

An Analysis on the Transformation of Phenomenon of “Political Power” in the West Context of the Concepts of “Auctoritas” and “Potestas”

“Auctoritas” ve “Potestas” Kavramları Bağlamında Batı’da “Siyasal İktidar” Anlayışının Dönüşümü Üzerine Bir Çözümleme

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Öz

Antik Roma’da siyasal, sosyal ve hukuki kavramlar olarak ortaya çıkan “auctoritas” ve “potestas” birlikte ele alındığında “otoriteyi ve otoritenin yaptırım gücünü” tanımlamak için kullanılır. Orta Çağ Hristiyan siyasal düşüncesi bağlamında değerlendirildiğinde, Roma İmparatorluğu’nun zayıflamasıyla Avrupa’da “siyasal iktidar” boşluğunun oluştuğu dönemde Hristiyanlık kurumsal olarak kendisini korumak ve seküler iktidar odaklarından kurtulmak ve daha sonra bu seküler iktidarlarda üzerinde hakimiyet kurabilmek için ilk olarak auctoritas ve potestas kavramlarını kullanmıştır. Bu bakımdan Papa Gelasius’un geliştirdiği, “din adamlarının kutsal otoritesini (auctoritas)”, “krallığın gücü (potestas)” ile karşılaştıran ve din adamlarının kutsal otoritesinin krallık gücünden daha üstün nitelikte olduğu yönündeki düşünce önemlidir. Modern dönemde ise teorik ve pratik alanlarında yaşanan dönüşüm ve Bodin, Hobbes, Rousseau gibi düşünürlerin ortaya koyduğu egemenlik konusundaki düşüncelerle birlikte “auctoritas” ve “potestas” kavramları da değişime uğramıştır. Bu çalışmada tarihsel sınırlamalara dikkat edilmiş, konuya ilişkin modern döneme girdikten sonra yaşanan tartışmalar bir tercih olarak ele alınmamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasal iktidar, auctoritas, potestas, otorite, Batı siyasal düşünceler tarihi.

Abstract

Auctoritas and potestas, which emerged as political, social, and legal concepts in the ancient Rome, are used to describe “the authority and the sanctioning power of authority”, when taken together. As it is evaluated in the political context of the Christian doctrine in the Middle Ages, when there was a vacuum of “political power” in Europe with the weakening of the Roman Empire, Christianity firstly used the phenomena of auctoritas and potestas to protect itself institutionally from

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“secular” power centers and then to claim “sovereignty” against these secular powers. The idea developed by Pope Gelasius is important, that who compared “the sacred authority of bishops (*auctoritas*)” with “the royal power (*potestas*)” and that the sacred authority of bishops is of a higher quality than royal power. By the transformation in the theoretical and practical contexts of the modern period and the ideas on the ownership of the power that were put forward by such thinkers as Bodin, Hobbes, and Rousseau, the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* have undergone changes. It is paid attention to the historical limitation of the study, and the dimension of debate that the subject came to after entering the modern period was not discussed in the study as a preference.

Key Words: Political power, *auctoritas*, *potestas*, authority, history of Western political thought.

Introduction

While the concept of power is generally evaluated in terms of having “the power to do something”¹, it is possible to make different definitions of “power” according to different disciplines of social sciences. In this context, according to an accepted definition, power is characterized by the idea that human desires are unlimited². When the concept is analyzed more “narrowly” through certain parameters, it is possible to see that the phenomenon is often discussed in terms of “structure of power” or “powers of class”. When the concept of power is evaluated through these phenomena, it is considered within the social sciences as something that is “deeply embedded in the debates in social and political theory, which deals with the essentially confrontational or consensual nature of social and political order”. It is a fact that, in the light of various theories and the debates that have developed from them, different definitions have been made to finalize the definitions/meanings of power as “rational”. Its main reason is the claim that “power is a theory-dependent term and there are only a few credible meta-theoretical grounds that can resolve debates between opposing theoretical paradigms”.³

To discuss power in these forms, the Weberian approach, which is still used and accepted as a theoretical approach in the context of understanding/analyzing power relations in the modern period, plays a major role. According to the Weberian approach, power is a phenomenon that should be read through a historical and social process, and “the potentials and manifestations of power depend on people’s willingness (and effectiveness) to use them. Potential power is based on certain qualities. But the manifested power is manifested not by qualities but social relations, and the definition of a *social relation* is partly based on its bilaterality”.⁴

- 1 Andrew Heywood, *Key Concepts in Politics*, Macmillan Publishers, New York 2000, p. 35-37.
- 2 Bertrand Russell, *İktidar*, (trans. Göksel Zeybek), İzmir 2004, İlyas Press, p. 1.
- 3 Mark Philp, “Power”, Adam Kuper-Jessica Kuper, edit., *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, Routledge, London 2005, p. 1128-1133.
- 4 Gordon Marshall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1994, p. 411-413.

While making a political evaluation of the phenomenon of power in the context mentioned above, the necessity to understand the transformation that the modern Western understanding of political power, accepted to be effective all over the world today, has undergone comes to the fore. Its main reason is the theoretical and practical changes/transformations that the politically and theologically intertwined nature of medieval and Christian thought experienced during the thousand-year period when is known to have domination over the Western world.

The main problem area in this process, in the simplest terms, is the efforts to determine the position of spiritual power (*auctoritas*) and secular power (*potestas*), which became a focal point in the context of the holder of political power as Christianity dominated the Western world in every way. The theoretical and practical conflicts over clarifying this position are a major problem that remained a central issue of political conflict, at least in Western political life and thought, until the modern period.

