



Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Plenitudo Potestatis and Its Discontents: Political Theories from Emergence to Rejection

Emre Didin¹

Abstract

Starting from the 10th century, the Catholic Church was on its way to becoming the primary player in European politics. Due to the weak status of temporal powers at the time, the Church leveraged its strong position to secure significant political power. The doctrine of *plenitudo potestatis* is the claim of papal supremacy, asserted by the Church for several hundred years. In this study, the most important intellectual discussion of the High Middle Ages, which was focused on this doctrine, is examined. Focusing primarily on systematic political theories, the study divides them into three categories. First, the most systematic theory of the Church's claim, as found in John of Salisbury, is presented. Second, the theories of moderate opposition found in Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham, and Jean of Paris are evaluated. Lastly, two radical political theories, which were completely opposed to the Pope, those of Dante Alighieri and Marsilius of Padua, are focused upon. After analytical and comparative examination of those theories, it has been seen that many staple ideas of modern political theory, such as natural law, popular sovereignty, and separation of church and state, can be traced to this debate, albeit sometimes in rudimentary form.

Keywords: *Plenitudo Potestatis, John of Salisbury, William of Ockham, Jean (John) of Paris, Dante Alighieri, Marsilius of Padua.*

Plenitudo Potestatis ve Karşıtları: Doğuşundan Reddine Siyasal Teoriler

Öz

10. yüzyıldan itibaren Katolik Kilisesi Avrupa siyasetinde birincil oyuncu olma yolunda ilerlemekteydi. O dönemde dünyevi iktidarların zayıf durumu nedeniyle, Kilise güçlü konumunu kullanarak önemli bir siyasi güç elde etmiştir. *Plenitudo potestatis* doktrini, Kilise tarafından birkaç yüz yıl boyunca ileri sürülen, papalığın üstünlüğü iddiasıdır. Bu çalışmada, bu doktrin çevresinde şekillenen, Yüksek Orta Çağ'ın en önemli entelektüel tartışması üzerinde durulmaktadır. Öncelikle sistematik siyaset teorilerine odaklanan çalışma, söz konusu teorileri üç kategoriye ayırmaktadır. Birinci olarak, Kilise'nin iddiasının en sistematik biçimde ortaya konduğu Salisbury'li John'un teorisi ele alınmaktadır. İkinci olarak, Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham ve Jean of Paris'te görülen ılımlı muhalefet teorileri değerlendirilmektedir. Son olarak ise papalığa bütünüyle karşı çıkan iki radikal siyaset teorisi, Dante Alighieri ve Padova'lı Marsilius'un yaklaşımları, inceleme konusu yapılmaktadır. Bu teorilerin analitik ve karşılaştırmalı bir incelemesi sonucunda, doğal hukuk, halk egemenliği ve din ve devletin ayrılığı gibi modern siyaset teorisinin pek çok temel kavramının, kimi zaman ilkel biçimlerde de olsa, bu tartışmaya kadar geri götürülebileceği görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Plenitudo Potestatis, Salisbury'li John, Ockhamlı William, Parisli Jean (John), Dante Alighieri, Padova'lı Marsilius.*

¹ Research Assistant, Ufuk University, Department of Political Science and International Relations, emreofdidin@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7457-9922>

Atıf/Cite as: Didin, E. (2026). Plenitudo potestatis and Its discontents: Political theories from emergence to rejection, *Hacettepe Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2026, 44 (2), 373-389.

© 2026 Hacettepe Üniversitesi.

INTRODUCTION

By 1200, the Papacy became the most developed and far-reaching governmental organization in Europe, with legislative power, courts, bureaucracy, procedures, taxes, and revenues in the form of donations. In the 13th century, the monarchies of France and England were only beginning to establish these structures. The Church was the first political structure in Europe to secure widespread loyalty for practical purposes (Güngör, 2016).

It was not always like that, however. There is a duality in the Christian faith, both in the obligation to preach the kingdom of God to everyone and in the certainty that the kingdom of God is not of this world. The early Christians tended to withdraw from worldly affairs; however, they gradually came to organize the world on the basis of faith. How the two contrasting conceptions of withdrawal from the world and world transformation were combined varied from century to century (Tellenbach, 1948).

By the 10th century, the Catholic Church, headed by the holy figure Pope, was the most important institution in Western Europe. In addition to its spiritual power, the Church was also the authority with the largest territory. It took further time for this great potential power to be translated into political power. Until the middle of the 11th century, the Church felt the tutelage of the aristocracy. European feudalism, instituted to provide rudimentary peace and security, remained the primary mode of social and political organization. Feudalism's essence was "vassalage," an agreement between the powerful and the less so, formed by the grant of land or offices called "fiefs" by the former to the latter (Rothman, 1970). In the 9th and 10th centuries, even the canon law forbidding the clergy to shed blood and take life was mostly ignored. The clergy could become lords, take fiefs, and even fight like any other vassal (Stephenson, 1965). The feudal aristocracy was able to establish churches and appoint their own priests. Furthermore, until 1059, the Holy Roman emperors were directly involved in the papal election.

It was under Hildebrand (1020/1025-1085), who became Pope in 1073 as Gregorius VII, that the Church was freed from such interference. The idea of papal supremacy can be traced back to Gregorius VII. The so-called "Gregorian Reforms", a term that often includes reforms made during his predecessors' time as well (specifically, they begin in 1049 under Pope Leo IX), set the stage for papal supremacy by creating a disciplined Church. Aimed at Church unity and guided by two principles of sacerdotalism and papal monarchy, they identified three problematic practices: simony (buying and selling of church functions), Nicolaitism (marriage or concubinage of clergy), and the interference of laymen in the election or installation of priests (Morrison, 1985). Especially the third of these practices, called "lay investiture," was the primary factor preventing the Church from becoming a major political player. In Germany, bishops were appointed by the earthly rulers and they were an integral part of the ruling structure. In 1078, Gregorius VII banned lay investiture with a decree (Spielvogel, 2008).

This development marks the beginning of the famous "investiture controversy". This great struggle had three main themes. The first was the relationship between the Church and secular power. The second is the internal order of the Church. The third is the relationship between the Church and the world (Tellenbach, 1948). Church doctrine during the investiture controversy was *plenitudo potestatis*. This term, meaning "fullness of power," can be traced back to Pope Leo I, when it was used to refer to authority within the Church, and reached its culmination in Popes Innocentius III and Innocentius IV (Benson, 1967). It was directly asserted in Gregorius VII's *Dictatus Papae* (The Pope's Dictates), dated 1075. There, the Pope asserts that, among other things, "he has never erred", he can "be judged by no one" and that he can depose, reinstate or transfer

bishops and even depose emperors (Morrison, 1971). While these assertions were clearly unacceptable to the Holy Roman emperor, the Papacy initially won the investiture contest when its spiritual power proved strong enough to force Emperor Heinrich IV to his knees at Canossa.

