

Friday Sep. 14, 1:30-3:30 pm – “More and Luther”

Chair : Rev. Dr. Jonathan Arnold (Magdalen College, Oxford)

Prof. Hélène Suzanne, *Independent scholar, France* (lh.suzanne44@gmail.com)

Thomas More vs Martin Luther : Can great minds be blind to each other?

Thomas More and Martin Luther, although sharing the same Christian beliefs, became enemies because of their faith. They lived during the Renaissance, when ancient texts and the Bible were being re-read in the light of new knowledge in classical languages, and new cultural freedom – the flow of new ideas across Europe allowing people to confront these ideas and enlarge their understanding of the world and of Christian faith – provided they remained truly open to others.

In our twenty-first-century eyes, Thomas More, who was so rigid against Luther and Protestantism in general, may be viewed as intolerant to any analysis of Faith different from his own, even as narrow-minded. For the sake of an honest understanding of More's attitude toward what he called heresy, we will examine more carefully each personality in their world: More lived in a probably more open part of Europe, and Luther apparently in a more restricted culture, in an economically and politically more limited world, surrounded by Princes looking for more independence from the Emperor. The purpose of this analysis is to try to uncover what in More made him consciously against Luther's Reformation, and what could have belonged to an unavoidable *acte manqué*.

