuius ratio est, quia servus in hoc differt a libero, quod **liber est causa sui**, ut dicitur in principio **Metaphys.**, servus autem ordinatur ad alium. Tunc ergo aliquis dominatur alicui ut servo, quando eum cui dominatur ad propriam utilitatem sui, scilicet dominantis, refert. Et quia unicuique est appetibile proprium bonum, et per consequens contristabile est unicuique quod illud bonum quod deberet esse suum, cedat alteri tantum; ideo tale dominium non potest esse sine poena subiectorum. Propter quod, in statu innocentiae non fuisset tale dominium hominis ad homine.

Tunc vero dominatur aliquis alteri ut libero, quando dirigit ipsum ad proprium bonum eius qui dirigitur, vel ad bonum commune. Et tale dominium hominis, ad hominem in statu innocentiae fuisset . . .<sup>8</sup>

The rule which a master has over his slave, for the good of the master himself, is called despotic rule, while the rule of free subjects for their own good or for the common good is called political rule. The subjection which a slave has to his master, according to which he is subject for the master's own good, is called servile; the subjection of a free man to political rule is called economic or civil subjection: "economic" refers to the subjection of free members of a household society to the head of the family, and "civil" to that of free citizens to the political rule of the head of the state or city. In St. Thomas' own words:

Duplex est subiectio. Una servilis, secundum quam praesidens utitur subiecto ad sui ipsius utilitatem: et talis subiectio introducta est post peccatum. Est autem alia subiectio oeconomica vel civilis. secundum quam praesidens utitur subiectis ad eorum utilitatem et bonum. Et ista subiectio fuisset etiam ante peccatum: defuisset enim bonum ordinis in humana multitudo, si quidam per alios sapientiores gubernati non fuissent.<sup>9</sup>

If all societies naturally and necessarily have a ruler who directs the members and their actions to the common good of that society, so too for St. Thomas the familial or domestic society must have a ruler, since he regards it as a true society. It exists not only for the performance together of those daily activities directed to preservation of individual life, but also for the generation and upbringing of offspring which preserves the life of the species.<sup>10</sup> The two relationships of master-slave and of husband-wife exist within the household society for these two types of activities:

Comunio domesticarum personarum ad invicem, ut Philosophus dicit, in **I Polit.**, est secundum quotidianos actus qui ordinatur ad necessitatem vitae. Vita autem hominis conservatur dupliciter. Uno modo, quantum ad individuum, prout scilicet homo idem numero vivit: et ad talem vitae conservationem opitulatur homini exteriora bona, ex quibus homo habet victum et vestitum et alia huiusmodi necessaria vitae; in quibus administranda indiget homo servis. Alio modo conservatur vita hominis secundum speciem per generationem, ad quam indiget homo uxore, ut ex ea generet filium.<sup>11</sup>

For St. Thomas man is by nature a social animal: since by himself he cannot supply all of the necessities of life, it is natural for him to live in societies.<sup>12</sup> But to live together in domestic society is even more natural to man than to live in civil society: man is a "conjugal" animal by nature even more than he is a political animal. Domestic society is antecedent to political society; it is more necessary than the civil society because it is ordered to acts which are more basic to life, and because the generation of offspring to which it is ordered is common to all animals.<sup>13</sup>

### MAN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE FAMILY

As a real society then the family must have a ruler to direct the actions of all of its members to the good of the whole. Since men, according to St. Thomas, excel beyond women in the wisdom, virtue, reason, strength, and nobility which make them naturally fitted for command, the man is the natural superior of the woman and the ruler of the domestic society. The good order of the family demands that it be governed by the member most perfected in wisdom and virtue, who is the man; also since men are thus more perfected, it is fitting that they use their abilities for the direction of those less wise and virtuous.

Defuisset enim bonum ordinis in humana multitudine, si quidam per alios sapientiores gubernati non fuissent. Et sic ex tali subiectione naturaliter femina subiecta est viro: quia naturaliter in homine magis abundat discretio rationis.<sup>14</sup>

Aquinas compares the relationship between man and woman to that between male and female in other animal species, showing that among humans the relationship is a true society. They are united not only for generation, but also for the purpose of a common domestic life, in order to form what is a true society. They not only generate together, but also each has his particular duties in the household which contribute to their living together; their union is not only to generate offspring, but also to cooperate in these other tasks which form the basis of their union *as a society*.<sup>15</sup> It is in these household tasks, the activities which make their union a real society, that the man must direct the woman: it is in the performance of her portion of the duties which found the society that the woman needs direction by the man so that her acts will tend to the good of the society as a whole. Thus it was fitting, Thomas says, that the first woman was made from the first man as from her principle, to show that he is the head of the woman, even though in other animal species (who do not form a society) the female was not made from the man:

... mas et femina coniunguntur in hominibus non solum propter necessitatem generationis, ut in aliis animalibus; set etiam propter domesticam vitam, in qua sunt alia opera viri et feminae, et in qua vir est caput mulieris. Unde convenienter ex viro formata est femina, sicut ex suo principio.<sup>16</sup>

The first woman was made from the rib of the first man to signify this subjection, and not from his head, since she should have no authority over him.<sup>17</sup>

The *Supplement* to the *Summa Theologiae* argues from the distinction of these household tasks into appropriately male and appropriately female duties to the naturalness of the man-woman society. It is most fitting then for men and women to unite in the familial society in which they each perform for the other the tasks becoming to each by reason of his sex, and in which tasks the woman is directed by the man as ruler of the household.<sup>18</sup>

Once given the necessity of a ruler for the domestic society, St. Thomas never doubts that it must be the man instead of the woman who commands. The man is prior according to nature and more perfect, and thus more fitted to command the inferior and imperfect.<sup>19</sup> He is the head of the woman because lower reason, to which the woman compares, must always be ruled by higher reason, in which the man excels and to which he is compared.<sup>20</sup> The woman is subject because of her deficiency of reason, and because she is related to the man as to her principle and her end, since Eve was made from and for the sake of Adam. In commenting on St. Paul's injunction to Timothy that women must be subject and silent, Aquinas gives as one of the reasons the fact that Eve was originally seduced and was instrumental in the downfall of Adam.<sup>21</sup> It is probable that he takes this sequence of events as indicative of woman's moral inferiority and susceptibility to deception and temptation, from which he concludes that she must be subject to the direction of the morally stronger man for her own good.