Pope Gelasius (410-496) articulated the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* in the organization of the Church, giving them a religious character, and integrating them into Christian political thought.⁵ The "doctrine of double swords" has clearly been the main source of the debates in Western political thought on the "owner/ownership of political power" and the "inviolability" of that power through the idea of government. The "doctrine of the double swords", which emerged within the early Christian teachings of the "Church Fathers" and was put forward as a political-theological doctrine by the Pope Gelasius after the fifth century, was at the center of the debates over "who owns" political power in the West throughout much of the Middle Ages. However, even though this doctrine became the "generally accepted tradition" for the Western European Christianity during the Middle Ages, it remained a source of conflict due to "the common points of action of the proponents of both sides when the rivalry between the Pope and the Emperor made the relationship between the secular and spiritual sphere a matter of debate".⁶

These debates about the distinction between secular and religious power, which continued in the Middle Ages, shifted in focus in the modern era, and under the influence of social and political changes, a secular understanding of political power emerged, shedding its religious dimension. Consequently, discussions of political power in the modern period placed the distinction between *auctoritas* and *potestas* within a secular context.⁷

5 Philippe Portier, "Otorite", Philippe Raynaud-Stéphane Rials, *Siyaset Felsefesi Sözlüğü*, (trans. İsmail Yerguz), İletişim Press, İstanbul 2017, p. 641.

6 George Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.: New York, 1961), 193-195.

7 Portier, loc. cit., p. 640-642.

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The most important reason for this understanding was the emergence of the theory of sovereignty. This theory brought the understanding that political power needed no source other than itself. Therefore, with the emergence of the concept of sovereignty, efforts to find a theological source for political power became unnecessary.⁸

With the secularization process initiated by the theory of sovereignty, the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* continued to be used in discussions of political power, and with the political and social developments that followed in the modern period, they assumed a people-centered paradigm. The concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* originated in the Roman period and took on a religious overtone in medieval Christian political thought; by the turn of the modern era, they had acquired a secular context while implicitly remaining at the center of discussions within the framework of “disclosing the source of political power.”

Regarding the study to be discussed in this context, the following is the detailed information on its general structure that can outline its broad framework in the context of “purpose, scope, and limitations of the study”, “research questions”, “literature review”, “methodology”, and “results/outcomes”.

Purpose, Scope, and Limitations of the Study

The main purpose of the paper is to examine the impact of the concepts of ‘*auctoritas*’ and ‘*potestas*’ on the transformation of the concept of “political power” in the Western political thought. The concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas*, from the Roman Empire where they were first used to the modern period, have been in a close relationship with the definition and description of political power, especially if the specific forms in its first use in Rome are partially excluded. In the most general sense, the concepts of *auctoritas*, as the principle of power and the source on which it is based, and *potestas*, as the use of power, are of central importance to understand the perspective on the power in the Western political thought. It is necessary to examine and analyze the effects of the conceptual and factual changes and transformations that these phenomena have undergone, at least until the modern period, on the formation of the concepts of both social power and political power which have been used today in the political context in order to understand the problem areas specifically addressed within the framework of political power today. In this context, the study focuses on the scope of the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas*, focusing entirely on political power. In addition, it is paid attention to the historical limitation of the study, and the dimension of debate that the subject came to

8 Olivier Beaud, “Egemenlik”, Philippe Raynaud-Stéphane Rials, Siyaset Felsefesi Sözlüğü, (trans. İsmail Yerguz), İletişim Press, İstanbul 2017, p. 271-273; Atilla Yayla, *Politika Bilimine Giriş* (Ankara: BB101 Press, 2015), 63-66.

after entering the modern period was not discussed in the study as a preference. Especially the 18th century, discussions and evaluations regarding the political power in the current context of the subject after the century are not included. In this context, an attempt has been made to evaluate the subject in detail historically, dating back to the 18th century.

Research Questions

What is power? What is *auctoritas*? What is *potestas*? What is the relationship between the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* and the concept of political power? What is the place of this relationship in the Western political thought, together with the semantic changes that it has undergone periodically? In this context, what are the semantic and factual effects of the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* in the current interpretation of the concept of political power?

Literature Review

The concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* first manifested themselves in a broad sense in the Roman social, administrative, and legal thought and then in the institutions in Roman political life and thus began to take their place in discussions of the power in the Western political thought. In this study, these processes are dealt and discussed within the framework of political developments and the views of thinkers in each period. While the sources used on this subject are generally the primary sources of writers, academics, and thinkers, who are considered authorities on the subject in the modern period and today (Carter, Monahan, Madison, Russell, Schmitt, Philp, Skinner, Shively, Sparks, Sennett etc.), many important figures such Cicero, Augustine, Thomas of Aquino, Bodin, Hobbes, Rousseau, etc., who lived in those periods examined and analyzed and who produced, executed, and declared ideas on the subject, are those having primary and secondary sources used under the study.

Methodology

This study uses "in-depth content analysis method" due to the nature of the subject and the way the materials to be examined address the subject. In the study, the primary sources of modern period writers/academics/thinkers, who are considered as an authority who have made important evaluations on the subject today, are utilized through direct and indirect references. In addition, the historical and theoretical information on the subject is tried to be brought to the fore by making use of primary and secondary sources of the figures who produced important ideas in the name of the history of political thought and the history of philosophy in the periods when the subject was discussed through their own practices. In many parts of the study and in the conclusion chapter, some ideas regarding the purpose of the study are tried to be put forward through comments and evaluations.

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Results/Outputs

This study reveals the importance of knowing and discussing the contents of the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* to understand the concept of “political power” in the Western political thought. It is tried to be evaluated the historical and theoretical meanings of these two concepts of which contents and relations with each other have changed over time evolve from the Christian political thought, which was the dominant understanding of the Middle Ages, to absolute monarchy, from there to constitutional monarchy, and today, to the point of foundation of the understanding of political power in the republican and democratic understandings, in whatever sense they are considered. It is a fact that the social, administrative, and legal uses of these two concepts, which were their first meanings in Rome, are used interchangeably from time to time along with the social, economic, political, and administrative transformations in the West as well as the changes and transformations in intellectual, moral, and secular meanings. However, it is specifically tried to reveal that these conceptualizations are of the Western origin and that they evolve different meanings in different periods of political power changes in Europe. The effects of these two concepts, especially on the phenomenon of political power, and the debates up to the 18th century, when it can be assumed that these concepts have lost their quality at certain points, at least intellectually, are examined in detail under the study, and the historical and theoretical studies on understanding and making sense of the effects of these concepts on the present day are discussed in detail and their background reveals in this way.

