

**Disease of the Body, Disease of the State:
A Metaphor of Political Discourse
in XVIth Century England (Thomas Starkey)**

Abstract: In this paper, I try to focus upon a form of political discourse which carried considerable weight during the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the modern period, from the XIIth to the XVIIth century. That is the idea of political disease within the broader context of the analogy between the human body and the state as a „body politic”. Emerging within the XIIth century with the work of an English cleric, John of Salisbury and his treatise *Policraticus*, this metaphor of political discourse undergoes the greatest development during the XVIth century and the beginning of the XVIIth century England, within the works of several English political theorists, among which the most preeminent in this regard is Thomas Starkey (1495 - 1538). His treatise, *A Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset*, makes the object of this study, for the most detailed and ample coverage which Starkey grants to this metaphor of the political disease.

Keywords: body politic, political disease, ideal commonwealth, healer prince