The transformation from medieval to modern political thought did not happen in a single abrupt rupture (Evkuran, 2003). The rise and fall of papal supremacy is one of the most important developments in the trajectory of political thought. The total assertion of *plenitudo potestatis* incited a “war of ideas” (Morris, 1989). At first, the Papacy had far greater firepower in that regard since it had a monopoly on the learned individuals. The reform movement began in the 11th century, accelerated in the 12th and peaked in the 13th and during these centuries popes, theologians and canon lawyers tried to build the so-called “papal monarchy” by ensuring the Papacy’s juridical authority over all earthly rulers (Whalen, 2019). As monarchs too became able to attract learned minds, rival theories that challenge *plenitudo potestatis* or even the Papacy itself started to be devised. Thus started the most fertile intellectual debates of the High Middle Ages. This study focuses on this debate, formed principally around the doctrine of *plenitudo potestatis* or the Two Swords Theory.

Studies focusing on this era usually adopt a historiographical approach; consequently, the theories developed around *plenitudo potestatis* and the investiture controversy have received comparatively limited attention in political theory. This study argues that several major thinkers formulated substantial and systematic political theories in response to the investiture controversy and seeks to address this gap in the literature by analyzing their political arguments. The study’s main focus is on systematic theories, and polemical arguments, also common among thinkers of the era, will be given less significance. Using an analytical and comparative approach, this study aims to identify and analyze the most important concepts and themes developed by the theorists of this era and to evaluate them in the context of *plenitudo potestatis* and later political thought.

The theoretical debate surrounding *plenitudo potestatis* has long been concluded, and the doctrine itself has been decisively rejected. Over several centuries, it followed a discernible trajectory from its emergence as a dominant political doctrine to its complete repudiation, a progression that can be traced both chronologically and in the political theories formulated in response to the investiture controversy. Reflecting this progression, this study organizes these theories into three groups: the first systematic assertion of *plenitudo potestatis*, the moderate theories formulated during its decline, and the theories that reject it outright. In the first chapter, the earliest systematic account of *plenitudo potestatis*, found in John of Salisbury, is presented. In the second chapter, the mediation efforts made by the moderates Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham, and Jean of Paris during the weakening phase of this doctrine are investigated. In the third chapter, the theories of the authors with the biggest enmity against *plenitudo potestatis* and the Church at the time, Dante Alighieri and Marsilius of Padua, are presented. It is widely argued that in the times of political crises and struggles, the best works of political theory are produced. This investigation on the investiture controversy demonstrates a clear example of this. From John to Marsilius, this era produced significant innovations that would later be picked up and popularized by early modern theorists in the 16th century onwards.

1. THE EMERGENCE OF PLENITUDO POTESTATIS AS A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

A comprehensive defense of the *plenitudo potestatis* and the Two Swords Theory in terms of political philosophy is found in John of Salisbury (c. 1120-1180). John put forward the first detailed medieval treatise on politics and can even be seen as the founder of political science in the medieval context, thanks to the methodology and content of his magnum opus, *Policraticus*.

In John, who deals with the nature and role of the prince, law-prince relations, what the state consists of, justice, and the place of the army, we see the first systematic attempt to make practical sense of medieval politics. John envisioned the state as representing the body through organic representation. In this context, the head corresponds to the prince, the heart to the senate, the eyes, ears, and the mouth to the judges and governors, the hands to the officials and soldiers, the stomach and intestines to the financiers, and the feet to the peasants (John, 2007).

John, while accepting divine power, as was the prevailing view in his time, stated that the prince is the hand of God that carries out God's will. Whatever he does, "is from God", he is the "public power", and this definition extends even to tyrants, who are still the hands of God, since God brought them there. Through them, God punishes or trains the subjects (John, 2007). However, this divine origin of the temporal ruler does not give him a divine right to rule as he pleases. According to John, the ruler's oppression of his subjects is equivalent to that of a guardian tormenting the child in his custody (John, 2007). That is, the prince's responsibility is not *to* the state, but *on behalf* of the state he represents (Güngör, 2015). On the other side of the coin, he is owed loyalty from his subjects, but only because he represents God's will.

The seemingly unconditional obedience in John soon becomes conditional. The prince has legitimacy according to the divine law, but he is not permitted to commit actions "inconsistent with the equity of justice". Prince is the interpreter of law, not the maker of it. He should uphold "the justice of God, whose justice is eternal justice and whose law is equity". As long as his laws are in accordance with God's justice, his laws are legitimate. Also, the prince "is a minister of priests and their inferior". John states that the prince accepts the sword from the hand of the Church. This sword gives him the authority for bodily coercion, yet the Papacy reserves spiritual authority (John, 2007). That law and justice are indispensable for the state and that civil law should be an expression of the supreme natural law is found in the ideas of Cicero, the Stoics and the Roman jurists; John drew on these as well as on St. Augustine and St. Ambrose (Copleston, 1993b). In this way, he was able to argue that the temporal ruler is accountable to natural law, even if not to the governed. However, in practice, this serves to keep the prince as a mere "minister" of the Church, which falls well short of sovereign rulership.

According to John, the prince who does not recognize the commandments of God and the Church becomes a tyrant, and it is lawful to kill him. In fact, killing him is a moral imperative. He asserts that "devoted shoulders are to support the ruler", but "in so far as he is subject to God and follows His decrees" (John, 2007, p. 137). Thus, there is a point at which the rightful ruler becomes a tyrant. Tyrant is the ruler who "oppresses the people by violent domination," while the prince is "one who rules by the laws," laws, which are "a gift of God" and "the norm of justice" (John, 2007). The tyrant who usurps the law commits a "public crime" and becomes a "public enemy". When that happens, slaying him is not only permitted but equitable (John, 2007).

On the issue of Church-prince relations, John sides with the Church and supports the Two Swords Theory. As an extension to the organismic view, if society is a body, the Church is its soul, and the soul is superior to the whole of the body, including the head (John, 2007). The supreme law is the law of God, and any duty that falls under this law is a religious duty. In other words, the prince's sword of government is also a sword of religious duty, that is, it belongs to the Church. The Church holds the spiritual sword, while the prince holds the sword of earthly coercive power. Ultimately, however, both swords belong to the Church. Since political power belongs to the Church, the prince is merely a functionary who exercises it and must exercise his power in accordance with the Church's commands (Güngör, 2015).