The Origins of the Concepts of *Auctoritas* and *Potestas* and Their Relations with Each Other

Auctoritas is a Roman term, and it was derived from the Latin word “augere” meaning to increase. It was initially used in the sense of *prestige* or *respect* beyond its political meanings such as *power* and *authority*. *Auctoritas* means ‘prestige’ and ‘respect’ when used for institutions, it means ‘rank’ and ‘wisdom’ when used for individuals.⁹ The concept of *potestas*, on the other hand, was derived from the Latin word “posse” meaning to *be able to do*. The concept is used in natural sciences to *mean to act, to generate energy*, however in social sciences it is used in the sense of ‘being able to make others do what one wants against the threat of force and to determine their will in the way one wants’.¹⁰ In a similar definition, *auctoritas* is defined as “an authority freely recognized by

9 Sverre Bagge, “From Fist to Scepter”, Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola and Tuija Ainonen edit., *Authorities in the Middle Ages*, de Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2013, p. 162; Carl J. Friedrich, *Tradition and Authority*, Pall Mall, London 1972, p. 47-48.

10 Heinrich Albert Rommen, *The State in Catholic Thought A Treatise in Political Philosophy*, B. Herder Book Co., London 1950, p. 380-381.

others” and *potestas* as “a power arising from external factors”.¹¹As a matter of fact, the concept of *potestas* can be directly translated as the word “power” from Latin.¹²Although the concept of *potestas* includes the concepts of ‘coercion’ and ‘power’, the concept of *auctoritas* also includes principles such as ‘respect’ and ‘voluntariness’. As a matter of fact, another source defines *auctoritas* as “the ability to ‘command respect and voluntary obedience’ due to both holding an authoritative position and having the capacity to give authoritative advice”.¹³In addition, the origin of the word *auctoritas* is also traced back to the use of the expression “*auctorio*” (I approve) by an official who approves a transaction or a law by using his legal and moral weight during the Roman period.¹⁴ With these meanings, *auctoritas* can also mean ‘persuasive moral power’ from time to time. The fact that there are so many different definitions of *auctoritas* and *potestas* is because these concepts are difficult and multifaceted concepts. The “chameleon qualities” of these concepts, which change according to periods and contexts, may require sensitivity to (their) periods, places, historical and cultural conditions, when evaluating them.¹⁵

The origins of the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* date back to the Roman Republican period. The many ways in which the words *auctoritas* and *potestas* were used show that their meanings are not easily understood today. Therefore, it is important to understand these concepts within the political conditions of the Roman period in which they first emerged. However, leaving the concepts only within the framework of their meaning in their own period may also lead to a situation that may prevent the concepts from the use of today. On the other hand, if concepts are abstracted from their context, they lose their true meaning. For this reason, it is important to use concepts in a way that can be adapted to the present day without losing their meaning in their own periods. In this context, it may be useful to examine the *auctoritas* of the Senate in the Roman Republic by comparing it with the *potestas* of the popular assembly.¹⁶ In the period of the Roman Republic, the government was formed in such a way that the Senate had authority (*senatus auctoritas*) and the people had power.¹⁷ The Senate was composed of former executive and judicial

- 11 Gary B. Madison, *The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights*, Routledge, London 2003, p. 64
- 12 Eric Nelson, “Republican Visions”, John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig ve Anne Phillips, edit., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2006, p. 197-198.
- 13 April Carter, *Authority and Democracy*, Routledge, London 2010, p. 17-18.
- 14 Cristian Bratu, “Je, auteur de ce livre: Authorial Persona and Authority in French Medieval Histories and Chronicles”, Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola and Tuija Ainonen, edit., *Authorities in the Middle Ages*, de Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2013, p. 183.
- 15 Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola and Tuija Ainonen, “Foreword”, Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola and Tuija Ainonen, edit., *Authorities in the Middle Ages*, de Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2013, p. VII-VIII.
- 16 Carter, loc. cit., p. 17.
- 17 W. Jeffrey Tatum, “Roman Democracy?”, Ryan K. Balot, edit., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford 2013, p. 335-354.

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officials called “*magistratus*” and their descendants.¹⁸ In Rome, because these people were older, more experienced and wiser, they had a great prestige and respectability. This prestige and respectability of the members of the Senate is expressed by the concept of *auctoritas* in the Roman republican period.¹⁹ *Potestas*, on the other hand, belonged to the people’s assembly; to the people. Looking at the relationship between the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* in the Roman Republic, *auctoritas* in the Senate did not give it power, but only prestige.²⁰ This respectability was so important that *auctoritas* was also described as “honor” of the Roman people in some sources.²¹

Citizens were expected to support the supreme role of the Senate, and the Senate was seen as the owner of the state.²² There are some debates on the nature of the orders given by the Senate. It was also said that these orders were “more than advice, less than orders” since they were issued by a body that did not have coercive power but had *auctoritas*.²³ As a result, different terms were used for the decisions taken in the Senate and the people’s assemblies, which expresses the conceptual differences between *auctoritas* and *potestas*. In the decisions related to the Senate, the word “*placuit senatui*” (the senate was satisfied) was used, while in the decisions of the people’s assembly, the word “*populus romanus iussit*” (the Roman people ordered) was used.²⁴

The famous Roman thinker and statesman Cicero (106 BC-43 BC) also expressed the *auctoritas-potestas* distinction between the senate and the people as follows: “*quum potestas in populo, auctoritas in senatu sit*” (*potestas* belongs to the people; *auctoritas* to the senate). Accordingly, the Senate had *auctoritas* because of its seniority, aristocratic character, experience, prestige, and bride price. The concept of *auctoritas* included all these qualities. *Potestas*, on the other hand, meant that they could also hold power due to their numerical superiority. Thanks to *potestas*, the decisions taken by the people’s assembly were binding on the whole people.²⁵ Moreover, another element that showed that this legal power of the people, expressed as ‘*potestas*’, was different from ‘*auctoritas*’ of the senate was the “right of appeal” of the people’s assembly.²⁶ However, the extent to which this right of appeal was exercised was always controversial, and the people’s assembly generally ratified the decisions taken in the senate.²⁷

- 18 Antony Black, *A World History of Ancient Political Thought*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016, s. 170.
- 19 Rommen, loc. cit., p. 382-383.
- 20 John Morrow, *History of Political Thought a Thematic Introduction*, Palgrave, New York 1998, p. 235-236.
- 21 Robert Morstein-Marx, *Mass Oratory and Political Power in The Late Roman Republic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004, p. 54.
- 22 Neal Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1988, p. 24-26.
- 23 Carter, loc. cit., p. 17.
- 24 Bagge, loc. cit., p. 162-163.
- 25 Carter, loc. cit., p. 41.
- 26 Benjamin Straumann, *Crisis and Constitutionalism*, Oxford University Press, New York 2016, p. 279-280.
- 27 Black, loc. cit., p. 170.

