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Corporal Metaphors in Richard Hooker's Political Thought Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie

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This paper aims to analyze the occurrences of the corporal metaphor in one of the most significant sixteenth century political works from England, Richard Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*. After the Elizabethan Settlement from 1559 built the foundations of what later will be called the Anglican Church, the new organization came under severe attacks from Catholics and Puritans for its perceived deviations from what both considered the "true faith". The Puritan challenge to the Settlement had been by far the most troublesome and Hooker's work was mostly addressed to them. In making his argument, Hooker occasionally resorted to the already traditional method, employing the tried and tested corporal metaphor in order to be as convincing as possible. In order to prove the weakness of the Puritan argument, Hooker argued that the human law upon which the Church of England was established during the reign of Elizabeth I was legitimate and the Puritans should conform, otherwise they could cause harm to the body politic they claimed they were trying to save.

Mots-clés :

The Elizabethan Settlement and its challenges

The reign of Elizabeth I saw the Anglican Church, which had been thrown into deep turmoil by the actions of Henry VIII and its immediate heirs, starting to assume its final shape. While originally rejecting Luther’s doctrine and arguments, in a book called *In Defence of the Seven Sacraments,* something which, ironically, brought him the title of *Defensor Fidei* from the pope, Henry VIII came to embrace his own peculiar form of Protestantism, which, while rejecting the authority of the Pope, designated only as Bishop of Rome according to the new English theory on this matter, and proclaiming the King as the Head of the Church of England, preserved much of the former Catholic hierarchy and rituals. Yet, England moved slowly towards Protestantism, farther than Henry VIII intended, as his first heir, Edward VI, albeit under age upon his ascension, clearly favored the Protestant doctrines, under the influence of his Council. A step back was about to be taken under Mary I, a devout Catholic, who was firmly determined to do away with all the “heretical” changes initiated by her father and brother: the title of Head of the Church for the English monarch was abandoned and the English protestants

were heavily persecuted. Yet, Mary's reign proved to be short, and her marriage with Philip II of Spain, intended to shore up Habsburg support and give England an illustrious alliance, produced no heir and, more so, had been deeply unpopular. It fell upon the new queen, Elizabeth I, to find a solution to this conundrum and the deep religious confusion which was starting to take over upon England and the solution she and her councilors chose was the Settlement from 1559, consisting of two main documents, the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity: the first instated Elizabeth as Supreme Governor of the Church of England, giving up the title Henry VIII had adopted, that of Head of the Church, which might have seemed unsuitable due to Elizabeth being a woman and also tainted by its association with the papal claims (Jones, 1993, 20); the second regulated religious life, requiring people to attend church on Sundays else face a fine, and set up a new Book of Common Prayer, drew largely from Edward VI's Book from 1552, but with certain alterations (Dickens, 1966, 303-5). Elizabeth and her council were rather conciliatory, avoiding the reprisals some might have expected from people who just experienced a sudden change of fortunes after the misfortunes they had endure under Mary I. For instance, it established a statute of limitations of six months for prosecuting anyone who had preached against the royal supremacy under the previous queen, which, since the Act took effect only in June 1559, basically meant a complete amnesty for any such person, and it made it quite difficult for Catholicism to be labeled as heresy (Jones, 1993, 22). Yet, despite this, it was not easy for the Act to pass: likely to the surprise of Elizabeth and her council, who might have expected things to go smoother and face little opposition, the Marian bishops were firmly against these measures and the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity passed only narrowly, after the Privy Council sent two of the antagonistic bishops to the Tower (Lockyer, 2005, 187). Yet, this settlement was problematic for both sides of the aisle. For the Catholics, Elizabeth I may indeed have given up the title her father had assumed, that of Head of the Church of England, but she retained the newly created one of Supreme Governor of the same Church and the effect was the same: the universal Church was no longer universal. In the words of J. W. Allen, if every prince was supreme head of the Church in his dominions, then what was left was only a number of separate churches and, absent any common authority, "the imaginary bond of common Christian belief shall have practically disappeared", thus the door became wide open "to every kind of heresy and irremediable division" (Allen, 1957, 202). On the other hand, for many radical Protestants, especially those who had settled at Geneva during their Marian exile and came under the influence of Calvin (Lockyer, 2005, 186), Elizabeth's Reformation did not go far enough and they would have liked to do away with all the former Catholic hierarchy, vestments and rituals which the new Church of England still retained after the settlement. Yet, despite that the lot of the Catholics under Elizabeth was harsher than that of the Radical Protestants, the former spoke less against the regime than the Protestants and one such as Thomas Stapleton could point out that "no Catholic had been convicted of disloyalty for word of deed, concerning the prince's civil regiment in the first eight years of Elizabeth's reign" (Jones, 1993, 66). Even later, the mass of English Catholics were just as resolved not to accept any foreign interference and the efforts of Jesuit missionaries to stir up rebellion were completely unsuccessful (Allen, 1957, 206).