But it is also possible that he is arguing that the woman's subjection is her punishment for being deceived and for leading the man to sin. In fact, Thomas admits, the subjection of woman to man is given in Genesis as the woman's particular punishment for her role in the original sin. But how can woman's subjection be a punishment for and a result of sin if it is natural subjection which existed before sin because of the nature of society and the inferiority of women? "Subiectio mulieris ad virum consequitur perfectionem virilis sexus et imperfectionem muliebris."<sup>22</sup> Woman was always subject to the man, even before sin (when that subjection would not have been burdensome); as a punishment for her sin, however, woman now has to obey her husband even against her own will.<sup>23</sup>

The subjection of woman to the rule of her husband is not only a right which he enjoys; it also benefits the woman, who as weak and deficient in reason has need of the man for governance. Thomas argues in defense of the permanence of marriage that it would be an injustice against the woman if the man were to leave her without his

direction when he is tired of her.<sup>24</sup> In effect he is defending the woman's right to be subject to, and to benefit from, the man's governance, and by so doing he clearly illustrates that the subjection of woman to man is natural not only because it is required by the nature of every society, but also because it is required by the nature of woman herself, by her inferiority to the man who is naturally fitted to provide her with the guidance and direction she needs.

Besides distinguishing the woman's subjection from that of the slave by his analogy between the husband-wife relationship and that of the ruler and free citizen (which is the opposite of the slave-master relationship) and by his further arguing the necessity of the husband's rule over his wife on the basis of the requirement that every society have a director to guide the actions of all members to the common good (which shows that his rule is political, not despotic), Aquinas also explicitly states that the woman's subjection is not servile but rather economic, akin to civil subjection.<sup>25</sup> The rule of the husband over the wife is distinguished not only from that of a master over his slave, but also from the rule of the father over the child, because the father has full power over his children, unlike the husband whose rule over the wife is limited by the laws and nature of marriage, and by her being a free person:

*Vir enim principatur mulieri, et pater filiis, non quidem sicut servis, sed sicut liberis: in quo differunt hi duo principatus a principatu despotico. Secundum est quod hi duo principatus non sunt uniusmodi; sed vir principatur mulieri politico principatu, idest sicut aliquis quis qui eligitur in rectorem civitati praeest: sed pater praeest filiis regali principatu; et hoc ideo, quia pater habet plenariam potestatem super filios, sicut et rex in regno: sed vir non habet plenariam potestatem super uxorem quantum ad omnia, sed secundum quod exigit lex matrimonii; sicut et rector civitatis habet potestatem super cives secundum statuta.<sup>26</sup>*

While the rule of the parent over the child is a type of monarchy, and that of the master over the slave is a tyranny, the rule of the domestic society corresponds to aristocracy, since both husband and wife share in the administration of the household, each according to his dignity and worth. When either one or the other of them takes full charge and leaves the other in charge of nothing, he is ruling out of accord with his dignity; his authority does not arise from his excellence but rather from wealth or power, which is oligarchy, the perversion of aristocracy.

*Principatus quo vir et uxor dominantur in domo, est aristocraticus; quia vir habet dominium et curam circa ea quae pertinent ad virum secundum suam dignitatem, et dimittit uxori illa quae pertinent ad eam. . . . Ponit duos modos respondententes oligarchiae. Quorum unus est, quando vir vult omnia disponere et nullius rei dominium relinquit uxori. Hoc enim non secundum dignitatem nec secundum quod melius est. . . . Vir enim, quia melior est, praeficitur uxori: tamen vir non praecipit ea quae sunt uxoris.<sup>27</sup>*

In commenting on St. Paul's passage to the Ephesians "Let women be subject to their husbands as to a lord,"<sup>28</sup> Thomas explains that the husband is similar to a lord only in that they both rule. In fact their types of rule differ since the husband does not employ his wife in whatever is profitable to himself. Aquinas sees in the fact that St. Paul says "as to a lord" a clear indication that the husband is not in fact a lord over his wife, and thus interprets Paul's passage according to his own theory.<sup>29</sup>

While the first woman was formed from the rib of Adam, and not from his head, as a sign of her subjection, Aquinas also notes that she was not formed from his foot which would have signified that she was his slave.<sup>30</sup> It is true that when he describes the needs which slaves and women supply to the man, Thomas appears to be equating their roles, since they are both needs-suppliers. For food, clothing, and the life he has the slave, and for generation he has the woman.<sup>31</sup> But he is distinguishing, not equating, the positions of slave and woman. The slave fulfills needs which pertain to the individual good of the man, and the woman is needed for generation, which is not ordered to his good but to the good of the species; it is precisely this difference which contrasts the woman's subjection to that of the slave. The woman does not merely supply the man with some personal needs of his as a slave does; he needs her in order to generate offspring, which is for her good as much as for his.

Nor does Aquinas consider the wife to be the possession of the husband, as a slave is. In discussing the nature of theft, he gives as a requirement that the thing taken be a real possession, not either a part of the body or a related person. The taking of another's wife then is not theft because she is not possessed.<sup>32</sup> He explains that the verb "to have" properly refers to real possessions over which we are absolute masters, although it has been extended in use to refer to things we do not possess, such as wives and health.<sup>33</sup>

Thomas further distinguished the slave from the woman in his treatment of justice, which in the proper or unqualified sense of political justice exists between free and equal men. But between those who are not equal, as between a subject and his superior, there is not justice in the unqualified sense, but only a similitude of justice or a peculiar type of justice.<sup>34</sup> However, justice is more properly found in the relation between husband and wife than in the relation of slave and master, because the man and wife, although ruler and subject, much more closely

approximate equality than the slave and master do. Justice or injustice cannot exist in a man with regard to himself or to those things which belong to him. Since a slave is chattel and a son is in a sense part of his father, there is no justice or injustice absolutely speaking towards a slave or a son. But a wife is different from a slave or a son. She is not part of her husband nor owned by him, and she is less subject than either a son or a slave. Thus the relationship between husband and wife more closely approaches an equality than either of the other two relationships, and hence it has more of the nature of justice:

Quia uxor minus est subiecta viro quam servus domino, vel filius patri; ideo plus habet de ratione iusti illud quod est viri ad uxorem quam illud quod est patris ad natos, idest filios, et domini ad possessiones idest servos.<sup>35</sup>

Husband and wife are equally subject to the law as free citizens, but since they are united and related not only as fellow citizens, but also in their union in their own domestic society, the justice between them is not justice simply or political justice, but economic justice.

Et ideo inter virum et uxorem plus est de ratione iusti quam inter patrem et filium, vel dominum et servum. Quia tamen vir et uxor habent immediatam relationem ad domesticam communitatem; ideo inter eos non est etiam simpliciter politicum iustum, sed magis iustum oeconomicum.<sup>36</sup>

### *EQUALITY IN MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP, DUTY*

But for St. Thomas the woman's subjection to the man is not only distinguished from servitude: it is also combined with a certain equality with the man. In their marriage relationship the woman is the man's equal, not subject to him. In fact when mentioning together this equality and woman's subjection in household affairs, Thomas makes it clear that the subjection is something that needs to be stressed while the equality is taken for granted as already known or accepted by all: "Quamvis enim mulier sit aequalis in actu matrimonii, tamen in his quae ad dispositionem domus pertinent vir caput est mulieris."<sup>37</sup> The treatise on matrimony in the *Supplement to the Summa Theologiae* explicitly presents the marriage relationship as a permanent one between two equals who contract the marriage by their free consent.<sup>38</sup> Marriage is not the acquisition of a wife by a man, and in fact it cannot be contracted against the will of the woman; that is, she must freely consent and hence can enter into matrimonial union only insofar as she is a free person and equal partner in the bond.<sup>39</sup>

Thomas' own treatments of the indissolubility of marriage and of the mutual obligations of husband and wife confirm this view of the marriage relationship as one between two equal and free persons, neither of whom solely contracts the marriage, has power over the bond, or enjoys all the rights.

