

**Thursday Sep. 13, 3:30-5:00 pm – “Utopia & Utopias”**

**Chair : Dr. Gabriela Schmidt (U. Munich, Germany)**

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**More in *Terra Australis Incognita*: Two seventeenth-century French utopias**

Thomas More's *Utopia* is often regarded as a radical text, proposing a variety of ideas such as universal education regarded as ahead of their time. More wrote in Latin for an elite audience and was averse to its translation into English; the extent to which he might be understood to have advocated the radical ideas in *Utopia* can be endlessly debated. *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* by Denis Vairasse and *La Terre australe connue* by Gabriel de Foigny are among the many vernacular works inspired by *Utopia*. Both authors translated More's fictional setting to the legendary unknown southern continent of *Terra Australis Incognita*, and borrowed and adapted many ideas and tropes from More, turning them in new directions. In this paper, I will discuss some important examples of such borrowings, and consider what they reveal about how differently Vairasse and Foigny responded to the political and religious conflicts of their time. I will argue that More's radical ideas and tropes were reshaped when revisited in the vernacular during the rise of French colonialism in the reign of Louis XIV, and turned from reflections on the cost to the individual of the growth of state power into an advocacy of harnessing the individual to the projects of the state.