According to A.G. Dickens, the Settlement had been "a compromise between contending forces which Elizabeth and her Stuart successors failed to reconcile", but "whereas Catholics were dangerous to Elizabeth through external forces, the Puritan problem remained internal, not only to the English society but to the English Church itself" and Puritanism "contained heavier explosive charges than Catholicism" (Dickens, 1966, 307-11). Dickens' remarks ring true, because the Catholic menace originated mostly from abroad and threatened the physical integrity of both the queen and her realm: the plots to overthrow/assassinate Elizabeth and replace her with a pliant Catholic monarch, Pius V's bull *Regnans in Excelsis*, the Spanish Armada, all represented an extremely visible danger and it was very easy for Elizabeth's regime to rally support against them. As the overwhelming majority of historians noticed, most English Catholics remained loyal and extremely hostile to such attempts. The Puritan challenge, though, was far more problematic for the government, because it could not use the force of English nationalism against it, nor was it as easy to depict the Puritans as a threat against the queen and the realm: their issues with the Elizabethan regime was much more ideological in nature, concerned with dogma and not necessarily the occupant of the throne of England. Not appealing to foreign powers, Puritans could look as genuine reformers concerned for the well-being of the queen and her kingdom – and it is likely this is how they considered themselves as well. If Catholics could be dealt with by repressive measure, a far more subtle answer was required in the case of the Puritans and one such answer was given by Richard Hooker, who, near the end of the sixteenth century, wrote one of the most important works which gave an ideological form to this struggle to protect the settlement: *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie.*

The Political Thought of Richard Hooker

Richard Hooker had been a clergyman of the Anglican Church, but without occupying a prominent position on the political stage. Even though his main work, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie,* exerted a strong influence on the conceptions regarding the relationship between state and Church in England, Hooker himself remained for his whole life a rather minor figure of the English clergy: rector of several parishes of little significance, subdean of the Salisbury cathedral, the peak of his career could be considered the moment when he had been appointed by Queen Elizabeth I, at the recommendation of the Archbishop of York, Edward Sandys, as Master of the Temple Church (whose name came from the fact that it had been the headquarter of the Templars in England, before being ceded to the Hospitallers after the dissolution of the Templars and had been confiscated in favor of the Crown by Henry VIII). Yet, his work is far more significant than his meager ecclesiastical career would suggest. In the opinion of J.W. Allen, "for breadth of view, combined with intellectual honesty and detachment, he had no serious rival save Bodin" and the same J.W. Allen pointed out that his work "was designed to show that Puritan criticism of Elizabethan Church was unsound in substance and in detail and that Puritan refusal to conform to ecclesiastical law of the

land could not rationally be justified", the book being "addressed specifically to the Puritans from the first word to the last" (Allen, 1957, 184). Basically, in the words of Torrance Kirby, Hooker tried to persuade that a complete reformation of the Church had been achieved through the Elizabethan Settlement (Kirby, 2005, 60): the opinion of Puritan critics such as Walter Travers or Thomas Cartwright was that the scriptural authority was the only one which could determine ecclesiastical matters, but Hooker, in order to achieve his purpose, insisted that natural and man-made law could also be imbued with divine authority, being just as valid as long as they did not directly contradict the divine law. The Elizabethan Settlement, as the outcome of natural law and positive law, by the working of the queen and Parliament, was thus theologically legitimate.

Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie consists of eight books, five of which had been published during Hooker's life and the other three posthumously. Donald Hanson considered that Richard Hooker tried in his treatise „to set the major lines of the medieval heritage and much of the contemporary English thought on government and law in a broad philosophical framework" (Hanson, 1970, 265) and he also pointed out that this attempt at systematization undertaken by Hooker had resulted in a certain incoherence of the text, seeming to favor the doctrine of royal supremacy and, at the same time, letting himself tempted by the model of the mixed monarchy, by accepting the principle of law's supremacy. Just like John Fortescue one century earlier, Hooker granted an extraordinary significance to the law: thus, the danger which he believed radical Protestantism posed for the law was what separated him from the latter. In the words of André Gazal, "Hooker argues against the Presbyterian thesis that Scripture provides a precise, absolute form of ecclesiastical governance", insisting that such a position "disregards other types of law" (Gazal, 2013, 503).