The right to resist in his thought, although ostensibly aimed at limiting the authority of kings and protecting subjects, in fact paves the way for Church intervention. The theory itself specifically states that the Church is superior to the earthly ruler and holds all the keys to his legitimacy. Moreover, as Taylor (2006) argues, *Policraticus* was deeply intertwined with high politics. While John had been gathering materials for his treatise for some time, the event that pushed the book to completion was King Henry II's attempt to tax the Church.

2. THE EFFORTS OF MEDIATION BY THE MODERATES

During the heyday of *plenitudo potestatis*, the 12th century, the only people with the education to produce abstract ideas were the Church elite. The spread of literacy and the universities initiated by the Church itself changed this situation. In the 13th and 14th centuries, there were now also educated people in the service of the secular powers. Kings and emperors now had their own jurists and writers, whether secular or clerical. To provide them with the necessary ammunition, the popularity of both Aristotle and Roman law was very useful (Güngör, 2016). At this date, kings were now on the road to sovereignty, where the Empire and the Papacy had been for a long time. After a long and arduous process, unlike these two, they would succeed (Jouvenel, 1972).

Times were changing, and the daring tones of *plenitudo potestatis* and Two Swords Theory were now untenable. Great Scholastics of that time tried to safeguard papal power and legitimacy by devising moderate theories instead of supremacist claims, even though Popes themselves did not always adhere to their doctrines. Two great examples of these Scholastic moderates were St. Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham. Meanwhile, in France, the political success of the French monarchy encouraged theorists to devise theories to free it from papal tutelage. The most important of these theorists was Jean of Paris. Jean did not go further than Ockham in rejecting papal authority and thus can be classified as a moderate.

It is true that St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the most important thinker of Catholic philosophy besides St. Augustinus, lived at a time when the political power of the Papacy was at its peak. However, this peak was also the point when this power began to wane. Philosophically, Aquinas lived in a period of transition from Platonic to Aristotelian philosophy, and politically, he lived in a period of transition in which the Church's claims of absolute supremacy over secular authority began to be questioned and the feudal order, which made this absolute supremacy possible in a sense, began to dissolve and centralized authorities that could rival the Church began to emerge (Salihpaşaoğlu, 2014). A master synthesizer, Aquinas studied and was inspired by the thought of many authors, but his biggest influence was Aristotle. Around 1260, Aristotle's *Politiká* (Politics) was translated into Latin, and it gave thinkers of the time the choice of adopting a more naturalistic Aristotelian orientation on issues such as authority and the origin of the state, or remaining on the earlier Platonic Augustinian theological plane. Aquinas essentially adopted a hybrid approach of the two (Eardley & Still, 2010).

The basis of Aquinas' theory of the state, as in many theories of the state, is human nature. He accepted Aristotle's view of the *zoon politikon* (political animal) (Aristotle, 1999) and adapted it to his thought. However, this term, which Aristotle, writing about human life in the ancient Greek polis, used to express that there was no social-public distinction in human life, was translated as *animal politicum et sociale* (political and social animal) in Aquinas. According to him;

"The first is that man is by nature a social animal, with the result that people in the state of innocence would have lived together socially. When the people are many, their living

together would not be possible without someone in charge who would look to the good of all..." (Aquinas, 2024, p. 1498).

For Aquinas, then, even though man is social and is driven to social life, social life itself does not complete human ends; the political community exists as a necessary structure for coordinating social life toward the common good. Political authority is thus understood as more of a functional and directive structure, rather than constitutive of human perfection.

Since political power arises out of necessity (i.e., is not directly natural or Godly), certain responsibilities need to be imposed on it. It should not aim for the individual interests of men but for the common good. Aquinas, like John of Salisbury, is an organismist, but he does not make the State-Church connection as John did. He develops a theory of law to do that (Coleman, 2000). Aquinas' theory of law is where he reformulates *plenitudo potestatis* in a much more moderate manner; however, he still holds the Pope somewhat above the temporal ruler. "Law [*lex*] is nothing other than a dictate of reason of a ruler by which subjects are governed," thus it is binding. However, this does not mean a pure positive law is to be accepted, since he also asserts that "it is proper to law to bring subjects to the virtues proper to themselves". Thus, law gains legitimacy from the virtue of the lawgiver. What makes the law not equal to the will is the question of whether or not it reasonably prioritizes the "Common Good regulated by divine justice" or the private good (Aquinas, 1993a).

In accordance, in *Summa Theologiae* [Summary of Theology], I-II, Question 91, Articles 1–4, Aquinas defined four different types of laws. These are "eternal law" (*lex aeterna*), "natural law" (*lex naturalis*), "human law" (*lex humana*), and "divine law" (*lex divina*). In Aquinas' political philosophy, there is a distinction between man as a natural being, man as a member of society, man as a citizen, and man as a Christian. Natural man obeys eternal law and the law of nature. The citizen is subject to human law. As a Christian, he obeys the divine law. The logical consequence of this distinction is the separation of the spheres of sovereignty of the state, based on human law, and the Church, based on divine law (Aquinas, 1993). Of course, the eternal law is superior to human law, but Aquinas is not a proponent of *plenitudo potestatis*. He recognizes that the basis of the state is human law. Although power comes from God, the existing political organization, with its various forms of exercise, is the result of natural law, since the state itself is already natural. In this case, there is no need for the Church to constantly intervene in the state to bring it back to lawfulness.

On the other hand, this does not eliminate the problem of the tyrant. What happens if the ruler does not act in accordance with natural law? This is addressed in *De Regno* [On Kingship]. Quoting John of Salisbury directly on tyrannicide, he proceeds to reject his view as "not in accord with apostolic teaching" and also "dangerous" in practice. According to him, if the tyrant derives his legitimacy from being elected by the people, then he can be deposed; if he is appointed by a higher authority, it is that authority's duty to remove him from office. If none of these are applicable, then "recourse must be had to God", i.e., people should turn to God for "divine help" (Aquinas, 1949). Only here does Aquinas *almost* grant the Pope supervisory authority, even though he does not mention it directly. This is because Jesus is the head of God's state, and the Pope is his successor. Even though the state functions freely in its own realm, natural law ultimately trumps positive law. Public authority should promote the "good life", but in turn, what the good life is will be learned from "God's law" on which the Church is the "universal educator". However, he rejects that the Church can intervene if the earthly ruler does not prevent good life. He, on the other hand,

assumes that the public, once educated by the Church, will themselves remove the ruler who does not promote common good (Coleman, 2000).