In a curious argument in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Thomas concludes to the indissolubility of marriage both from woman's subjection to man and from her equality with him. First he establishes that the woman would not be able to put away her husband because she is subject to him and it is not within the power of a subject to free himself from his subjection. But if the wife cannot put away her husband neither can he put her away, since they are equal with the same things permitted and denied to each. If he were able to divorce her but not she him, she would in effect be a slave, but since in fact the wife is not a slave but equal to her husband, he cannot have a power which she does not have, and hence neither can divorce the other.

Manifeste apparet inconueniens si mulier virum dimittere posset, quum mulier naturaliter viro subiecta sit tanquam gubernatori. Non est autem in potestate eius qui alteri subicitur ut ab eius regimine discedat. Contra naturalem igitur ordinem esset si mulier virum deserere posset. Si ergo vir deserere posset mulierem, non esset aequa societas viri ad mulierem, sed servitus quaedam ex parte mulieris.<sup>40</sup>

The wife then is not subject to her husband as regards their marital relation, since he is as powerless as she is to dissolve the bond. Against polygamy and polyandry, Aquinas presents a similar argument which confirms that husbands and wives have equal rights with respect to their relationship. He first shows that a woman's having more than one husband is wrong, because it would be impossible to determine the fatherhood of offspring, and this would go against the natural desire of all parents to know their own offspring. But if a woman cannot have more than one husband, it would be contrary to their equality if the husband could have more than one wife.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the friendship of a wife for her husband who had many wives would not be free and equal but rather servile. St. Thomas states the case as follows:

Amicitia in quadam aequalitate consistit. Si igitur mulieri non licet habere plures viros, quia hoc est contra certitudinem prolis, liceret autem viro habere plures uxores, non esset liberalis amicitia uxoris ad virum, sed quasi servilis. Et haec etiam ratio experimento comprobatur, quia, apud viros habentes plures uxores, uxores quasi ancillae habentur.

Praeterea, amicitia intensa non habetur ad multos. . . . Si igitur uxor habet unum virum tantum, vir autem plures uxores, non erit aequalis amicitia ex utraque parte. Non igitur erit amicitia liberalis, sed quodammodo servilis.<sup>42</sup>

In his treatment of adultery, Thomas makes it clear that the husband and wife are equal not only as regards the relation itself, but also in the fidelity that they both owe each other and the exclusive right which each has to the body of the other. He does not define adultery, as others before him have done, as merely a sin of injustice against a husband, as the stealing of another's wife. It is a sin against chastity, and an injustice in that it breaks the faith that is due between husband *and* wife. As a sin of injustice, then, it can be committed both against the husband and against the wife, since both have equal rights to each other.<sup>43</sup> If a married man has intercourse with a woman other than his wife, even if she is not married, his sin is not merely fornication but rather adultery, and an injustice against his wife's exclusive right to him. In marriage each partner receives the exclusive right to the other's body; marriage involves the surrender of one's power over one's body to the spouse.<sup>44</sup> Adultery then consists in giving one's body, which no longer belongs to oneself but to one's spouse, to someone else. Adultery is especially opposed to matrimony, Thomas says, because it breaks the faith which is due between *both* of them; they both equally owe this fidelity to the other: "Adulterium autem specialiter matrimonio contrariatur: in quantum violat matrimonii fidem quam quis coniugi debet."<sup>45</sup>

While the wife then is subject to the husband as to a ruler in matters concerning their domestic society, with regard to their relationship as man and wife they are equal, or as the texts often put it, they are mutually and equally subject to each other. In an almost humorous text commenting on the I Corinthians passage "it is good for a man not to touch a woman,"<sup>46</sup> St. Thomas describes marriage as a type of slavery of the man to the woman, showing that he certainly thought of the two as both subject to the other in their relationship. He explains that while generation is good for man considered as the species, it is good for a man as individual to refrain from marriage for three reasons. One is the good of the soul, which is distracted from contemplation by sexual contact; another is the fact that a married man must work to provide for his wife and children. But the third reason is that by matrimony a free man becomes a slave and is under the power of the wife. "Vir subiicit per matrimonium potestati uxoris, se ex libero servum constituens. Servitus autem haec prae omnibus aliis est amara."<sup>47</sup> The bitterness of servitude then is given as an argument against marriage; but it shows that Aquinas did think of the man as subject to the woman in marriage, as she is subject to him.

St. Thomas further discusses the equality between husband and wife in his treatment of the virtue of friendship, which requires equality between the two persons loving even more than justice does between the two parties related.<sup>48</sup> Friendship consists in an equality,<sup>49</sup> and there cannot exist true friendship between greatly unequal persons, for one would be loved more than the other, making the friendship somewhat servile.<sup>50</sup> But between husband and wife there is the greatest friendship, for they are united not only in generation but also in domestic life, and for their entire lives.<sup>51</sup> Hence the husband and wife are equal, since theirs is the greatest of friendships, and friendship requires equality. Aquinas uses this equality of friendship between husband and wife as a principle from which he concludes that marriage must be permanent and monogamous, and the partners faithful.<sup>52</sup>

But for Aquinas the equality between husband and wife extends beyond their relationship in matrimony and into the area of their domestic life together. Not only are husband and wife equal partners in the forming of the marriage bond, equally powerless over that bond and its dissolution, equal in their friendship and love, in their obligations of fidelity and payment of the marriage debt; they are also equally bound to each other in the performance of the household duties which pertain to each of them. An article in the *Supplement* to the *Summa Theologiae* explains that the equality between husband and wife is one of proportion, not of quantity. Man and woman differ in perfection, and also in the contents of their mutual domestic obligations. But in both the marriage act and the management of the household, they are equally bound to each other in the things pertaining to each.