According to Richard Hooker, the Church of England had grown out of the law and the queen's policy, basically returning to the natural law in order to provide legitimacy to the former (Kelley, 1996, 63). In his opinion, two elements led to the emergence of the body politic: *jus naturalis,* a concept which can be found in the writings of all medieval theorists as one of the foundations of the realm, and „common law". Hooker actually identified multiple types of law, because his exposition on the law from the first book had a strong philosophical and theological character, approaching the issue of the whole macrocosm's functioning: the so-called eternal law, or „God's method", the celestial law (or scriptural law), which could be applied to the angels as well, consisting of the norms governing the whole *corpus mysticum* of the Church, natural law and human law. The last two are of greatest interest to us, because they were the foundation the body politic was built upon. Natural law was unchangeable and represented a given of the natural existence itself, present in the conscience of each individual in the form of axioms which nobody could reject as „unreasonable or unjust" (Hanson, 1970, 268), while the human law was an artificial construct:

> „Two foundations there are which beare up publique societies, the one, a naturall inclination, wherby all men desire sociable life & fellowship, the other

> an order expresly or secretly agreed upon, touching the manner of their union in living together. The later is that which we call the law of a common weale, the very soule of a politique body, the parts wherof are by law animated, held together and set on worke in such actions as common good requireth" (Hooker, 1969, 70).

This idea was obviously inspired by Aristotle, strengthened by an argumentation based on the Bible, in order to justify the emergence of those „lawes politique" as elements needed for the body politic to exist. Man's nature was assessed to be rebellious and „disobedient to the laws of nature" and the purpose of these „lawes politique" was to block the possible negative events which could have occurred if men had been free to follow their basic instincts instead of their reason. But, despite being an obvious human creation, the "lawes politique" possessed a sacred character as well. As Torrance Kirby pointed out, the human positive laws had the force of divine ordinance, thus there was an explicitly divine basis for human, positive laws and external institutions of the Church: these laws were by nature wholly distinct from the revealed law, but were nonetheless divine in a mediated fashion (Kirby, 2005, 94).

Arthur Monahan remarked that Hooker's political thought involved a reaffirmation of the medieval scholastic and Counter-Reformation corporation theory totally different from that originally espoused by the continental reformers (Monahan, 1997, 207). In this respect, the main difference resolved around the issue of the source for the political authority: for the continental Reformers, all political authority was legitimate because it came directly from God, hence their original insistence (even though they vacillated over this issue, to a certain extent, under the pressure of events, such as the persecutions faced by the Reformed Church in the Empire and France) that rebellion was a sin and never acceptable. If a ruler was a tyrant, despoiled his subjects or, worse, persecuted the faith, then the most advisable remedy was prayer or, as the last resort, flight. English political thought during the Tudor period put an equal emphasis on the duty of obedience, but introduced a feature which was absent in the early writings of continental Reformers: the consent of the subjects. This wasn't an English innovation: for instance, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, John of Paris asserted that both kings and prelates received their power through election or, at least, with the consent of the people and they could be deposed if they did not fulfill their tasks adequately, while Marsilius of Padua went even further and claimed that the citizens could make laws and institute whatever type of government they preferred, which could be deposed if it violated the original covenant under which it took office (Ullmann, 1968, 200-14). In England, this issue appeared as early as 1470 in one of the writings of the influential jurist John Fortescue, *De Laudibus Legum Anglie,* who stressed that the ruler of England could not change the laws without the consent of his subjects – but without going as far as John of Paris and suggest deposition in case of the ruler's inadequacy –, and it was often reiterated during the sixteenth century by other English political writers. Regarding this, one must keep in mind that, as Stanley Chrimes pointed out, the Tudor regime was despotic only in the sense that its two greatest rulers, Henry VIII and Elizabeth, were very autocratic in temper and high-handed in methods, sometimes even