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Hannah Arendt argues that the *auctoritas* in the Senate in Rome also refers to founding values, and that the actions of the ancestors who founded the city brought them political dignity. She cites the founding fathers of America as a modern example of this.²⁸ Arendt states that America's founding fathers established a constitution and the US Supreme Court reinterpreted the constitution according to contemporary problems and they made new decisions. However, these decisions depend on the voluntary harmony of the government with other institutions. In this sense, Arendt points to the US Supreme Court as the closest example to the Roman senate at the present day. As a matter of fact, the Romans often referred to the senate with the word "*patres*". *Patres* means fathers in Latin.²⁹

The concept of *auctoritas* has been used in many different areas other than the one above. One of these is the 'private sphere', which refers to the family environment of individuals. When it is used in the private sphere, *auctoritas* means the father's authority in the family, expressed as '*patris*'. On the other hand, the concept of *auctoritas tutoris* also was used at school to mean 'the authority of the teacher' over the students. However, as the concept moved to the political sphere, it became *auctoritas senatus*. Therefore, the central axis around which the concept of *auctoritas* revolves is the concept of "reliability", which has applicability in many social fields other than law and politics. That's why, *auctoritas* can also be seen as a reliable, authoritative opinion, the weight or importance of an opinion, as well as a model or an example.³⁰

A connection was established between the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* and the concepts of *power* and *authority*, especially in the Roman republican period. According to this connection, *auctoritas* is seen as equivalent to the concept of *authority* and *potestas* to the concept of *power*.³¹ According to one definition, power is a phenomenon inherent to a community of individuals and becomes authority when it is delegated to a ruler. Accordingly, the power to defend oneself and punish injustice, which is inherent in individuals in the state of nature, becomes standardized by getting rid of ambiguity, when it is delegated to a person by the community and in this way, it becomes authority.³² It is suggested that the birth of authority is related to values. Authorities change as the believed values change. By the transformation of values and beliefs, some authorities weaken, while authorities in line with new values become stronger.³³

28 Carter, loc. cit., p. 73.

29 Carter, loc. cit., p. 17-18.

30 Kangas, loc. cit., p. VII-VIII; Bratu, loc. cit., p. 184.

31 Madison, loc. cit., p. 64.

32 Arthur P. Monahan, *Late Medieval and Early Modern Political Thought, 1300-1600*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston 1994), p. 153-154.

33 Friedrich, loc. cit., p. 57-58.

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There are also views that accept *auctoritas* as one of the forms of authority. Accordingly, authorities have the right to be respected and to determine what should be done and what should be believed. Since *auctoritas* also possesses these characteristics, a connection is established between them.³⁴

The relationship between the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* has also affected the legitimacy of political powers. *Auctoritas* and *potestas* are interdependent; without *auctoritas*, *potestas* would lose its legitimacy, and without *potestas*, *auctoritas* would be deprived of concrete implementation. In this respect, the concept of *auctoritas* contains the element of “credibility” and provides a basis of legitimacy to the power, which is seen as ‘mere power’.³⁵ There is a similar relationship between the concepts of *authority* and *power*. Power that exists without authority is based on mere power and loses its legitimacy. In this respect, the existence of authority brings legitimacy. However, authority, as a legitimate power, also has the right to compel obedience to a certain extent.³⁶ However, this coercion can only take place when the authority has power. While the power can be understood as the power to coerce in this respect, an authority abstracted from power is understood to have no power to coerce, but only an activity of voluntary obedience that is based on values and morality.³⁷

Authority shows a moral quality that is related to such values as personal experience, wisdom, and honesty rather than the use of sanctioning tools. In this respect, power can be abstracted from persons, but authority cannot. For this reason, less is said about the power of judges and more about their legal knowledge and integrity. An elderly statesman may have no power in this sense, but he may have great authority. A person with wealth or power can force obedience by exerting force in his duty and position. But this person will have authority through his intuition, experience, knowledge, and moral qualities. In this sense, power is simply ‘the power to command obedience to itself’. Authority, means voluntary “obedience” from the masses on the other hand.³⁸

There is a confusion between these concepts sometimes. The same concepts are sometimes used to mean both *legitimate authority* and *power*. Classically, *potestas* in Latin means ‘legitimate authority’, and other concepts are sometimes used to denote pure power independent of legitimacy. However, since *potestas* changed its meaning in the modern period and was used in the sense of ‘pure power’, modern authors also used the concept of “*potestas legitima*” to avoid confusion.³⁹

34 Carter, loc. cit., p. 18.

35 Bratu, loc. cit., p. 184.

36 Carter, loc. cit., p. 50-51.

37 Madison, loc. cit., p. 64; Rommen, loc. cit., p. 380-381.

38 Rommen, loc. cit., p. 382-383.

39 Harro Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought the Society of Jesus and The State 1540-1630*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004, p. 186-187.