Sed quantum ad secundam aequalitatem sunt aequales in utroque: quia sicut tenetur vir uxori in acto coniugali et dispensatione domus ad id quod viri est, ita uxor viro ad id quod uxoris est. Et secundum hoc dicitur in littera quod sunt aequales in reddendo et petendo debitum.<sup>53</sup>

Wives must be subject to their husband's direction of the household and fear them "with the fear of reverence and submission."<sup>54</sup> Husbands have a corresponding duty to love their wives even as they love their own bodies, and as Christ loves the Church.<sup>55</sup> The obligation of the husband to cleave to his wife and to love her is shown in the first

woman's being made from the man: thus would he love her more and cleave to her more, knowing that she was made from him.<sup>56</sup>

The husband must direct domestic affairs, provide for the necessities of the domestic life,<sup>57</sup> and be solicitous for the care of his wife and children and for the temporalities which serve for their upkeep.<sup>58</sup> To the husband then pertains the business outside the home,<sup>59</sup> and working for the acquisition of the riches necessary for the life of his family.<sup>60</sup> The wife is responsible for the preservation of the household wealth which the man acquires,<sup>61</sup> she concerns herself with activities within the household, with its management, with sewing and other domestic occupations.<sup>62</sup> The fact that the woman is subject to her husband in household affairs does not mean that she is without authority in the home. It has already been seen that Aquinas likens the husband's and wife's rule of the family to aristocratic rule, in which each of them has responsibility over matters pertaining to them both. Although she is ultimately subject to her husband's direction, the wife is the manager of all the internal affairs of the household. In an argument against holding wives in common, Thomas says that without particular wives there could be no households, since there would be no one to run them: the men are out working in the fields. The woman does not merely work in the household as the slave does, she manages it and such management is proper to her: since no one else could do this particular, wives are necessary for the existence of households.<sup>63</sup>

In the education and upbringing of children, both husband and wife cooperate, and the need for both of them is used to argue the permanence and indissolubility of marriage in treatments of fornication, divorce, polygamy, and concubines, all of which prevent cooperation between mother and father in the education of the children.<sup>64</sup> The husband must help the wife with this upbringing, and remain with her for life in order to do so, for she is not able to perform the task alone.<sup>65</sup> His strength is needed for correction and his wisdom for instruction.<sup>66</sup> It is evident that Aquinas did not consider this education as primarily the husband's task: his abilities are also needed, and thus he must help her in this upbringing. In his prohibition of women teaching publicly, Thomas allows and even requires them to teach within the home; their responsibility in teaching their children is especially mentioned.<sup>67</sup>

It is evident then that in Aquinas' view the relationship between man and woman in the domestic society is not that of master and slave, nor is it as simple as the relationship between civil ruler and citizen. The husband's rulership and the wife's subjection is combined with a certain equality between them. In the marriage act they are equal partners, equal too in the obligations of love and fidelity to each other and in their right to the love and fidelity of the other. Although the husband has direction over the wife in household affairs, he is subject to her in his household obligations no less than she is to him. Not only are the rights and duties of one partner equal to those of the other for Aquinas; it also seems that there is a balance within each partner between his or her own rights and duties. While the woman must work within the household and be subject to her husband in her management of the household, even against her own will as a result of sin, she also enjoys the right to be provided for by her husband's outside work since this is his obligation. The husband enjoys rulership over his family, yet his rulership is balanced by his obligation of providing the necessities of life for the society he rules; his punishment for sin is the responsibility and difficulty of his toil.<sup>68</sup>

It must also be remembered that since the husband's rule of his wife is for the common good of the familial society, it is limited to those matters which affect that common good. The wife's personal life remains untouched by her husband's authority; morally and religiously she is a free person as he is. She can assent to the faith, convert, and be baptized without her husband's permission, although children subject to their parents may not be baptized without parental consent.<sup>69</sup> If a wife makes an oath in a matter which comes under her husband's authority, he may annul that oath; but only when the oath concerns a matter in which the wife is subject to him, a matter pertaining to the good of the society he directs.<sup>70</sup> Obviously then there are matters in which she does not come under his authority, and in which she is free to make her own binding agreements.

In an interesting article on the ability of subjects to give alms, St. Thomas gives valuable insight into his view of the wife's position in the home and the balance between her subjection and her independence. The principles from which he argues are twofold: no one can give that which belongs to another, and no one can act without the permission of his superior in those matters in which he is subject. Monks, then, cannot give alms except as directed by their superiors, nor children or slaves without the consent of their parents or masters. Wives can give alms from the household monies with the express or presumed consent of their husbands; this consent is necessary because he is the head in domestic matters. In addition, wives may give, without their husbands' consent, alms from their own property which they earn or acquire in other lawful means:

*Si uxor habeat alias res praeter dotem, quae ordinatur ad sustentanda onera matrimonii, vel ex proprio lucro vel quocunque alio licito modo, potest dare eleemosynas, etiam irrequisito assensu viri: moderatas tamen, ne ex earum superfluitate vir depauperetur. Alias autem non debet dare eleemosynas sine consensu viri vel expresso vel praesumpto, nisi in articulo necessitatis. . . . Quamvis enim mulier sit aequalis in actu*

matrimonii, tamen in his quae ad dispositionem donum pertinent **vir caput est mulieris**.<sup>71</sup>

Thomas' answer presumes that almsgiving is a household task, and that as such it pertains to the wife, who must then have at her disposal funds for the running of the household. Of course she cannot give alms from this money against the wishes of her husband, but the reason given by Thomas is not that the money is his, but that he is the head of the domestic society. The fact that she can give alms with only his presumed consent means that this money is not his exclusive property, but the common property of both of them. No one can give that which belongs to another, and the wife can give alms from the household funds as long as her husband does not object. Monks, slaves and children do not have property themselves, and hence they can only give the property of another, with his permission. But the wife requires only presumed permission, and that only because the man is the head of the family, not because what she is giving is his property. It seems that the household money which the wife may dispose of with only the husband's presumed consent belongs not to him but to the domestic society, to the both of them.<sup>72</sup>

The situation in which the woman may give alms without her husband's consent is revealing of an even more surprising element of Thomas' thought about the role and position of wives. She may give alms out of her own property, which means that married women can own property and dispose of it themselves. This property does not include her dowry, which although remaining the woman's possession, is intended for the support of the burdens of marriage; the use of it belongs to the husband as head of the family society.<sup>73</sup> Thomas says she may give alms out of property which she has gained by her labors or by other lawful means.<sup>74</sup> The wife then is not only able to own property, but also to work in her free time and to dispose of the money earned herself. As subject to the man in her actions connected with the household society, the wife cannot make a vow, since she may be promising something which would interfere with her household tasks in which she is subject to her husband.<sup>75</sup> As her director in domestic matters he has a right to her time. But when she is not occupied with these things, she is free to employ herself in gainful occupation and the money earned is hers to dispose of. She must not give to the poor so much, however, that she impoverishes her husband, Thomas adds, indicating that the wife's earnings like those of the husband are normally contributed to household funds.<sup>76</sup>

It is evident that the subjection of the wife to the husband is not absolute for Thomas. He has direction over her within the household and for the good of the domestic society, but in other areas and in her free time she is not subject to him. She may employ herself and earn money, she may own property and dispose of it. The wife then enjoys a certain autonomy and independence from her husband with respect to her own time and her possessions, and a certain power and authority within the home, since she has power to act and to spend their common household money on her own, although ultimately only with the approval of her husband.