straining the law in order to achieve their purpose, but without considering themselves above the law or that their will alone was the law; nor did they have an army strong enough to impose their will on any large proportion of their subjects (Chrimes, 1967, 87). Consent was also a fundamental feature of Hooker's theory of law, because positive laws derived their authority from the consent of the people to be governed by them (Monahan, 209-10). The conferral of authority upon a ruler by consent of the community in observance of the law of reason becomes for Hooker the ultimate, authoritative grounds for the Royal Supremacy, the English monarch's right to govern the Church of England (Gazal, 2013, 512-3). This was extremely important, as Richard Hooker's argument was, at its core, one about Royal Supremacy, because the Elizabethan Settlement which he tried to defend depended first and foremost on it. It was an essential element in the organization of the new Church of England: more so, it was through the initiative of the Queen and her Privy Council that the two Acts from 1559, the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity, came into being. If the principle of Royal Supremacy collapsed, then the entire edifice of the Church of England was in danger of falling apart as well. Hooker's pattern of thought is quite similar to that of Thomas Aquinas in this regard with respect to the relation he established between reason and revelation. Saint Thomas argued that, even though reason and theology used different methods, they should both lead to the same conclusions. For Hooker, reason was the tool employed by man in order to establish a polity enjoying the divine sanction even in the absence of a direct revelation in favor of the respective body politic. This was an important point to make in the argument about Royal Supremacy, because his opponents, both Catholics and Puritans, based their thesis on Scriptural authority and it was said that a prince who took upon himself to rule the Church exceeded the lawful boundaries of his authority. The Acts establishing the Settlement were clearly man-made laws, so whether they had the authority to decide in Church matters was a matter of contention. For Richard Hooker, Royal Supremacy was indeed human law, but it had been established upon natural law without contradiction of Scripture, which by being ratified by consent of the realm through Parliament had acquired the status of divine sanction (Gazal, 2013,518).

Still, the issue of consent could have been problematic for Hooker, because it could have been used as a tool by his opponents. It could seriously imply that the Settlement was only a temporary arrangement: if the Puritan rhetoric was successful and managed to convince a large number of Englishmen, then they could have legitimately required that the government acceded to their wishes regarding to organization of the Church of England. In such a situation, based on this theory of consent, the Queen and the Privy Council would have been legally compelled to accept the request. In order to prevent this, as Arthur Monahan pointed out, Hooker asserted that government once established was to all intents and purposes irrevocably conveyed to the ruler, because his case against the puritans would have been weakened by conceding any possibility of revoking the original compact (Monahan, 1997, 214). This was a nod to the theory of *lex regia*: originally, this was supposed merely to explain how the Roman emperors acquired their power – transferred to them by the Roman people. It was quite problematic whether it applied to political entities other than the Empire, and many

medieval jurists, such as Oldradus, were of the opinion that it did not (Canning, 2003, 170-1). But *lex regia* was irrevocable, as the infamous fourteenth century jurists Bartolus and Baldus claimed (Canning, 2003, 170), meaning that while the authority of the ruler did originate in the people, once the transfer occurred, it could no longer be taken back.

The Corporal Argument

An aspect of Hooker's work much less explored is that of the corporal and medical analogies which he used occasionally in order to develop his argument. As J.P. Sommerville pointed out, albeit referring to the early Stuart period, analogies "meant far more to people in the early seventeenth century than they would today" (Sommerville, 1999, 52). The remark is true also in regard to the sixteenth century, which saw plenty of political tracts resorting to analogies and, first and foremost, to the one between the human body and the body politic. Yet, as we have argued elsewhere (SĂlĂvăstru, 2014, 337-46), Sommerville underestimates to a certain extent the importance of analogies when asserting that they merely reinforced opinions already held, but they did not generate conclusions by themselves: amongst all analogies, the one with the human body was by far the most significant and, with such a close connection between the body and the polity as it characterized the respective analogy, one could draw even conclusions regarding how certain aspects of the "body politic" were supposed to work, based on the examples provided by the knowledge of the human body (SĂlĂvăstru, 2014, 341). The corporal analogies had a strong tradition working for them, dating back to Pagan and Christian antiquity, to the works of Plato and Saint Paul. During the Middle Ages, the analogy between the body and the state (which will come to be referred later as the "body politic") showed up for the first time at John of Salisbury, in his work *Policraticus*, during the twelfth century. The one between the body and the Church (as a *corpus mysticum*) existed even earlier than that: during the ninth century, Raban Maur referred to the Catholic Church in such terms – "Ecclesia Catholica, quae mystice corpus est" (Lubac, 1948, 116). From there, the corporal analogies had often been used as a powerful argumentation tool, because the body, as a divine construct, was a conveyor of legitimacy and thus these analogies could be found employed for many different purposes, being appropriated by writers from all political and religious camps. As David George Hale commented in his book *The Body Politic*, "the comparison is employed to defend and attack the established Church, to promote order and obedience to secular rulers and to criticize political and economical abuses" (Hale, 1971, 7) and the first of the goals mentioned by Hale is the one pursued by Richard Hooker. Having in mind the popularity of this analogy in contemporary English political thought, even though Hooker did not develop the comparison to the same extent as Thomas Starkey had done in *A Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset* in the 1530's or Edward Forset in *A Comparison between Bodies Natural and Politique* in 1606, it would have been unlikely for him to avoid it altogether and he had no reason to do so.