The most significant reason for the shift in *potestas* in the modern period, particularly in the theoretical framework outlined above, was the emergence of the theory of sovereignty. Along with this theory of sovereignty comes a shift in the understanding of political power, rendering the search for theological sources of political power unnecessary and institutionalizing it on a secular basis. In this sense, sovereignty can be regarded as the modern form of political power.⁴⁰

Political power, freed from its religious character by Bodin's concept of sovereignty, later acquired a popular content through the contributions of Hobbes and Rousseau. With Bodin, a framework was established in which *auctoritas* and *potestas* were considered together, while Hobbes and Rousseau based the source of power on the people, arguing that *auctoritas* resided in the people.⁴¹ The modern understanding of political power places the people at the center and exhibits a rational character. According to this understanding, people established political power to protect their lives and property against one another. Therefore, in the modern era, a point has been reached where *auctoritas* lies with the people, and *potestas* lies with the representatives elected by the people.

Within the framework of the views of these thinkers, political power has become institutionalized and impersonal in the modern period. Political power is no longer a phenomenon embodied in individuals, as it was in the pre-modern era, but has acquired a unified, indivisible, and sublime meaning.⁴²

While the birth of the concept of sovereignty shaped the phenomenon of political power in this way, concepts such as the rule of law, which emerged in the modern period, altered the image of unlimited sovereignty and gave rise to the separation of powers approach. In this respect, one of the most important ideas about political power in the modern period has been the limitation of power by the rule of law. Consequently, discussions of political power in the modern period have developed around the concepts of the rule of law and the separation of powers.⁴³ It can be said that these discussions have centered on the nature of *potestas*.

40 Olivier Beaud, "Egemenlik", Philippe Raynaud-Stéphane Rials, *Siyaset Felsefesi Sözlüğü*, (trans. İsmail Yerguz), İletişim Press, İstanbul 2017, p. 271-273; Atilla Yayla, *Politika Bilimine Giriş* (Ankara: BB101 Press, 2015), 63-66.

41 Michel Malherbe, "Hobbes Thomas", Philippe Raynaud-Stéphane Rials, *Siyaset Felsefesi Sözlüğü*, (trans. İsmail Yerguz), İletişim Press, İstanbul 2017, p. 374-375; Catherine Larrère, "Rousseau Jean-Jacques", Philippe Raynaud-Stéphane Rials, *Siyaset Felsefesi Sözlüğü*, (trans. Emel Ergun), İletişim Press, İstanbul 2017, p. 727-728; Robert Wokler, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Ahlakî Çöküş ve Özgürlük Arayışı", Brian Redhead, *Siyasal Düşüncenin Temelleri*, (trans. Mimar Türkahraman), Alfa Press, İstanbul, 2001, p. 172-174.

42 Beaud, loc. cit., p. 272.

43 Leslie Lipson, *Politika Biliminin Temel Sorunları*, (trans. Tuncer Karamustafaoglu), (Ankara: Birlik Press 1986), p. 340-348; Yayla, loc. cit., p. 67-72.

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Within the general framework of the debates in this period, it is widely accepted that the ideologies and forms of government of the modern era have become grounded in the people and shaped by their role, and that the status and position of the political power have become significantly more complex, through notions such as “legal compliance” and “general will”.⁴⁴

The Power of *Auctoritas* and *Potestas* to Determine “Political Power” in the Middle Ages

The concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas*, which were discussed in different contexts during both the republican and imperial periods in Rome and had a central importance in determining power, would shift to different meanings with the emergence of Christianity and its adoption by the Roman Empire, and these two concepts would undergo significant changes in terms of their content.⁴⁵ In Rome, there were not two different conceptions of power, whereas with Christianity, the state and the church power existed as two separate powers. This would be the main factor determining the positions and contents of *auctoritas* and *potestas* throughout the Middle Ages.⁴⁶

Christianity, which emerged during the rule of the Roman Empire, initially offered a model of life that ignored state power and rejected privileges. Therefore, the early Christians were indifferent to the political power.⁴⁷ Such concepts as *auctoritas* and *potestas* had no equivalent in the Christian society in this period. The Christianity’s interest in these concepts and its influence on their content began in the early IV. Century, when Emperor Constantine (272-337) accepted Christianity and made it the state’s religion. Christianity would be freed from all kinds of pressure, and the Christian clergy would have a say in the political sphere.⁴⁸

One of the arguments revealed by the Christian clergy to legitimize the political powers is the view put forward by the Apostle Paul (5-65). The Apostle Paul argued that all the powers come from the God and that the existing powers should be obeyed.⁴⁹ In this manner, the principle and origin of power, called ‘*auctoritas*’, began to originate from the God. On the other hand, the statement of the Prophet Jesus (4-30/33 B.C.), “*Render unto Caesar the things that*

44 Gerald G. Gaus, *Siyaset Kavramları ve Siyaset Kuramları*, (trans. Nihal Akdere), (Ankara, Phoenix Press, 2016), p. 216.

45 Carter, loc. cit., p. 43.

46 Norberto Bobbio, *Democracy and Dictatorship*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1989, p. 73-74; Garrett Ward Sheldon, *Encyclopedia of Political Thought, Facts on File*, New York 2001, p. 56

47 Black, loc. cit., p. 212.

48 Rommen, loc. cit., p. 521-523; Jean Louis Gazzaniga-Philippe Ségur, “Kilise”, Philippe Raynaud-Stéphane Rials, *Siyaset Felsefesi Sözlüğü*, (trans. İsmail Yerguz), İletişim Press, İstanbul 2017, p. 509.

49 Rommen, loc. cit., p. 424-425.

are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" led to the emergence of two separate phenomena of power in the Christian political thought, and a distinction was made between religious and secular power.⁵⁰

With the division of the Roman Empire as the western and the eastern parts, the Christian authority, taking advantage of the vacuum emerged by the disappearance of the Western Roman Empire in a short period of time, endeavored to regulate its relations with the Eastern Roman Emperor on the one hand and with the kingdoms that emerged in the Western Roman lands on the other, and to position its own power strongly against these secular powers. In this regard, the popes and the clergy put forward some opinions from time to time; they said that the Eastern Roman Emperor could regulate the secular sphere as he wished, while the right to regulate the religious sphere belonged to the clergy and the church.⁵¹ It was also during this period that the *potestas*, in the sense of the right to exercise power, began to be divided into the religious and secular spheres. The Church explained this division with the argument that the religious and secular spheres were different.