The wife's subjection to her husband then is not in her personal affairs but in the matters which concern their living together as a society. Even within the household, however, his authority is not absolute. They rule the society together, cooperating in the tasks of the household for the good of the whole family and in the work of caring for and educating their children, which is their common end. In these areas the husband is the ultimate head of the woman, but she enjoys a certain autonomy and authority in the things that pertain to her, the internal affairs of the home. The family life then is not formed by the absolute domination of the husband and the servile submission of the wife; although the husband has a certain preeminence, the unity of the home results from the harmonization of the powers of both marriage partners.

#### *WOMEN OUTSIDE DOMESTIC SOCIETY*

St. Thomas' treatment of woman's place outside the domestic society is not as extensive as his description of the position of the wife: he rarely mentions single women, and does not elaborate on the role of woman in civil and ecclesiastical societies. Yet what he does say is essential for a full understanding of his philosophy of woman.

First of all, it must be noted that Thomas never states as a starting principle that all women must be subject to some man. As has already been seen, the reason for the wife's subjection to the husband is her belonging to their domestic society which must have a ruler; Aquinas does not first argue that all women must be ruled, and then conclude that the particular ruler in the case of a married woman is her husband. This would suggest that unmarried women are not subject as wives are. In fact, it is by her entry into domestic society with her new husband, through her own free consent as an equal marriage partner, that the woman becomes subject; since she cannot be married against her will, she is certainly not subject before her marriage. Likewise, Aquinas considers widows to be under the rule of no man: they are not connected with any other person, and do not even have anyone to whom to turn for relief.<sup>77</sup> And yet Thomas never mentions single women except those who are virgins and under the care and rule of

their fathers, and those who are harlots. Simple fornication is distinguished from adultery and seduction according to whether the woman is subject to any man or not. Simple fornication occurs between a man and a woman both of whom are unmarried; adultery and seduction occur when the woman is under the authority of someone, a husband and a father respectively.<sup>78</sup> In a following article Thomas clarifies seduction as the violation of a virgin, and fornication as intercourse “with harlots, women, namely, who are no longer virgins.”<sup>79</sup> A synthesis of these two articles would suggest that all unmarried women are subject to the authority of their fathers, but only as long as they are virgins; the loss of their virginity frees them from their fathers’ rule and causes them to be classed as harlots. But the non-subjection of harlots is of less interest than the subjection of maidens to the rule of their fathers, and it is clear that all unmarried virgins come under their fathers’ care and authority.<sup>80</sup>

For St. Thomas the parents’ authority over the child and the child’s subjection decreases as the child progresses in age and reason, and this progression is marked by seven-year periods. Before the age of seven a child neither understands by himself nor is able to learn from another; he can neither bind himself in any promise for the future nor act on his own. Between the age of seven and puberty (14 for boys, 12 for girls) a child begins to learn, but since he is incapable by himself of understanding, he cannot bind himself by perpetual obligation. Any vows or oaths he attempts can be annulled by his parents. He may, however, make simple promises for the future, as betrothal promises or simple religious vows, but these are not binding. At the end of his second seven years a child is able to consider by himself as regards those things having to do with his own person and his state of life, and hence he can bind himself in religious vows or in matrimony.<sup>81</sup> “Post annos autem pubertatis, possunt iam se voto religionis obligare, vel simplici vel solemnibus absque voluntate parentum.”<sup>82</sup> Unlike a slave who does not have free disposal of his own person, a son or daughter is free in that which pertains to his state: “Post annos pubertatis quilibet ingenuus libertatem habet quantum ad ea quae pertinent ad dispositionem sui status.”<sup>83</sup> A daughter is not subject as a slave is, but rather she is under her father’s authority for her education, and has free disposal of her own person. She may enter religion or bind herself in matrimony even against her father’s will.<sup>84</sup>

But even while sons and daughters are free with regard to the disposition of their persons and the choice of their state of life, they are not sufficiently developed in reason before their twenty-first year to be able to consider things outside their own persons or to dispose of property on their own. So even after they are free to make their own decisions to contract marriage or enter religion, children are still subject to their parents in financial and household matters.<sup>85</sup> The property of children belongs to their parents and hence they cannot give alms or dispose of their property except under the direction of their fathers. “Ea quae sunt filiifamilias sunt patris. Et ideo non potest eleemosynam facere (nisi forte aliquam modicam, de qua potest praesumere quod patri placeat): nisi forte alicuius rei esset sibi a patre dispensatio comissa.”<sup>86</sup> A child is subject in domestic affairs to the head of the household, his father, and cannot vow or contract anything concerning the household economy without the consent of his father.

Ex quo homo venit ad annos pubertatis, si sit liberae conditionis, est suae potestatis quantum ad ea quae pertinent ad suam personam: puta quod obliget se religioni per votum, vel quod matrimonium contrahat. Non autem est suae potestatis quantum ad dispensationem domesticam. Unde circa hoc non potest aliquid vovere quod sit ratum, sine consensu patris.<sup>87</sup>

But in all of these conditions there seems to be no difference between sons and daughters in their subjection to their fathers. The subjection of the daughter however is greater for St. Thomas than that of the son. The daughter’s subjection is mentioned more frequently, as an example of subjection in general, than the son’s.<sup>88</sup> And a daughter is more under the care of her father than is a son, for the purpose of the preservation of her virginity. She is withheld from the wanton life by her father’s care and authority, lest she lose the seal of virginity and be set on the road to this wanton life.

In virgine autem sub custodia patris existente quaedam deformitas specialis occurrit si corrumpatur. Tum ex parte puellae, quae, ex hoc quod violatur, nulla pactione coniugali praecedente, impeditur a legitimo matrimonio consequendo, et ponitur in via meretricandi, a quo retrahebatur ne signaculum virginatis amitteret. Tum etiam ex parte patris, qui de eius custodia sollicitudinem gerit: secundum illud Eccli. 42:11: **Super filiam luxuriosam confirma custodiam, nequando faciat te in opprobrium venire inimicis.** Et ideo manifestum est quod stuprum, quod importat illicitam virginum deflorationem sub cura rapentium existentium, est determinata luxuriae species.<sup>89</sup>

Thomas says nothing about single women beyond these treatments of their relative subjection to and freedom from parental authority, suggesting that he considered single women to be those who, because they had not *yet* entered either religion or matrimony, were still under their fathers’ care until they selected one or the other of these states. In fact, when St. Thomas gives examples of the states of life which daughters may freely choose, he names only these.