Referring to Richard Hooker, Geoffrey Elton emphasized that the limitation, at least in theory, of the royal power was not carried out by „some nebulous law of nature to which all man-made law must conform", but by the positive law of the realm and the king himself was thought of as subject to the common law of England and unable to tamper with it (Elton, 1965, 14). It is the same theory whose origin can be found in John Fortescue's writings, that of a „controlled" monarchy, of a *dominium politicum et regale.* This outlook of „double majesty" hid great dangers, which became obvious during the seventeenth century, when the Stuart absolutism led to a deadly clash with the Parliament – the first of this kind in the entire Europe. For the theorists of the Tudor period, a serious clash in England between government and subjects was only a theoretical hypothesis, due to the assumption that the interests of the ruler and those of the subject must coincide, and lawfulness was the best policy of the prince (Morris, 1954, 186). The organic outlook of the state made such a conflict seem impossible because of its self-destructive nature: after all, the fable of the quarrel between the belly and the other parts of the body, ascribed to Menenius Agrippa, and the idea of interdependency between the elements of the body politic was long enough reiterated in order to have left its mark on Hooker's and his contemporaries' thought. One can say that, according to that period's mindset, a clash between the monarch and the Parliament was an organic impossibility.

Richard Hooker's theory contains thus a reminiscence of the concept of interdependency between the parts of the body politic, although it is less clearly expressed than it was in his predecessors' writings. According to Hooker, the organic structure of the body politic, the fact that men are „parts of the same body" forced them to serve the „common good":

> „But we must further remember also (which thing to touch in a word shall suffice) that as in this respect they have their law, which lawe directeth them in the meanes whereby they tende to their owne perfection: So likewise another law there is, which touches them as they are sociable partes united into one bodie, a lawe which bindeth them each to serve unto other good, and all to preferre the good of the whole before whatsoever their owne particular" (Hooker, 1969, 55).

What motivated such an attitude is the fact that, this way, the internal harmony of the body could develop and the latter could function properly. These „them" which the author speaks of are not just the men, members forming the body politic, but all the „natural agents", Hooker extending this functional scheme to all natural realities. It is worth recalling that, according to the medieval outlook, the human body was a microcosm, faithfully mirroring the universal macrocosm, with respect to both its organization and hierarchy and the way it worked. Such correspondence existed also regarding this concept of interdependency, whose existence was seen as originating in divine law. In this regard, Hooker alluded to a doctrine which he thought to have belonged to Hippocrates, according to which „each thing, both in small and in great,

fulfilleth the taske which destenie hath set downe" (Hooker, 1969, 53). The author referred here to the natural macrocosm's way of functioning, which obeyed its own laws, but it is not hard to notice the similarity with Plato's statement expressed in *Republic*, which had so great an influence during the Middle Ages, according to which the members of the body politic had to fulfill only the responsibilities entrusted to them, without attempting to interfere in the activity of other parts of the body or to change their duties (Plato, *The Republic,* 434 a-b; in: Plato, 2003, 128-9).