By the views put forward by Augustine (354-430), a Christian cleric who was also interested in philosophy, the process of separating *potestas* into religious and secular power accelerated. Augustine explains this issue through a metaphor that he calls the earthly state and the heavenly state. The heavenly state belongs to the God and His followers, while the earthly state belongs to the human.⁵² The religious power belongs to the heavenly state, while all the political powers in the world belong to the earthly state. According to Augustine, the earthly state should be at the service of the heavenly state so that it can get rid of the deficiency and evil in which it is.⁵³

One of the important figures in the medieval period in terms of the distinction between religious and secular power is Pope Gelasius, whose name we have mentioned several times at the beginning of the study and whose theory of *double swords* that we have briefly mentioned. This theory was put forward by Gelasius in the form of an explanation. This theory actually emerged during the period of the East-West division in Rome and because of an approach that aimed to protect the Western Christian doctrine against the Eastern Roman Emperor. Pope Gelasius' letter to Emperor Anastasios (430-518), which

- 50 Donald G. Tannenbaum-David Schultz, *Inventors of Ideas: An Introduction to Western Political Philosophy*, Thomson Wadsworth, London 2004), p. 74-75; Black, loc. cit., p. 212.
- 51 Antony Black, *The West and Islam*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2008, p. 18.
- 52 St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, ICON Group International, San Diego 1999, p. 214; Morrow, loc. cit., p. 25-27; Malcolm Schofield, "Epilogue", Christopher Rowe-Malcolm Schofield, edit., *Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, p. 668.
- 53 William Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers*, Harcourt College Publishers, Orlando 2000, p. 183-184; Alexander Lee, *Humanism and Empire The Imperial Ideal in Fourteenth-Century Italy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2018, p. 187-188.

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is traditionally known as “the Duo Sunt”, in which he declared that “*the Church of Rome’s spiritual power overrides worldly power in the face of Byzantium’s imperial claims*” formed the main core of the theory of *double swords* / *Duo Sunt*.⁵⁴

According to the *double-swords theory*, there are two swords; one representing religious power and the other representing spiritual power, and both swords are given by the God. In other words, the source of power is directly the God. The spheres of the two powers are completely different from each other, but the two powers need each other and must act together. The religious power needs the secular power to ensure peace and security, and the secular power needs the religious power for spiritual salvation. Both powers should not interfere in each other’s affairs and they should remain within their own spheres.⁵⁵ In his letter to the Byzantine Emperor of the period, Pope Gelasius (410-496) compared the sacred authority of the bishops (*auctoritas sacrata pontificum*) with the royal power (*regalis potestatis*), -as we have already mentioned-, and he elaborated that the sacred authority of the bishops was of a higher quality than the royal power, i.e. *auctoritas* than *potestas*.⁵⁶

It can be said that the purpose of Gelasius and the Christian clergy insistently emphasized and theorized the separation of the two spheres of power was the Church’s effort to become independent from the Eastern Roman Empire. As a matter of fact, the Popes who came later also exhibited views in the same vein. The Gregorius I (540-604) among them used a more diplomatic and admonitory style in his relations with the Eastern Roman Empire, while he took a harsher approach towards the weak kingdoms in the Western Europe, addressing the emperor with the word “master”, while addressing the kings of Europe with the word “my sons”.⁵⁷

By the reign of Pope Gregorius VII (1015/1028-1085) in the XI. Century, the religious power completely dominated the secular one and became almost the sole owner of *potestas*. As a matter of fact, the duties of the secular powers had to be defined by the Church in this century, and the kings could exercise their powers only with the approval and permission of the Church. In this way, the Church characterized its absolute authority to exercise both ecclesiastical/religious and secular/earthly power and its ownership of both powers as “*plenitudo potestatis*”. *Plenitudo potestatis* literally means “fullness of power or undivided power”. The Church in this period was able to give political power to kings and easily take it back (from them). In accordance with the principle of *plenitudo po-*

54 Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Citizens to Lord*, Verso Books, London 2011, p. 177-179.

55 Ebenstein, loc. cit., p. 199-201; Lee, loc. cit., p. 215.

56 Bagge, loc. cit., p. 163; Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought 300-1450*, Routledge, London and New York 1996, p. 35-36.

57 Joseph Canning, loc. cit., p. 37-38.

testatis, the Church is the owner of political power and temporarily transferred it to kings.⁵⁸

At the end of the thirteenth century, Pope Boniface VIII (1230-1303), in his book "*Unam Sanctum*", states that there are two swords, both of which are held by the Church, and that the secular is subject to the religious sword and under the religious one. He clearly states that the Church has the authority to establish and destroy political powers.⁵⁹

The Grounding of Absolute Monarchy on the Idea of "Sovereignty" and the Place of *Auctoritas* and *Potestas* in the Idea of Power

As we see; the Middle Ages was a period in when *auctoritas* originating from the God was unquestionable. So much so that it was not possible to discuss this situation and it was accepted in advance that all powers came from the God.⁶⁰ Although the Church characterized *potestas* that it received from the God as *auctoritas*, the entire struggle was conducted over the right to use the power; *potestas*. In this process, *potestas* was divided into two between religious and secular powers, and the religious power prevailed over the secular power and completely dominated *potestas* towards the end of the Middle Ages. However, as we approach the modern period, a new concept -the concept of "sovereignty"- which would completely change the positions of the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas*, gradually began to emerge. This concept has a secular content and is capable of radically changing the idea of power. Whereas *auctoritas* was once accepted as coming from the God and never touched again during the Middle Ages, great debates would arise over the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* with the emergence of the idea of sovereignty, and the idea of power would change in this respect.⁶¹

The Renaissance movement was a stream that put human beings at the center, reinterpreted the ancient Greek and Roman sources by looking at them from outside the framework of the Church, and thus shook the dominance of the Church.⁶² This period would also prepare the ground for the concept of sovereignty in the context of political power. Thomas of Aquino (1225-1274), one of the thinkers of this period, rejected the idea that political power arose from the first sin of man, which was present in the Christian political thought,

58 Black, loc. cit., p. 19-20.

59 Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2014, p. 14-15.