He probably did not consider the single state either a common or a normal enough condition for discussion. But even in this sketchy treatment of the condition of unmarried daughters, it is seen that this subjection, like that of the wife, depends on Thomas' theory of the domestic society as requiring a ruler, be he husband or father. Younger daughters are subject to the care and authority of their fathers for their protection and for their education; but as they grow older they become free persons, with full power to decide and act on their own as regards their own persons. The wife too is free with regard to her own person, but both daughters and wives, as long as they belong to the domestic societies ruled by their fathers or husbands, are subject in all matters pertaining to the household.

Within civil society, women, according to Aquinas, have no public role. Since their proper sphere of activity is the internal affairs of the household, they must not concern themselves with external affairs. They must abstain from civic activities,<sup>90</sup> from warfare,<sup>91</sup> and even from being lawyers, since public disputation is shameful in a woman just as public teaching is.<sup>92</sup> Women are unfit to be civil rulers because of the weakness of their reason:

Nihil differt utrum ipsae mulieres principentur; vel ipsi principes sub mulieribus regantur, quod eis subiecti sunt propter insolentiam mulierum. Idem enim accidit utroque modo, ut scilicet civitas male regatur quia mulieres deficiunt ratione. . . . Earum indicia in rebus civilibus, item perniosa est et nocua.<sup>93</sup>

Aquinas explains Aristotle's statement that the rule of women is the corruption of the city by saying that reason is the most necessary requirement for rulers, so women, who are deficient in reason, must be subject and not rule.<sup>94</sup> The *Supplement*, however, mentions that women may have temporal rule although they are denied spiritual rule.<sup>95</sup> Thomas himself corresponded with women rulers, advising them on matters about which they questioned him. His *Letter to the Duchess of Brabant* "On the Government of Jews" in its tone and address suggests nothing but respect for the "illustrious and pious Lady (*Domina*)" who is addressed as "Your Excellency."<sup>96</sup> Thomas does not treat her as though she were either weak in reason or unfit for rule. Rather, he respectfully answers her questions, advises her to seek the counsel of others more knowledgeable than he, and wishes her a long reign: "Valeat dominatio vestra per tempora longiora."<sup>97</sup>

Because women do not participate in the ruling activities of civil society, they are not citizens absolutely speaking. While all those who live in a city or come under its jurisdiction may sometimes be called citizens, only those who have full rights of citizenship are properly called citizens, for example those who can debate or vote in popular assembly, or those on whom deliberative or judicial functions can be conferred. But Thomas says that women are not citizens *simpliciter*, but only *secundum quid*, like others who merely dwell in the city but do not have the capacity to exercise functions that directly pertain to the community: old men, children, and so on.<sup>98</sup> The woman is a citizen, however, in that she is a subject of the laws and the rights of the city, even if she does not have full power of citizenship; she has civic rights and duties to the law, but she does not participate in the directing activity of the city.<sup>99</sup>

In the Church the woman's position is analogous to her place within civil society. She is a full member of the Church with equal religious obligations and benefits, but she does not enjoy an active role in the teaching, ministerial, or governing activities of the Church. The function of a priest includes ruling or presiding, so women cannot receive Holy Orders since they are in the state of subjection and are incapable of rule. It is a perversion of the city's rule that it be under a woman; woman then has neither the key of order nor that of jurisdiction.

Mulier, secundum Apostolum, est in statu subiectionis. Et ideo ipsa non potest habere aliquam spiritualem iurisdictionem; quia etiam secundum Philosophum in **VIII Eth.** corruptio urbanitatis est, quando ad mulierem dominium pervenit. Unde mulier non habet neque clavem ordinis nec clavem iurisdictionis.<sup>100</sup>

But it is not only unlawful for a woman to receive orders — it is impossible.<sup>101</sup> Every sacrament is a sign which sanctifies man,<sup>102</sup> a character or imprint which both effects the reality of the sacrament and manifests or expresses that reality.<sup>103</sup> Thomas compares the sacraments of Extreme Unction and Holy Orders to show that the male sex is a necessary condition for reception of the latter sacrament. Since Extreme Unction is a spiritual healing which is signified by a bodily healing, it can be conferred only on those who are sick and hence "competent to receive bodily healing." In similar fashion women are not competent to receive holy orders, since it is not possible for the female sex to signify eminence of degree, since woman is inferior and in the state of subjection. In all sacraments not only the thing but the signification of the thing is required, hence women are not apt subjects for this sacrament since they cannot symbolize the eminent dignity which is necessary for orders.<sup>104</sup>

As a sacrament, orders differs from gifts such as prophecy, which require only the thing and not the signification. Also, the gift pertains to the soul where women do not differ from men. Thus women may receive prophecy and other gifts equally with men, but not orders. The symbolism is essential to the sacrament, and since in

the case of the “ordination” of a woman the symbolism is not possible, there is no sacrament realized by the rite of ordination.<sup>105</sup>

As seen above, Thomas also denies to women the power of jurisdiction.<sup>106</sup> The reasons are of course the same as those which prohibit woman from being ordained: her natural state of subjection, and the risks of a woman’s assuming power.<sup>107</sup> But what about the women abbesses who in fact enjoyed jurisdictional power in Thomas’ day? They do not have this power, Aquinas says, but merely the use of it in order to correct the women under them, and that only because of the dangers which would ensue from a man living in the women’s monastery. “Sed mulieri committitur aliquis usus clavium, sicut habere correptionem in subditas mulieres, propter periculum quod imminere posset si viri mulieribus cohabitarent.”<sup>108</sup>

Preaching and public teaching are also denied to women, because of their lacking in the wisdom required.<sup>109</sup> Teaching involves presiding and pertains not to subjects but to those who are over subjects, thus women may not teach publicly in Church.<sup>110</sup> They may however teach privately, and here there is no qualification of the sex of the hearers;<sup>111</sup> they are permitted and even required to instruct their children both in religion and in other matters;<sup>112</sup> women may even preach publicly to audiences composed of women, as in monasteries.<sup>113</sup> But preaching to men or teaching them in Church is shameful for women who must be subject to men.<sup>114</sup>

But while they may not take part in any of the teaching or ministerial activities of the rulers of the Church, women are nonetheless full members of the Church. With the exception of Holy Orders, they may receive all the sacraments equally with men. Even Confirmation is not denied them, for the spiritual superiority conferred and signified by that sacrament is not of the body but of the soul, where there is no difference of sex.<sup>115</sup> Women can baptize in an emergency, although it is not fitting that they do so if there is a man present who can do it.<sup>116</sup>

In both civil and ecclesiastical societies then it would seem more precise to speak of woman’s secondary role than to say that she is subject to the man. The positions of male and female lay persons within the Church are equal, as are those of male and female citizens. As in civil society the woman enjoys the same benefits and is subject to the same laws as the man, so too in the Church she has equal religious obligations and the same access to spiritual benefits. In both of these societies the difference between men and women is that the woman cannot be in the position of ruler but the man can. As long as a man is not a priest or civil ruler, he is not less subject than the woman in either society; but her subjection is permanent and his is not: he can be both a priest and a ruler, but she must always be a subject.