What distinguishes Hooker from other English writers is the fact that he also approached the issue of the ecclesiastical body politic, called „mystical body" and not just that of the English kingdom's body politic. The expression *corpus mysticum* appears for the first time during the Carolingian period, but it originally referred to the Eucharist. From the twelfth century onwards, though, this expression took a political meaning as well, starting to designate the „organized body of the Christian community". In the words of Alexandru-Florin Platon, a binomial *corpus verum/corpus mysticum* was thus created, where the first notion described the „proper body of Christ", while the latter took a juridical and institutional meaning (Platon, 2000, 177-8). According to Henri de Lubac, the reason for this shift can be found in the temptation of the power claimed by the papacy over temporal matters, through an excessive assimilation of the „mystical body" by the „visible body" of the Church. This attitude, according to the same Lubac, drew strong criticism during the Reformation, especially from Luther and Calvin, finally leading to a total dissociation of the two bodies (Lubac, 1948, 131-2). But, when this cycle came to a close in the Catholic areas, this expression showed up in *The Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*, in a kingdom of England dominated by strong religious controversies, where important Catholic elements still existed and where the Reformation was disputed between the conservatives whom, while approving the separation from Rome, were favoring the preservation of some Catholic features in the new Church of England, and the Puritans who wished for a total breach with the past. Hooker also proposed a binomial corporal metaphor, but this time not between *corpus mysticum* and *corpus verum*, as it had been the case in the Catholic world several centuries before, but between the *corpus mysticum* („body mystical"), which possessed a significant spiritual and celestial component besides its terrestrial one, and the body politic, set up and governed by the law of reason (based in turn on the divine and natural law). The consequence was that the majority of his considerations, both those concerning the corporal metaphor, and those related to the concepts of political disease and political medicine, possessed a marked theological character. They are connected first and foremost to the religious squabbles of that period and less so to the social, political and economic issues, which had been so preeminent in the works of other English writers, such as John Fortescue, Thomas Starkey, Stephen Gardiner or Thomas Smith:

> „That Church of Christ which we properly terme his body mysticall, can be but one, neither can that one bee sensiblie discerned by any man, in as much as the partes therof are some in heaven alreadie with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their naturall persons bee visible) we doe not

> discerne under this propertie, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Onely our mindes by intelectuall conceipt are able to apprehend, that such a reall body there is, a body collective, because it containeth an huge multitude, a body misticall, because the mysterie of their coniunction is removed altogether from sense" (Hooker, 1969, 126).

A consequence of this approach was the distinction between types of laws which make the „body mystical" and the „body politic" work, while the ideas related to the preservation and restoration of the health of the „body politic" bear a theological influence. In his work, Hooker gave the law the same importance as Fortescue had done – who called the laws the „nerves" of the body politic, keeping it alive (Fortescue, 1949, 31) –, but the former paid to this topic much greater attention, addressing both the issue of the divine law, which maintained the macrocosm and the natural elements according to a perfect template, which surpassed human understanding, and the issue of the law of human reason, which made the existence of the earthly „body politic" possible. According to this theological approach of the corporal metaphor, Christ is called the „supreme physician", and the start of the disease was considered as connected to sin. Among all English writers who addressed the issue of disease in their political works, one could say that Hooker was the one influenced the most by the theological outlook on the causes of diseases and on the relationship between body and soul. At the same time, though, Hooker also employed the expression „body politic" in order to designate the structure which he describes: the explanation for the joining of these two apparently antagonistic terms, exactly at a time when Catholicism was trying to split the „mystical body" of Christ from its juridical and institutional meaning of the previous centuries, lies in the merging, which occurred in England starting with Henry VIII, between the commonwealth and the Church. The English king is „supreme head of the Church of England", a position which Stephen Gardiner strived a lot to justify, and „membership of Church and the Commonwealth was identical; Church and State were "two complementary aspects of the same society" (Morris, introduction to Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,* 1969, XI). Consequently, the Anglican Church itself could have been described as a body politic, which, in turn, was part of the *corpus mysticum.*

Due to his position, Hooker was close to Anglicanism and hostile to the puritans, whose excesses he disapproved. Hooker actually considered that the puritans could rightfully change the structure and the theology of the Church of England to meet their desires, but only if they were capable to provide arguments in favor of such a transformation. This did not happen though, Hooker claiming that their explanations were pure conjuncture (Hanson, 1970, 271). According to Patrick Collinson, Hooker's purpose was to depict the Puritans as running into extreme or even lunatic scenarios (Collinson, 1997, 169). The use of this medically charged term is indeed apt, because, in order to justify his attitude, Hooker resorted to an obviously medically-inspired metaphor. As a matter of fact, the author had been obviously influenced by the medical opinions of that period: Galen is even mentioned directly in his work, Hooker quoting the latter's opinion according to which „in matters of deeper discourse, the wise in heart do showe the

simple where his way lyeth" (Hooker, 1969, 13). This problem deeply concerned the medieval medical world, with the learnt physicians enjoying a privileged position, protected by authorities and benefiting from a great prestige, and harsh struggles occurring between them and the practitioners of an empirical folk medicine. Even though the public opinion was not really against the latter, despite the bitter attacks they were subjected to from their university rivals, it seems that Hooker leaned towards the former, because this attitude allowed him to borrow their own argument for his theological disputes. The idea that only an adequately trained person, according to specific norms, could pass judgments in an argument undoubtedly flattered Hooker's intellectual pride and, because of this, it can be found in *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity.* Besides, such a standpoint served Hooker's goals also with respect to the arguments provided in his treatises: starting from this premise, one could have expected the puritans to submit to the authorized opinions, if they could not justify their attitude. If not, they would have become those rebellious parts of the body, which led to anarchy – with all the following consequences.