60 Johnny Grandjean-Gogsig Jakobsen, "What Jesus means is ...: The Dominican Order as Theological Authority for Laity and Clergy in Medieval Northern Europe", Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola and Tuija Ainonen, edit., *Authorities in the Middle Ages*, de Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2013, p. 123.

61 Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola and Tuija Ainonen, edit., loc. cit., p. 124.

62 Francis Oakley, *The Watershed of Modern Politics Law, Virtue, Kingship and Consent (1300-1650)*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 2015, p. 52-56.

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and argued that society arose naturally and therefore political power arose in nature.⁶³ Dante (1265-1321), another thinker who lived in this period, rejected the theory of *double swords* and stated that the Church and political powers received authorization directly from the God and that political powers did not need the mediation of the Church.⁶⁴ William of Ockham (1287-1347), who was also a clergyman, also opposed the mediation of the Church in this period and argued that Christ never interfered with political powers and never ruled them.⁶⁵ Marsilius of Padua (1275-1343), one of the most important thinkers of this period, argued that society emerged on the basis of common good and mutual needs, and that political power was a natural institution that emerged spontaneously in this context, and opposed the Church to be seen as above political powers.⁶⁶ In particular, Marsilius of Padua made attacks aimed at eliminating the *plenitude potesta* of the Church and expanded the field of the political to the detriment of the Church.⁶⁷ This theoretical change, which led to the re-establishment of political power over the Church, was referred to as the "Marsilian project" for some sources, referring to the thoughts of Marsilius of Padua, and the conflict began to be treated as a period in when "*potestas* would now rule *auctoritas*".⁶⁸

Following the period when the Renaissance movement began to transform the relationship between the Church and the political powers, the emergence of the Reformation movement in Europe would further weaken the position of the Church. At the beginning of the 16th century, the German cleric Martin Luther (1483-1546) announced his criticism of the Roman Church, stating that the Church could not be an intermediary between the God and human beings and that religious belief was a phenomenon between human and the God. Some of the political powers, who were disturbed by the Church's exploitation of the states and the societies in Europe, supported Luther's views, and thus the position of the Church vis-à-vis political powers was shaken.⁶⁹

Many of the thinkers who emerged in this new period, when absolute monarchies accepted that they received the *potestas* directly from the God and they removed the mediation of religious power, expressed new views on the nature of *auctoritas*. The idea of "sovereignty", which was put forward by Jean

63 Alexander Passerin D'entrèves, *The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought*, The Humanities Press, New York 1959, p. 22-24; Morrow, loc. cit., p. 28; Charles Covell, *The Law of Nations in Political Thought*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2009, p. 3-5.

64 Ebenstein, loc. cit., p. 249-250.

65 Oakley, loc. cit., p. 46.

66 Tannenbaum and Schultz, loc. cit., p. 107-109.

67 Skinner, loc. cit., p. 20-22.

68 Stephen A. Chavura, *Tudor Protestant Political Thought 1547-1603*, Brill, Leiden and Boston 2011, p. 156.

69 Chavura, loc. cit., p. 19-22; Morrow, loc. cit., p. 307-309; Sheldon, loc. cit., p. 191.

Bodin (1530-1596), became a new basis for absolute monarchies.⁷⁰ Bodin defines the concept of sovereignty as "the highest, absolute, and permanent power over citizens and subjects". According to him, there is sovereignty in the foundation of the state.⁷¹ By his idea of sovereignty, Bodin caused radical changes on the phenomena of *auctoritas* and *potestas*. The sovereign was characterized as *suprema potestas* (the supreme power) with the qualities of being the highest, absolute, and permanent.⁷²

Bodin also stated that his idea of sovereignty has certain limitations.⁷³ In particular, there is such a situation as the limitation of the idea of sovereignty. Bodin says that the political power is ultimately limited by divine laws.⁷⁴ The idea of sovereignty has somehow overthrown the Church in a way, but it can be said that it has also caused the phenomenon of *auctoritas* to be divided into two. Because while sovereign power is shown as the address on which power is based, it is still evident as a fact that sovereignty is limited by the divine (religious, Godly) power contrary to its nature and the divine power cannot be removed as an address on which power is based. This problem will be solved via the views of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Hobbes, a thinker who lived in the XVII. Century places the concept of "state of nature" at the basis of his political thought. *The state of nature* is a negative situation in which there is no state, people exist equally and there is a constant war among themselves. Because everyone can claim rights on everything in this period.⁷⁵ Since continuing such a situation is harmful to everyone, people decided to come together and make a "social contract" among themselves. People have authorized a sovereign by limiting themselves in this manner.⁷⁶ According to Hobbes, the sovereign is the supreme power whose actions cannot be judged and whose rights are indivisible and inalienable. Moreover, the sovereign is not one of the parties to the contract that is made between people. Because people made a contract only among themselves.⁷⁷ For Hobbes, the sovereign cannot do wrong,

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- 70 Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology Four Chapters on The Concept of Sovereignty*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2005), p. 16-17.
- 71 Jean Bodin, *On Sovereignty Four Chapters from The Six Books of The Commonwealth*, Julian H. Franklin, edit. and trans., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010, p. 1-5.
- 72 Dick Pels, *Property and Power in Social Theory*, Routledge, London 1998, p. 51.
- 73 Dick Pels, loc. cit., p. 52.
- 74 Arthur P. Monahan, *Modern Political Thought after The Reformation 1521 (Luther) to 1762 (Rousseau)*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal & Kingston 2007, p. 35-36; Oakley, loc. cit., p. 145; Bobbio, loc. cit., p. 75; Blandine Kriegel, "The Rule of The State and Natural Law", Ian Hunter and David Saunders, edit., *Natural Law and Civil Sovereignty*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2002, p. 17-18.
- 75 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, John Gaskin, edit., Oxford University Press, Oxford 1998, p. 82-84; Tom Sparks, "The Place of The Environment in State of Nature Discourses", *The State of Nature Histories of an Idea (363-398)*, Mark Somos-Anne Peters, edit., Brill Press, Boston 2022, p. 371-375.
- 76 Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1987, p. 87-90.
- 77 Thomas Hobbes, loc. cit., p. 115-120.