## CONCLUSION

It is essential to note that in St. Thomas’ theory of the woman’s subjection in familial, civil, and ecclesiastical societies it is not all women as a class that are subject to each and every man. He does not consider women to be, as they have been in many non-Christian cultures, subject as a group to the men. It is quite clear that the reason for woman’s subjection is Aquinas’ theory of society as requiring the subjection of all members to the ruler of that society. Women and non-ruling men equally are subject to the rulers of any society, but those rulers must always be men. The reason for the wife’s subjection to the husband is the same as the reason why women cannot be rulers of any type. Women are inferior in reason and not fit for directing or commanding; in fact they are natural subjects, since they have need of direction. Men are superior and hence the natural rulers of any society, be it domestic, civil, or ecclesiastical. While in domestic society the woman is subject to the man, in the city and the Church the women and most of the men are subject to the few men who rule; but the ruler of any society must be a man because women are unfit for rule and men are by nature fitted for it. So outside of the domestic society as within it, the woman is subject, and the ruler is always a man.

St. Thomas shows indirectly but clearly that he did not think women were as a class subject to men in an article discussing matrimony between close relatives. He argues that one cannot marry one’s parents since it is not fitting to be conjugally united with a person to whom one is naturally subject: “Inconveniens est ut illis personis aliquis socialiter coniungatur quibus naturaliter debet esse subiectus.”<sup>117</sup> Since it would be impossible to argue from this principle and still maintain that women (who are most fittingly conjugally united with men) are by nature subject to men in general, it is evident that the woman’s subjection to the man is within the domestic society, and because of that society. Just as women are not essentially inferior to men, so too they are not as a class subject to each and every man. The inferiority of woman is combined in Aquinas’ theory with a certain equality, in human nature and in grace; in his theory about woman’s position, her subjection is described as merely civil subjection, and it is combined with a certain equality between the man and the woman in their marriage relationship.

In fact, Thomas’ main contribution to the philosophy of woman is his teaching on the equality of men and women in marriage, his synthesizing woman’s subjection with her equality to the man. Aristotle had well

established the inferiority and subjection of woman; in this area Thomas did little more than repeat his arguments, although as has been seen he did view femininity as a perfection and not merely a lack of the perfection of masculinity as did Aristotle. And the essential equality of men and women was well argued by Christianity and by Aristotle; again Thomas merely develops the arguments he inherited. But the equality of men and women in their relationship had not been previously substantiated. Christianity had taught this equality but had not explained it; a basis for it existed in Aristotle's philosophy but he had neither developed arguments nor expressly taught it. Aquinas not only taught that husbands and wives were equal in their mutual subjection, but he also justified this teaching philosophically and synthesized it with the subjection of the woman to the man in the domestic society. Even the Patristic Tradition, which often taught a certain equality between men and women, had usually limited it to their equality in the eyes of God, to their equality with respect to salvation; the Fathers had taught a certain mutuality of marital rights and obligations, but they had concentrated on the woman's subjection to the man and had not developed a theory of their equality in marriage.

It is Aquinas then who develops this notion of the equality between the husband and wife, and synthesizes it with the woman's subjection. He not only explains how it is possible that the man and the woman are both essentially equal and unequal in nature, he also explains how they are related both as subject and ruler and as equals. He probes the marriage and domestic relationship in such a way as to save both the character of marriage as a free and equal relationship between persons, and the nature of the domestic society as a real society that requires a ruler for its direction to the common good.

It is worthwhile in this reflective look at Thomas' philosophy of woman to notice the degree to which his theory of woman's subjection depends on an erroneous conception of generation. The inferiority of woman is solidly based on the Aristotelian biological theory of femininity as passivity, as defective in comparison with masculine activity and perfection. Without this foundation, the only ground of woman's inferiority for St. Thomas is her physical weakness and a few Scriptural passages, which are clearly used only as supportive arguments in his writings. It is interesting to speculate about what Aquinas might have thought about woman's nature and position had he not been so formed by Aristotle's generative theory: certainly woman's being smaller and weaker than man, and her having been created after him, would have looked different had they not been viewed through a notion of woman already developed from Aristotle's *femina est mas occasionatus*. Of course the nature of the household as a real society would still have required that it have a ruler, who still would probably have been the man, on the basis of these supportive arguments. But how would the woman's subjection have differed if she had not been thought of as naturally inferior by the very fact of her femininity? What would St. Thomas have said of woman's rational powers and virtue, had he not been sure that the imperfection of her femininity made her inferior to man in these areas? Without woman's natural inherent inferiority as feminine, without her being defective in reason and morally weaker than the man, perhaps he would have talked less of her subjection and more of her sharing with her husband in their aristocratic rule of their household. But in fact St. Thomas was strongly influenced by this theory of generation, which colors all he says about woman.

In light of the strength of this biological influence it is remarkable that Aquinas was as moderate as he was in his teaching about woman's inferiority and subjection. The notion of femininity as imperfect and subordinated to masculinity could quite easily have led to the conclusion that woman's inferiority makes her less human than man, that women are so deficient in reason and virtue and perfection that the man's rule is absolute, and that women are chattel owned and used by men for their own good. But Thomas everywhere avoids this conclusion and argues against it. Despite her natural inferiority, the woman is equally human as the man; there are exceptions to the general rule that women are less able to reason and less virtuous; the man rules the woman only for her own good and that of the community; the woman shares in the administration of the household, she is subject only in some areas and totally in her own power in others, and she is equal to the husband in their relationship as married persons. In fact a study of Thomas' statements about woman gives the impression that he himself was torn between the biologically-based inferiority and subjection of the woman and his desire to affirm that she is equal to the man in essence, perfection, abilities, and their relationship. Of course men and women are not the same, and even without Aristotle's biology Thomas no doubt would have concluded to some form of inferiority and subjection in woman's nature and position. But such a theory would have differed from that which Aquinas did in fact develop on the basis of Aristotle, and one gets the impression that St. Thomas might have been quite happy to modify his theory had he been told that generation was not what the Philosopher had said it was.