According to Richard Hooker, because the body politic was a visible body, unlike the *corpus mysticum* which was only partially perceptible, this body politic was undoubtedly in danger to fall prey to disease. Even though the author did not use this term, preferring to refer to the perceived imperfections of the Church as „corruptions", the meaning is the same:

> „They can say that in Doctrine, in Discipline, in Prayers, in Sacramentes, the Church of Rome hath (as it hath in deede) very foule and grosse corruptions, the nature whereof notwithstanding because they have not for the most part exact skill and knowledge to discerne, they thinke that amisse many times, which is not, and the salve of reformation they mightily call for, but where and what the sores are which neede it, as they wote full little, so they thinke it not greatly materiall to search" (Hooker, 1969, 184).

The strong symbol of the leper, which had been used during the Middle Ages by the Catholic Church with respect to the heresies it had to confront many times, was assumed now by Protestantism and redirected against the new opponent: „Those Romish ceremonies wherof we have hetherto spoken are like leprous clothes, infectious unto the Church, or like soft and gentle poysons, the venom whereof being insensibly pernicious, worketh death, and yet is never felt working" (Hooker, 1969, 188). Hooker distanced himself though from such a violent condemnation of the Catholic Church and the explanation for this lies with the fact that Hooker acted as a „champion of the Elizabethan Church", which, even though it did not recognize the authority of the pope, referred to only as the „bishop of Rome", still preserved many Catholic elements; besides this main factor, one could also take into consideration the fact that, when Hooker published his work, between 1594 and 1597, the Catholic and Spanish danger was less severe: the reprisals of Mary Tudor were long passed, the Invincible Armada had been defeated and the Gunpowder Plot had not taken place yet. Even though there

was an obvious antagonism towards the papacy, Hooker could afford to show more lenience, more so since his own interests demanded it.

If diseases existed, then a series of remedies in order to cure the body of the Church were also necessary. Following Richard Hooker's description, the puritans justified their opinion, that a radical removal of *all* catholic rituals and organization was necessary, by appealing to a medical outlook widespread during Middle Ages, that a disease was cured by applying a remedy possessing opposing traits:

> „That extreme dissimilitude, which they urge upon us, is now commended as our best & safest policie for establishment of sound religion. The ground of which politique position is, That evils must be cured by their contraries, and therfore the cure of the Church infected with the poyson of Antichristianitie must be done by that which is therunto as cotrary as may be. A medled estate of the orders of the Gospell & the ceremonies of popery is not the best way to banish Popery" (Hooker, 1969, 183).

Hooker, though, considered this opinion to be mistaken, even dangerous for the health and the life of the political organism, because the outcome would have been an excess of a fundamental quality and this would have led to destruction:

> „We are contrarywise of opinion that he which will perfectly recover a sicke and restore a diseases body unto health, must not endevor so much so much to bring it to a state of simple cotrariety, as of fit proportion in contrarietie unto those evils which are to be cured. He that will take away extreme heate by setting the body in extremitie of cold, shal undoubtedly remove the disease, but together with it the diseased too. The first thing therefore in skilfull cures is the knowledge of the part affected, the next is of the evill which doth affect it, the last is not onely of the kinde, but also of the measure of contrarie thinges whereby to remove it" (Hooker, 1969, 183).

Surprisingly for a cleric from late sixteenth century England (and something which brought upon him accusations of crypto-Catholicism, especially after his death, when many Catholics referred favorably to his work), Hooker considered that all Churches had a common root, the Church of Christ, and some of the Catholic rituals which the Protestants so strongly opposed had their origins in it, so they could not have been removed without endangering the spiritual health of the organism which the Reformation desired to save from the „corruptions of the Church of Rome". Hooker's reproaches against the Protestants also bear a strong medical imprint: the Reformation aimed to heal the „body of the Church", but those who assumed the task to apply the necessary remedies did not meet at all the Galenic standards, which recommended a careful knowledge of the afflicted parts and of the disease attacking them.