Although Aquinas took a position closer to the Church, he can be characterized as a happy medium. Wilks (1963) argues that Christian Aristotelianism was by itself a “contradiction in terms” and led to “intellectual schizophrenia”. As the later medieval Christian thought failed, Thomism has not proven to be a last defense of The Age of Faith against The Age of Reason, but actually accelerated the former’s collapse. However, this viewpoint can be argued to overlook structural factors. Firstly, by the end of the Middle Ages, the *plenitudo potestatis* arguments were outdated, but the Popes insisted on them rather than adopting Aquinas’ middle-of-the-road approach. Thus, it is true that the Papacy lost a great deal of power, but it did not adopt Thomism meanwhile. More importantly, the real reason for the collapse was that the Papacy’s opponents were growing stronger and multiplying. In addition to the emperor, who was the Pope’s only worldly rival, the kings of England and France, who had completed their organization and established their own bureaucracies, were emerging by the mid-12th century. The rich Italian city-states also sometimes joined the rivalry (Mosca, 1972). In addition, feudal social elements were losing power while new elements, such as the bourgeoisie, were rising (Didin, 2025).

A renowned philosopher and theologian, William of Ockham (1287-1347) later became a “Scholastic radical” at the court of Ludwig of Bavaria, writing harshly against the Pope (Rickaby, 1911). His work fully turned towards politics in 1337 (Shogimen, 2007). His *Breviloquium de principatu tyrannico* [A Short Discourse on Tyrannical Government], dated c. 1341-1342, is his most important work in the context of *plenitudo potestatis*. There, Ockham rejects papal *plenitudo potestatis*, defines the source of emperor’s legitimate power, and lays out why neither Scripture nor human law can prove its subordination to the Pope. Ockham first argues that the Pope’s power is not unlimited and unconditional since his authority only extends so far. Pope has a well-defined “apostolic authority” (authority given to apostles) based on the Scripture (for example he has no authority to depose a king), its purpose is “the advantage of the sheep [subjects]” and limits of its office (for example he cannot impose notably burdensome measures) (Ockham, 1992).

In accordance with the above qualifications, Ockham goes on to claim that the Pope has no authority to depose emperors. The argument here is two-fold; the Roman emperor gets his power from God himself and also from the people; he says the Roman Empire is “from God alone”, follows it by saying “the Roman Empire is from God in such a way that it is from the people, who established the Roman Empire.” (Ockham, 1992, pp. 111-112). Neither idea leaves any room for *plenitudo potestatis*. If the emperor did get his power from the Pope, the Pope may have had such authority. Moreover, according to the Scripture, the Church’s power does not extend to the temporal realm and “spiritual and temporal jurisdiction are distinct and separate” (Ockham, 1992, p. 36).

Ockham argues that the state was created by men and for men, and that its duty is to defend the rights and liberties of men. The king or prince who rules the state is obliged to defend the common good; he can make positive laws for this purpose, but he must respect the principles of natural law and feudal rights and freedoms. His power is not absolute and obedience is conditional. Even though a clear “right to resistance” is not developed, the government for Ockham is instrumental and bound by duty (of promoting the common good). Even the Papacy is an instrument, an instrument of God (McGrade, 1974). According to McGrade, by rejecting both descending (i.e., papal supremacy) and ascending thesis (i.e., popular sovereignty) of political

authority, Ockham wanted to “widen the gap between secular and spiritual government” so that they very rarely overlap (McGrade, 1974).

Ockham’s inclusion of the people in his formula for government authority instead of an intrinsic right was an ingenious precaution against the usurpation of the control of worldly power by the Pope. Papal authority is accepted, but such authority is severely limited by multiple qualifications. However, not content with this, Ockham also applied a similar nominalist approach to the Church itself, arguing that the spiritual power of the Church derives from all believers, and therefore, the Pope does not hold absolute power over the Church itself. The worldly and ecclesiastical governments are approached formally and structurally in the same manner, the only difference of the ecclesiastical is that it governs another community (of believers) (McGrade, 1974). Moreover, just as the Pope has the right to intervene in the case of temptation of the secular ruler, in the case of “papal heresy”, a “General Council” may be summoned. Without awaiting papal authority, the council may be summoned by bishops; if they refuse, it may be summoned by secular rulers, and, as a last resort, by any Catholic (Jacob, 1936).

Ockham, while rejecting *plenitudo potestatis*, is nevertheless not in full opposition to the Church holding any power. In Aquinas, the Church is superior to temporal rulers despite not having supremacy. Ockham, on the other hand, envisaged a sort of parallel limitation between temporal rulers and the Church, thus going further away from *plenitudo potestatis*. However, he never gave temporal rulers spiritual power, nor did he deny the divinely ordained power of the papal office like Marsilius of Padua. (McGrade, 1974). Ockham is not important for constructing a systematic theory (which he did not), but in providing systematic limits to powers in the form of various conditions, exceptions and responsibilities. As McGrade (1974) put it; “By substituting rational, utilitarian considerations for the cosmic and theological analogies of the papalists, Ockham effectively decreased the specifically religious meaning of the institutions of church government. It is not necessarily a matter of reducing the pope’s power, but of changing its character.”

Jean (John) of Paris (c. 1255-1306) was writing at a time when the king of France was winning victories against the Pope. He was on the side of the French crown during the Franco-papal conflict between Philippe (the Fair) and Bonifacius VIII. His theory shows the extension of the *plenitudo potestatis* debate from an Empire-Pope conflict to a broader spiritual-temporal conflict and it testifies to the growing confidence and institutional power of the French monarchy at the turn of the 14th century. According to Sabine (1960), Jean’s book *De potestate regia et papali* [On Royal and Papal Power] was the most important work written in defense of the French crown during that era. Jean’s political theory starts on Aristotelian foundations and proceeds with Thomistic underpinnings. Political society is natural. As the head of this natural society, the earthly power, which is itself natural, has a responsibility that extends to the moral plane to lead men into the common good (Monahan, 1974). For Jean, kingship itself derives from natural law and the law of nations and is defined as “rule over a community perfectly ordered to the common good by one person.” Jean prefers rule by a single person as long as he is “pre-eminent in virtue” because such a rule means more concentrated virtue and better unity (John, 1974). Priesthood’s aim, however, is different. For Jean, its duty is guiding men through “eternal life” and its power is “spiritual power given by Christ to ministers of the Church for dispensing the sacraments to the faithful” (John, 1974, pp. 10-11). The core of his theory aims to give kingship and priesthood separate spheres, which would make *plenitudo potestatis* impossible.