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<sup>1</sup>In Pol. I, 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

- <sup>3</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>4</sup>**S.T. I**, 96, 4.
- <sup>5</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>6</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>7</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>8</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>9</sup>**S.T. I**, 92, 1, ad 2.
- <sup>10</sup>**S.T. I-II**, 105, 4; **Suppl.**, 41, 1; **In Eth. Exp. VIII**, 12, 1721.
- <sup>11</sup>**S.T. I-II**, 105, 4.
- <sup>12</sup>**Suppl.**, 41, 1.
- <sup>13</sup>**In Eth. Exp. VIII**, 12, 1721.
- <sup>14</sup>**S.T. I**, 92, 1, ad 2.
- <sup>15</sup>**In Eth. Exp. VIII**, 12, 1721; **S.T. I**, 92, 2.
- <sup>16</sup>**S.T. I**, 92, 2.
- <sup>17</sup>**S.T. I**, 92, 3.
- <sup>18</sup>**Suppl.**, 41, 1.
- <sup>19</sup>**In Pol. I**, 10.
- <sup>20</sup>**In I ad Tim. II**, 3, 79; **In I ad Cor. XI**, 1, 590; **S.T. II-II**, 182, 4.
- <sup>21</sup>**In I ad Tim. II**, 3, 79-83.
- <sup>22</sup>**S.T. II-II**, 164, 2.
- <sup>23</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>24</sup>**S.C.G. III**, 123, 3.
- <sup>25</sup>**S.T. I**, 92, 1, ad 2. See footnote 14 above.
- <sup>26</sup>**In Pol. I**, 10.
- <sup>27</sup>**In Eth. Exp. VIII**, 10 and 11, 1684-5 and 1694.
- <sup>28</sup>**Eph. 5:22.**
- <sup>29</sup>**In ad Eph. V**, 8.
- <sup>30</sup>**S.T. I**, 92, 2, ad 3.
- <sup>31</sup>**S.T. I-II**, 105, 4. See footnote 11 above.
- <sup>32</sup>**S.T. II-II**, 66, 3.
- <sup>33</sup>**S.T. II-II**, 118, 2.
- <sup>34</sup>**In Eth. Exp. V**, 2, 1006-15.
- <sup>35</sup>**Ibid.**, 1015.
- <sup>36</sup>**S.T. II-II**, 57, 4.
- <sup>37</sup>**S.T. II-II**, 32, 8, ad 2.
- <sup>38</sup>**Suppl.**, 45.
- <sup>39</sup>**Suppl.**, 47, 3.
- <sup>40</sup>**S.C.G. III**, 123, 4.
- <sup>41</sup>**S.C.G. III**, 124.
- <sup>42</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>43</sup>**S.T. II-II**, 154, 8.
- <sup>44</sup>**Suppl.**, 61, 1; 64, 1.
- <sup>45</sup>**S.T. II-II**, 154, 8, ad 2.
- <sup>46</sup>**Cor. 7:1.**
- <sup>47</sup>**In I ad Cor. VII**, 1, 314.
- <sup>48</sup>**In Eth. Exp. VIII**, 5, 1632.
- <sup>49</sup>**Ibid.**, 1605.
- <sup>50</sup>**S.C.G. III**, 124, 5.
- <sup>51</sup>**Ibid.**, 123, 6.
- <sup>52</sup>**S.C.G. III**, 123 and 124.
- <sup>53</sup>**Suppl.**, 64, 5 (in American edition). In Leonine: 64, 3.
- <sup>54</sup>**In ad Eph. V**, 10.
- <sup>55</sup>**Ibid.**, lect. 8.
- <sup>56</sup>**S.T. I**, 92, 2.
- <sup>57</sup>**S.T. II-II**, 164, 2.
- <sup>58</sup>**S.T. II-II**, 186, 4.

- <sup>59</sup>**De Reg. Prin.** IV, 5; **In Eth. Exp.** VIII, 12, 1721.
- <sup>60</sup>**In Pol.** III, 2, 376.
- <sup>61</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>62</sup>**In Eth. Exp.** VIII, 12, 1721.
- <sup>63</sup>**In Pol.** II, 6.
- <sup>64</sup>**S.C.G.** III, 122, 6-8; 123, 5; 124, 3; **S.T.** II-II, 154, 2 and 8; **Suppl.**, 62, 4; 65, 3; 67, 1.
- <sup>65</sup>**S.C.G.** III, 122, 6-8.
- <sup>66</sup>**Ibid.**, 8.
- <sup>67</sup>**S.T.** III, 55, 1, ad 3; 67, 4, ad 1.
- <sup>68</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 164, 2.
- <sup>69</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 10, 12.
- <sup>70</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 89, 9, ad 3.
- <sup>71</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 32, 8.
- <sup>72</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>73</sup>**Ibid.**; **In IV Sent.** 49, 4, 1.
- <sup>74</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 32, 8.
- <sup>75</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 88, 8, ad 3.
- <sup>76</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 32, 8.
- <sup>77</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 65, 4, ad 2.
- <sup>78</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 154, 1.
- <sup>79</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 154, 6.
- <sup>80</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>81</sup>**Suppl.**, 43, 2; **S.T.** II-II, 88, 9.
- <sup>82</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 88, 9.
- <sup>83</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 189, 6.
- <sup>84</sup>**Suppl.**, 45, 5, ad 1.
- <sup>85</sup>**Suppl.**, 43, 2; **S.T.** II-II, 88, 8, ad 2.
- <sup>86</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 32, 8 ad 3.
- <sup>87</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 88, 8, ad 2.
- <sup>88</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 88, 9; 89, 9, ad 3.
- <sup>89</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 154, 6.
- <sup>90</sup>**In Pol.** II, 6.
- <sup>91</sup>**Ibid.**; **De Reg. Prin.** IV, 5.
- <sup>92</sup>**In I ad Cor.** XIV, 7, 881.
- <sup>93</sup>**In Pol.** II, 13.
- <sup>94</sup>**In I ad Cor.** XIV, 7, 880; **In IV Sent.** 19, 1, 1, 3, ad 4.
- <sup>95</sup>**Suppl.**, 39, 1, ad 2.
- <sup>96</sup>**De Reg. Judaeorum.**
- <sup>97</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>98</sup>**In Pol.** III, 1, 352-5; **S.T.** I-II, 105, 3.
- <sup>99</sup>**In Pol.** III, 1.
- <sup>100</sup>**In IV Sent.** 19, 1, 1, 3, ad 4.
- <sup>101</sup>**Suppl.**, 39, 1.
- <sup>102</sup>**S.T.** III, 60, 2.
- <sup>103</sup>**Suppl.**, 30, 1.
- <sup>104</sup>**Suppl.**, 39, 1.
- <sup>105</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>106</sup>See footnote 100 above.
- <sup>107</sup>**In IV Sent.** 19, 1, 1, 3, ad 4.
- <sup>108</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>109</sup>**In I ad Tim.** II, 2, 78-80; **In I ad Cor.** XI, 2, 596; XIV, 7, 870-1; **S.T.** II-II, 177, 2.
- <sup>110</sup>**S.T.** II-II, 177, 2.
- <sup>111</sup>**Ibid.**
- <sup>112</sup>**S.T.** III, 55, 1, ad 3.
- <sup>113</sup>**In I ad Cor.** XI, 2, 596.
- <sup>114</sup>**Ibid.**, XIV, 7, 880.

<sup>115</sup>**S.T.** III, 72, 8 and 10.

<sup>116</sup>**S.T.** III, 67, 4.

<sup>117</sup>**S.C.G.** III, 125, 7.