Regarding the degree of danger posed by the diseases afflicting the body politic, Hooker followed the indisputable axiom of the Middle Ages and the early modern period, which saw the diseases with an endogenous origin as being a greater threat than those with an exogenous origin. Roughly speaking, until then it was mostly about the lack of harmony between the parts of the body, which prevented it from working properly and, without the rescuing intervention of the physician-king, led to its demise. But Hooker provided a new explanation for this phenomenon, blaming it on the lack of vigilance of the body towards the internal dangers, which seem to be under control and could be eradicated at any time. Basically, one could say that Richard Hooker blamed this situation not necessarily on a greater innate perilousness of the endogenous diseases, as his predecessors did, but on a tendency for self-deception of the body politic, which did not pay the necessary attention to the emerging threat until it was too late. Thus, the insidious activity of an endogenous disease could have passed unnoticed compared to an external factor, which was not only obvious, but also determined the mobilization of the entire defensive capabilities of the body and the unity of its parts:

> „Bodies politique being subiect as much as naturall to dissolution by divers meanes, ther are undoubtedly more estates overthrowne through diseases bred within themselves than through violence from abroade, because our manner is alwaies to cast a doubtfull and more suspitious eye towards that over which we know we have least power, and therefore the feare of external daungers causeth forces at home to be the more united, it is to all sorts a kind of bridle, it maketh vertuous mind watchfull, it holdeth contrarie dispositions in suspence, & it setteth those wits on worke in better things which would be else imploied in worse; wheras on the other side domesticall evils, for that we think we can master them at all times are often permitted to run on forward till it be too late to recall them. In the meane while the commonwealth is not onely through unsoundnes so farre impaired as those evils chance to prevaile, but farther also through opposition arising between the unsound part & the sound, where ech endevoureth to draw evermore contrary waies, til distraction in the end bring the whole to ruine” (Hooker, 1969, A3).

As one could notice, the classic warning against the lack of unity could not have been absent from this template of the disease’s work: lack of wisdom was not the only thing threatening the body politic; so did the absence of harmony among its parts. In this, Hooker was not at all original, because this had been chief among the dangers looming above the "body politic", from the very beginning of its metaphor. The Puritans were, actually, part of the same body politic as the rest of the Englishmen and Hooker's conceded that the Church of England could have been reformed along their lines if their arguments had been sound. But, as he strove to prove in his book, the Puritan arguments lacked merits: in such circumstances, they had to obey to laws established by common consensus for the entire realm, otherwise they could be regarded as an element causing the disease of the body politic by disrupting its unity.

Conclusions

Hooker's work drew upon two main traditions, present both in sixteenth century English political thought and in late medieval scholasticism: the significance of the law in establishing and regulating the polity and the use of the "body politic" analogies in order to legitimize his argument. In fact, his debt to medieval political thought was such that Arthur Monahan referred to him as a "Counter-Reformation thinker". Just like all the English political writers after John Fortescue, Hooker's work is mainly concerned with the fortunes of England: but, unlike other writers who had made use of the body politic metaphor in relation to the commonwealth, Hooker focuses on the Anglican Church. Richard Hooker's position was that a complete reformation of the Church of England had been achieved: in replying to the arguments employed by the Puritans against the outcome of the Elizabethan Settlement, Hooker made use of a corporal and medical imagery in order to deliver a warning as striking as possible. The Puritan case having been proven unsound, they should submit to the legitimate authority and accept the Settlement, as their "remedy" could have proven itself worse than the "disease" it was supposed to cure.

Hooker's *Of the Lawes* did not attract much attention from his contemporaries as it should have, and the likely reason was its monumentality and complexity. As Diarmaid MacCulloch remarked, "the reading public was perhaps baffled by a work which grounded its assault on its opponents on axioms from Aristotle, Plato and the medieval scholastics" (MacCulloch, 2008, 573). In fact, there was only one direct Puritan answer to it, a tract called *A Christian Letter*. Yet, his reputation quickly rose after his death, when others, starting with English clergyman William Covell, took up the task of answering to his critics.Hooker's rather lenient attitude towards Catholicism and his rejection of the Puritans' radicalism was convenient for the regime of the first two Stuart monarchs, who were leaning towards a similar position. Yet, there remained a level of ambiguity in Hooker's work which led to *Of the Lawes* being exploited even by Catholic polemists, and the regime of James I attempted "to see Hooker as setting himself apart from a Reformed context" (Brydon, 2006, 43). Despite this, Hooker was going to slowly evolve during the seventeenth century into what Michael Brydon called "an Anglican icon".

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