To separate the spheres thoroughly, he claims that kingship is more ancient than priesthood. Moreover, the former does not derive from the latter. He does concede that priesthood has greater

dignity than kingship; however, this does not mean it is superior in all things. Higher spiritual power does not mean higher secular power. Everything arises from the same power, which is divine power, and is made superior in the field in which God willed them to be superior. The implicit conclusion that follows from this is that kingship is just as Godly as the priesthood. In addition, Jean explicitly states that secular power is greater in temporal matters than spiritual power, and that it is in no way subject to it in that sphere (John, 1974). Thus, the temporal and spiritual power, although both deriving from God, should be accepted to have separate spheres of authority. The Church, as the universal holder of spiritual power, is legitimate, but this does not mean that it is superior to earthly power. Jesus, who said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” clearly does not have the sword of earthly power, and even if he did, he did not pass it down to Peter. Therefore, neither does the Pope, even if he is his vicar. In fact, the king’s power comes from God but through the mediation of people themselves: “kingly power is not from the pope either in itself or in respect to exercise ... it is from God and from the people electing a king in a person or family.” Even prelates get their power the same way (“people choosing and consenting”), even though he accepts that lesser pontiffs are more dependent on the Pope’s mediation (John, 1974). It is important to note here that even though he separates the temporal and spiritual spheres beyond a certain level, at the sub-sacramental level, there is no clear distinction, and neither of the two powers is purely secular or spiritual. This is also a functional requirement because, on one hand, the Papacy needs earthly power (for example, property) to operate, while the prince rules over a Christian people. There can be crises that justify their “indirectly” intervention in each other’s spheres. In both cases, it should be the people who will be doing the deposition, but they can be given active encouragement (Canning, 2015).

Jean wrote at a time when it was quite fashionable to present arguments proving the independence of the king of France from the Pope. In fact, his claim that both the king and the Pope have sovereignty only in their own sphere of sovereignty and therefore have the right to intervene when one party violates this sphere is significant, considering that a year later, King Philippe committed violence against Pope Bonifacius VIII. But the real innovation in John’s political philosophy is that while the king derives his power from God, there is an intermediary, and that is the people. Both for papacy and kingship, Jean gives a role to consent. Given his reference to the state of nature and, to some extent, to consent in the establishment of a political community, it would not be wrong to classify Jean as a thinker who envisioned the social contract and thus popular sovereignty in medieval thought as early as 1303 (Copleston, 1993b).

In this chapter, we followed the gradual erosion of *plenitudo potestatis* in the theoretical realm through a shifting theo-political landscape. As it has been demonstrated, the decline in the Church’s intellectual as well as political monopoly gave way to increasingly confident and increasingly secular theories. Even in Aquinas, there has been a call to restricted papal authority. With Ockham and Jean’s theories, the balance started to tilt towards temporal rulers. Aquinas and Jean’s calls to natural law aim to bind both the Pope and the prince while both Ockham and Jean try to separate earthly and spiritual realms in order to free their patrons from papal yoke. Jean’s political philosophy is similar in style and conclusions to Ockham, as they are both Scholastic thinkers and both tilt towards favoring temporal rulers without fully rejecting papal authority. However, it can be observed that Ockham’s nominalism compared to the moderate realism followed by Jean and Aquinas carries a higher potential to dissolve established authorities such as the papal authority. Collectively, all these three positions reflect a major reconfiguration of medieval theo-politics as they inject concepts such as Aristotelian naturalism, consent, functional authority, and separation of the temporal and the spiritual into the theoretical discussion.

3. THE ENEMIES OF PLENITUDO POTESTATIS

As temporal rulers became stronger and the Pope lost its grip on European politics, its intellectual rivals became more daring. The most important of the anti-papal authority theorists of the time are Dante Alighieri and Marsilius of Padua from Italy. Dante (1265-1321) is a world-renowned literary figure and poet known for works such as *Commedia* [The Divine Comedy]. Beyond his literary legacy, Dante was active in both daily politics and political theory during the turbulent period in which he lived. 12th-century Italy was a fragmented and chaotic place. By the mid-13th century, Florence, where Dante lived, had experienced great economic development to become a wealthy city-state; however, the city was not politically peaceful, both externally and internally. Two rival parties, the Guelfi and the Ghibellini, were active in Florentine politics; the former was the pro-Church and the latter the anti-Church party. Dante was initially a Guelfi and later became a Ghibellini due to the influence of his family (Korkmaz, 2015).

Dante's work on political philosophy dates from 1312-1313 and is entitled *De Monarchia* [On Monarchy]. Dante's purpose was the same as all the writers who had written in defense of the empire: to show that it had received his power directly from God, not through the Church (Sabine, 1960). However, Dante did not stop there, as he advocated giving the temporal ruler a universal power like the Pope. *De Monarchia* contains three books to prove three arguments; Book I defends that "monarchy" (Dante uses the word throughout the book to mean universal monarchy, not kingship) is necessary for universal well-being, Book II defends that the Romans rightfully acquired this office, and Book III defends that the monarch got his authority directly from God.

For Dante, any inquiry has to proceed from a first principle, and for human society, this first principle is "purpose". "The highest faculty in a human being ... is to exist as a creature who apprehends by means of the potential intellect." (Dante, 1992, p. 7). Accordingly, proper activity for man is to actualize this potentiality through thought and action. For Dante, this activity is divine and "mankind most freely and readily attends to this activity ... in the calm or tranquillity of peace." (Dante, 1992, p. 8). This, in turn, makes "universal peace" the highest ideal that has been "ordained," and it is thus the first principle of political philosophy. Dante proceeds to answer the first question according to that (Dante, 1996).

Firstly, only monarchy brings the order that is required for well-being, and thus everything should be ordered under a kingdom and kingdoms themselves under a monarchy. Secondly, when conflict arises between equals and neither can judge the other, there should be a higher party that has the authority over both to solve this conflict. If this party is not monarch (i.e., supreme) no final decision will be possible. Hence, "justice is at its strongest in the world when it is located in the monarch alone." For Dante, greed is the biggest threat to justice. Even kings will feel greed as their kingdoms are limited by borders, but this universal monarch will feel no greed as "there is nothing the monarch could covet." In addition, a monarchy guarantees the most amount of freedom. When freedom is defined as acting for one's own sake, tyrannies, democracies, and oligarchies instrumentalize citizens because of private interests in politics. On the other hand, since the monarch lacks greed, he will act as the servant of the people in terms of "ends" even though he is sovereign in terms of "means". Finally, he argued that the birth of Jesus during the reign of Augustus proved the legitimacy of the universal kingdom (Dante, 1996).

Book II aims at answering the question of why this monarchy should be the Holy Roman Empire. Dante follows a historicist argument; political right is based on divine providence, and accordingly, legitimate universal rule must coincide with God's will as revealed in history. Trying to appropriate history to fit this argument, he accepts every event narrated by Roman historians and

troubadours as true, and claims that the greatness of Rome was the work of God, that the Romans are a noble people, and that God is on their side by seeing miracles in the success of the Romans. The fact that the Roman people are a chosen people and are trying to conquer the world suggests they are looking out for the good of the world. Therefore, the Romans have a right to rule not on force alone but on divine right (Dante, 1996). Book III directly attacks *plenitudo potestatis*. Dante rejects that the earthly sword belongs to the Church. Emperors and Popes rule over different realms and have no jurisdiction over each other's realms (Dante, 1996). Overall, Dante grants no earthly authority to the Church, and since it has a different jurisdiction than emperor, it has no authority to intervene directly in worldly politics.