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because any regulation is valid because the sovereign accepts it. the Sovereign decides what is right and wrong in this order. For Hobbes' sovereign, the understanding of "*auctoritas, nonveritas facitlegem*" (it is the authority, not the truth, that makes the law) is valid.⁷⁸

Based on this sentence of Hobbes mentioned above, Schmitt thinks that distinguishing between *auctoritas* and *potestas* has lost its meaning in the modern period.⁷⁹ According to Schmitt, *suma potestas* (supreme power) has now become *suma auctoritas* (supreme authority).⁸⁰

Contrary to Bodin's views, there is no religious basis in Hobbes' thought. Hobbes has excluded religious elements from his thought so much that obedience to the sovereign cannot be abandoned even on the basis of a divine element.⁸¹ Hobbes and some thinkers who produced ideas at that time also based the origin of power instead of religious sources and introduced social contract theories as a new argument in the debates on the owner of political power.⁸²

In the period after *auctoritas* and *potestas* became completely secular, it would be seen that the two phenomena, in a sense, were completely concentrated in the public, with the thoughts of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). As in Hobbes' thought, Rousseau gives *auctoritas* to the public through a social contract. However, in Rousseau, people themselves bring a sovereign power to the power.⁸³ Rousseau's thoughts differ from Hobbes in this context in terms of sovereignty. The sovereign power described by Hobbes is a power that is accepted as unlimited once the contract is made and determines the laws itself.⁸⁴ However, according to Rousseau, the sovereign power is the "general will" that depends on the people. The general will be a common will formed by everyone in society giving up their own private will. Therefore, when people obey the general will, it means that they will still obey themselves.⁸⁵ According to Rousseau, the governmental forms can be monarchy, aristocracy or republic.⁸⁶ In

78 Carl Schmitt, *Dictatorship*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2014, p. 16-17.

79 Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in The State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, Greenwood Press, London, 1996, p. 44-45.

80 David Boucher, *Appropriating Hobbes Legacies in Political, Legal, and International Thought*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2018, p. 111.

81 Jacob Ben-Amittay, *The History of Political Thought from Ancient to Present Times*, Philosophical Library, New York 1973, p. 175-178.

82 Simone Zurbuchen, "The State of Nature, The Family and The State", Mark Somos and Anne Peters, edit., *The State of Nature Histories of an Idea*, Brill, Leiden and Boston 2022, p. 219-220.; Richard Sennett, Otorite, trans. Kamil Durand, Ayrıntı Press, İstanbul 2017, p. 216-217.

83 Robert Wokler, *Rousseau A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001, p. 49-50.

84 Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, p. 162-164.

85 Jean Jacques Rousseau, *du Contrat Social*, Editions Sociales, Paris 1971), p. 78-81; Renato Cristi, *Hegel on Freedom and Authority*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff 2005, p. 75.

86 Rousseau, loc. cit., p. 127-139.

this context, the thinker is against the representation system in legislation and in favor of everyone's personal participation in the approval process of laws. However, in Rousseau, this is the case for legislation, and the representation system can be applied for the executive.⁸⁷

Conclusion (Discussion)

The phenomena of *auctoritas* and *potestas*, both of Latin origin and used in both social and natural sciences, broadly with their Roman equivalents, are concepts put forward to reveal the limits and dimensions of the political power of the "authorized". Although they are sometimes used together or separately depending on context, it is observed that *auctoritas* is used in a political sense at the level of authority, and *potestas* is used with reference to its exercise. In the modern period, this situation has been evaluated, from time to time, through the relationship between "power" and "authority", and *auctoritas* and *potestas* have been interpreted, both theoretically and practically, within the political science discussions on sovereignty, power, and authority.

Since the Middle Ages, when Christianity began to dominate politics and society in the West, the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas*, used to describe the spiritual and worldly power, have become essential in terms of politically "legitimizing" themselves by the Christian saints and clergy, even though their meanings in society have been debatable. In this period, the belief that all the powers originate from God gave *auctoritas* a religious character. On this basis, *potestas* was introduced through two different understandings of power. It is a fact that, throughout the Middle Ages, the "right to use power" called '*potestas*' was shared between secular power and religious power.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, widely considered to be the end of the Middle Ages, the religious power almost prevailed over the worldly power and completely dominated the *potestas*. However, by the New Age, considered as the pre-modern period, the phenomenon of "sovereignty" emerged, a new concept that would completely change the positions of the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas*, first theoretically and then practically through monarchies.

Sovereignty has a worldly character, and it is of a nature to radically change the meanings of the idea of power in a short period of time, such as a century or two. While it was generally accepted throughout the Middle Ages that *auctoritas* came from the God and was never to be touched, great debates arose on the phenomena of *auctoritas* and *potestas* with the emergence of the idea of sovereignty, and there were significant changes in the theoretical and practical nature of the idea of power in this regard.

87 Lucien Jaume, "Temsil", Philippe Raynaud-Stéphane Rials, edit., (trans. İsmail Yerguz), *Siya-
set Felsefesi Sözlüğü*, İletişim Press, İstanbul 2017, p. 866.

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The understandings of sovereignty and the ideas of the holder of sovereignty, which were put forward by Bodin, Hobbes, and Rousseau, were very effective in theoretically strengthening this transformation and in paving the way for practical developments as the modern period began, and in the change/transformation of the meanings attributed to the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas*. Although these theories have pointed out different subjects, objects, and phenomena concerning the holder of political power and the use of political power, they have also been very effective in constituting sophisticated understandings of the changes/transformations that the concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas* have undergone over the centuries and the situation/shape that they have taken in the modern period.

It remains the case that debates about political power have continued throughout the modern era, particularly around “law” and the “popular will”, within the context of new theoretical understandings and the political and social changes/transformations described above. Time will tell whether the political and social structures intertwined with technology in today’s world will enable, in particular, a redefinition of political power.

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