Overall, Dante introduced several theoretical innovations; however, his relatively brief political theory relies on a number of theoretical leaps of faith and contains several underdeveloped elements. He is then arguably eclipsed by a better theoretician who is also his contemporary, Marsilius of Padua (1275-1342). Marsilius is another Italian who lived in the Commune of Padua, which at the time was a very anti-papal place. The Commune was so opposed to the Pope that it went far beyond abolishing Church privileges. For example, killing a non-Churchman was punishable by death, and killing a priest was punishable by a fine (Mosca, 1972). Perhaps encouraged by this intellectual climate, Marsilius, in contrast to the middle-of-the-road or separation of powers theories, defended the clear supremacy of secular power in his *Defensor Pacis* [Defender of Peace] of 1324 and put forward the most radical theory. The author, who, like Dante, was pro-emperor, was excommunicated when it was discovered that he was the author of this book and took refuge with the then Emperor Ludwig IV, with whom he remained until his death (Coleman, 2000). Compared to Ockham, who also opposed the power of the Pope and became a protégé of Ludwig, his conclusions differed greatly. Whereas Ockham was a proponent of balance, Marsilius sought to abolish papal sovereignty altogether. According to Wood (2008), this was due to the differences between the medieval English state and Italian civil society. However, it can also be because Ockham was a deeply religious Scholastic.

In *Defensor Pacis*, Discourse One is where Marsilius constructs a general political theory that ultimately aims to determine the criteria of legitimate authority, while Discourse Two is polemical against *plenitudo potestatis* claims (Canning, 2011). Since our focus is on political theory, Discourse One is what we primarily focus on. Marsilius starts by defining the greatest good of man, "sufficiency of life," and claims that no one can attain it without "peace and tranquility," whose fruits are the "greatest goods". It is then contrasted with "discord", or "intranquility," whose fruits are "unbearable evils" (Marsilius, 1980, pp. 3-5). Here, it is seen that just like Dante, Marsilius starts with a first principle and builds a normative theory upon that. The first principle in both is also very similar. However, when we compare the theories, which lay out how the principle is to be reached, Marsilius puts forth a significantly more advanced theory. He also bases the origin of the civil community on Aristotelian foundations, as he argues that the family is formed by the union of men and women as the natural and smallest community, and that the first society emerges when families come together. The first communities that emerge this way are villages, and as men's experience, arts, rules, and ways of living were discovered, by reason and experience, they establish the "perfect community", or state. Initially, smaller communities are run according to "quasi-natural law," but as society becomes more advanced, real law becomes necessary (Marsilius, 1980).

According to Marsilius, the purpose of the state is both life and the good life. The good life is divided into temporary (earthly) and eternal (afterlife). These make both the society and the state necessary. Since man is born "bare and unprotected", he needs various arts to protect himself

from harms. However, these arts cannot be exercised alone; thus, man needs society. Moreover, to prevent conflict by safeguarding a norm of justice, manage common material needs, provide security, and provide guidance in divine matters, a state is required. (Marsilius, 1980). In explaining the organization of the state, Marsilius took an organismic approach and analogized the social order to the body (Marsilius, 1980). According to him, just as when parts in the body are not ordered properly health is damaged; when the parts in the body politic are not ordered properly tranquility is damaged. It should be noted that he was indeed a medical doctor, so he was able to stretch this analogy further. Just like an animal body, the body politic was a closed system and thus needed no justification outside its body. Marsilius argues that the main factor holding civil society together was law, and just like each body, each body politic is the source of its own law (*lex*) (Canning, 2011).

Government should be voluntary, and Marsilius calls involuntary government “diseased”. The principle of non-tyrannical government is “the consent of the subjects and law established for their common benefit”. Accordingly, since elected government is more consensual, Marsilius prefers an elected monarchy (Marsilius, 1980). This still leaves the issue of law and how exactly it is to be established for “common benefit”. Law is a statement “emerging from prudence and political understanding”; concerns “justice and benefit and their opposites,” and it has “coercive force”. Law is primarily made for civil justice and common benefit, but secondarily it is to the benefit of the rulers as it guides them (Marsilius, 1980). Law is made by the “people or the whole body of citizens, or the weightier part thereof”, the “weightier part” is so according to its “quantity and the quality” (Marsilius, 1980). Here Marsilius, while giving the legislative power to the whole body of the citizens, tries to avoid tyranny by the pure numerical majority by adding “quality”. This quality is not based on some kind of traditional authority. Marsilius envisages a law-making process in which the whole body of citizens authorizes (i.e., elects) the “prudent and experienced” on the discovery of laws and, after the laws are discovered, “they must be laid before the assembled whole body of citizens for their approval or disapproval”. Even though the masses lack the wisdom to discover law, they are nevertheless able to suggest amendments (Marsilius, 1980).

It should be underlined that in Marsilius, the king is not the legislator. Thus, he envisages a separation of the executive and legislative branches. Another thing to note here is that Marsilius is more interested in law’s legitimacy than its compliance with some criterion of justice. Even though he also entertains the idea of a law having the correct form but being unjust (Marsilius, 1980), this is an extreme case and does not carry any weight in his argument. Law’s legitimacy, deriving primarily from its form, is essential for what Marsilius is trying to do. Trying to block papal interference into temporal politics once and for all, Marsilius brought the law down from the Gods down to the earth and envisaged that the law should be made by citizens, not subject to any normative tutelage such as natural law. As Canning (2011) observes, by admitting that law can be imperfect but taking it as nevertheless binding, he tries to eliminate the possibility of another power (i.e., the Papacy) asserting authority to judge the legislator. Thus, he went further than anyone else in pushing Pope out of temporal politics, since it is unclear how, in his system, the Pope will exercise even spiritual authority. To block papal interference once and for all, Marsilius came dangerously close to inventing positive law and killing natural law. Marsilius’ approach took the *plenitudo potestatis* debate to a very different level, for although there were thinkers before him who opposed the Two Swords Theory, no one opposed the *existence* of two swords. Previous scholars only argued that the Church should leave one of the swords to the secular power and interfere with it as little as possible. Marsilius’ theory however, left no room for any transcendental Church argument to explain the origin and purposes of the state.

The notion that the formation of society is based on reason and partly on consent, the necessity of the division of labor for the existence and continuation of society, the attribution of worldly goals such as the common good to society, a secularized legislative process and the idea of separate legislative and executive branches are common notions in modern political theory. These are only some of the concepts Marsilius either invented or theoretically further advanced. In this case, it would not be wrong to characterize Marsilius as a theorist far ahead of his time. His arguments would be revisited by writers such as Luther and Calvin in the Reformation, Hobbes and Grotius in political theory (Bullowa, 1895). Even though he has it in common with Dante, it is also significant that he based his theory on peace, centuries before Bodin (1955) and Hobbes (1985), who did the same thing.

4. CONCLUSION

This study provided a detailed panorama of the theories circulated around the assertion and rejection of *plenitudo potestatis* during the 12th-14th centuries in order to follow the accelerating development of political theory during the era. Apart from the *plenitudo potestatis* itself, most systematically defended by John of Salisbury, we identified two groups of political theorists: those that adopt a moderate stance and those that reject and attack *plenitudo potestatis* and papal power as a whole. According to this classification, the theories have been systematically analyzed and important concepts and themes present in them have been identified.

The study started with the analysis of the political theory of John of Salisbury, a proponent of *plenitudo potestatis*, who is also regarded as the first systematic political theorist of the Medieval era. Following the organismic modelling of the society, John gives the temporal ruler full authority as the leader of the realm. However, he then imposes heavy responsibilities on him. While doing that, he uses some kind of natural law framework. This framework is the yardstick according to which it is understood whether or not a ruler is a tyrant, in which case he will face the heavy punishment of death. As he also places the Church strictly above the prince and delegates the prince to the status of being the Church's minister for worldly affairs, John devises a theory that supports papal supremacy. However, what is essential for the history of political ideas is that John devised a natural law theory according to which the ruler's legitimacy will be determined, even though it can be considered a cynical attempt to provide a legitimate route of papal interference in temporal politics. Accordingly, he put forward a right to resist model.

Thomas Aquinas was trying to devise an appropriate happy medium between the Pope and temporal rulers, which can be perhaps attributed to this deeply religious Scholastic's wish to safeguard the Pope's long-term influence. In Aquinas, we see an adaptation of Aristotelianism, which started to dominate Western philosophy at the time. In the context of *plenitudo potestatis*, which Aquinas does not defend, the Thomist understanding of law carries the most importance. Just like John, Aquinas ties rulers' legitimacy to natural law; however, his natural law theory is much more advanced. He identifies different types of law and ties temporal authority to human law, which is not as exalted as divine law but still is the primary law for temporal affairs. The Church, being a higher authority in general, is not given the authority to interfere in the prince's affairs. On the other hand, the Church is given the role of "universal educator," which gives it an indirect route to interfere in worldly politics. In the context of general political theory, the grand tradition of Thomism cannot be done justice here. It will suffice to say that even in Aquinas' theory, the conflict around *plenitudo potestatis* is observed to have had its effect.

William of Ockham, a protégé of Emperor Ludwig IV, moved further away from the Church's side as he tried to erode the Church's authority without suggesting its abolition. For Ockham,

spiritual and temporal jurisdictions are distinct, and thus he rejects not only *plenitudo potestatis* but also any interference of the Church in worldly politics. To defend this view, he constructs a theory that contains some of the first examples of utilitarian thinking. For Ockham, political authority is instrumental and conditional, and it is bound by both the common good and natural law. In contrast with the full authority of *plenitudo potestatis*, Ockham strictly defines the papal authority and what it can and cannot do. His theory is aimed at strictly separating the temporal and spiritual powers' realms and thus eliminating the possibility of conflict. In rare cases, however, rulers of both realms can interfere in each other's realms. Since he devises a political theory that has a place for the Pope as well as the temporal ruler, Ockham is a moderate on the issue of *plenitudo potestatis*. All in all, Ockham, while trying to put the Pope-emperor conflict at rest, ended up devising a host of innovations. He ended up exemplifying the applications of nominalism to political philosophy. Moreover, he tried to devise a theory that has the common good of people in mind, besides abstract notions of divine authority, to restrict the role of spiritual authority while increasing the role of temporal authority.

Another protégé of a lay ruler, Jean of Paris, constructs an Aristotelian-Thomist theory to prove, just like Ockham, that kingship and priesthood have separate spheres. He defends that kingship is not only more ancient than priesthood it is just as Godly as priesthood. Since both are purposefully created by God, the prince is superior to the Pope in temporal politics, which is his field. To support his claim against *plenitudo potestatis*, Jean asserts that kingship does not derive from the Pope because it is from God and the people electing the king. Thus, trying to devise a theory against the papal supremacy, he put forth a rudimentary account of popular sovereignty and a proto-social contract as early as the 13th century. Just as rudimentary but nevertheless existent in his thought is the separation of church and state, even though he accepts that neither kingship nor priesthood is exclusively secular or spiritual.

The final and perhaps the most intriguing stage of the debate is represented in this work by Dante Alighieri and Marsilius of Padua, who both not only reject papal supremacy entirely but also go some steps further. The thing that makes Dante a more radical enemy of *plenitudo potestatis* than Ockham in our classification is the fact that Ockham does allow the Pope to intervene temporally in very exceptional cases (and vice versa), whereas Dante does not allow such an intervention. Dante's political theory proceeds from a defined "first principle": peace. Building upon that principle, Dante is of the opinion that only a supreme universal monarch can maintain peace, which is the primary prerequisite of human well-being. This type of rule has the advantages of unity, conflict resolution and freedom. According to Dante, nothing but an absolute universal monarch can bring about those benefits; hence, such a ruler is the only legitimate ruler. Dante then proceeds to argue why this universal monarch should be the Holy Roman emperor, and he does not owe his power to the Pope. What is significant in Dante is how he constructed a theory of the state in order to push the Pope out of the picture; in his theory, the emperor has philosophical right to rule while the Pope is confined to the spiritual realm with no authority to intervene in the temporal. Compared to the strictly medieval theories of John and Aquinas and even Ockham and Jean in some sense, Dante's theory has a distinct style. His theory legitimizes his preferred political position based on the earthly common good rather than spiritual maxims and heralds a new way of thinking. Even though it is a rudimentary attempt at political theory, its Bodinian character is evident. As Canning states (2011) "for Dante, the emperor's legitimate authority was ultimately justified by its fruits"; this identical sentence could have been used for Bodin or Hobbes.

The last thinker investigated, Marsilius of Padua, offers the most radical rejection of *plenitudo potestatis*. Marsilius took all the anti-ecclesiastical aspects present in previous theories,

took them to their logical conclusions, and supported them with a far more robust theoretical account. In a similar manner to Dante, he identifies peace and tranquility as the highest political goods. For Marsilius, a community should elect its own king and make its own laws without outside interference. He devises a two-stage legislative process in which the “weightier” part of the populace legislates, reminiscent of the two-stage legislative process (cabinet + assembly) in some modern states. The king (executive) then will rule with full authority, but according to the law made by the whole body politic. No religious influence on law is accepted, eliminating the possibility of any papal interference. When we consider that it was written in 1324, it is impossible to overstate how original *Defensor Pacis* is. In addition to making use of modern concepts such as human reason, consent, and popular government, Marsilius’ theory contains developed conceptions of the institutional separation of church and state, the separation of the legislative and executive branches, a fully secular and positive law, and a model of communitarianism.

This study presented a focused and detailed examination of how the theorists engaged in the grand debate around *plenitudo potestatis* presented their arguments. These theories, which spanned from the mid-12th to the early-mid 14th century, constituted a formative moment for many new approaches to political theory. The sheer originality of these theories testifies to the view that periods of political crisis stimulate especially fruitful debates and foster innovation in political theory.

AUTHOR STATEMENT

Statement of Research and Publication Ethics

This study has been prepared in accordance with scientific research and publication ethics.

Author Contributions

Emre Didin: Contribution rate (100%).

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest for the authors or third parties arising from the study.

REFERENCES

- Aristotle (1999). *Politics* (B. Jowett, Trans.). Batoche Books.
- Aquinas, T. (1949). *On kingship, to the king of Cyprus* (G. B. Phelan, Trans.). Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies.
- Aquinas, T. (1993). *The treatise on law: Summa theologiae, I-II; qq. 90-97: Volume 4* (R. J. Henle, Trans.). University of Notre Dame Press.
- Aquinas, T. (2024). *Summa theologiae, prima pars, Volume 3* (W. H. Marshner, Trans.). The Catholic University of America Press.
- Benson, R. L. (1967). *Plenitudo potestatis: Evolution of a formula from Gregory IV to Gratian. Studia Gratiana*, 14, 193-217.
- Bodin, J. (1955). *Six books of a commonwealth* (M. J. Tooley, Trans.). Basil Blackwell.
- Bullowa, F. E. (1895). *The history of the theory of sovereignty*. William R. Jenkins.

- Canning, J. (2011). *Ideas of power in the late middle ages 1296-1417*. Cambridge University Press.
- Canning, J. (2015). Ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction in the thought of John of Paris. In C. Jones (ed.) *John of Paris: Beyond royal and papal power*, Brepols Publishers, 35-48.
- Coleman, J. (2000). *A history of political thought: From the middle ages to the renaissance*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Copleston, F. (1993a). *A history of philosophy volume ii: Medieval philosophy*. Image Books.
- Copleston, F. (1993b). *A history of philosophy volume iii: Late medieval and renaissance philosophy*. Image Books.
- Dante (1996). *Monarchy* (P. Shaw, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.
- Didin, D. B. (2025). *Doğa bilimlerinin hukuk felsefesine etkisi: Modern ve postmodern paradigma ekseninde bir değerlendirme* (3rd ed.). Adalet Yayınevi.
- Evkuran, M. (2003). Ortaçağ paradigması ve siyasal düşüncenin evrimi. *Gazi Üniversitesi Çorum İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2(4), 37-58.
- Eardley, P. S., & Still, C. N. (2010). *Aquinas: A guide for the perplexed*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Güngör, C. (2015). *Policraticus ve Salisbury'li John'un siyaset kuramı*. Barış Kitap.
- Güngör, C. (2016). "Defensor Pacis" üzerine: Padovalı Marsilius'un siyaset kuramı. Barış Kitap.
- Hobbes, T. (1985). *Leviathan*. Penguin Books.
- Jacob, E. F. (1936). Some notes on Occam as a political thinker. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 20(2), 332-353.
- John, P. (1974). *John of Paris of royal and papal power*. Columbia University Press.
- John, S. (2007). *Policraticus* (7th ed.) (C. J. Nederman, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.
- Jouvenel, B. D. (1972). *Sovereignty an inquiry into the political good*. (J.F. Huntington, Trans.). The University of Chicago Press.
- Korkmaz, Ö. (2015). *Dante Alighieri: Yaşamı, eserleri ve siyaset felsefesi*. Yetkin Yayınları.
- Marsilius, P. (1980). *Defensor Pacis* (A. Gewirth, Trans.). University of Toronto Press.
- McGrade, A. S. (1974). *The political thought of William of Ockham: Personal and institutional principles*. Cambridge University Press.
- Monahan, A. P. (1974). General introduction, In Jean de Paris, *John of Paris on royal and papal power*. Columbia University Press, xi-xlix.
- Morris, C. (1989). *The papal monarchy: The western church from 1050 to 1250*. Oxford University Press.
- Morrison, K. F. (1971). *The investiture controversy: Issues, ideals and results*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Morrison, K. F. (1985). The Gregorian Reform. In B. McGinn & J. Meyendorff (ed.), *Christian spirituality: Origins to the twelfth century*. The Crossroad Publishing Company, 177-193.
- Mosca, G. (1972). *A short history of political philosophy* (S. Z. Koff, Trans.). Thomas Y. Crowell.

- Ockham, W. (1992). *A short discourse on tyrannical government* (J. Kilcullen, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.
- Rickaby, J. (1911). *Scholasticism*. Constable & Company Ltd.
- Rothman, S. (1970). *European society and politics*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company.
- Sabine, G. H. (1960). *A history of political theory* (3rd ed.). Oxford & IBH Publishing.
- Salihpaşaoğlu, Y. (2014). *Din ve devlet arasındaki iktidar mücadelesi: Avrupa örneği* (5th ed.). Adalet Yayınevi.
- Shogimen, T. (2007). *Ockham and political discourse in the late Middle Ages*. Cambridge University Press.
- Spielvogel, J. J. (2008). *Western civilization: A brief history: Volume I: To 1715 (4th ed.)*. Thomson Wadsworth.
- Stephenson, C. (1965). *Mediaeval feudalism (9th ed.)*. Cornell University Press.
- Taylor, Q. (2006). John of Salisbury, the Policraticus, and Political Thought. *Humanitas*, 19(1/2), 133-157.
- Tellenbach, G. (1948). *Church, state and Christian society at the time of the investiture contest* (R. F. Bennett, Trans.) (2nd ed.). Basil Blackwell.
- Whalen, B. E. (2019). *The two powers: The papacy, the empire, and the struggle for sovereignty in the thirteenth century*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Wilks, M. (1963). *The problem of sovereignty in the later Middle Ages*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, E. M. (2008). *Citizens to lords: A social history of western political thought from antiquity to the late Middle Ages*. Verso.