

Friday Sep. 14, 9:00-12:00 pm

“Richard III - History & Philosophy”

Chair : Dr. Marie-Claire Phélippeau (Amici Thomae Mori)

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Thomas More and the Nature of Time

This paper is an initial attempt to sketch More’s concept of the role of time in human affairs. From his early verses on Fortune to his closing meditation on Christ’s agony in Gethsemane, More cannot help but see the nature of time as either Fortuna or Providence. If, as he says in *Supplication of Souls* “time trieth out truth” what sort of truth does it reveal? In particular, given enough time, can human agency fix fundamental moral flaws? In *Utopia*, the laws laid down by King Utopus have served for over a millennium; perhaps the best human activity can offer is a form of divinely-mandated damage control. Whatever faith in change More may have felt on the accession of Henry VIII, by 1534 when he began his Tower works, More was fully of the Augustinian mind: souls are born not to change the world—which is not capable of change—but to be purged of their worldliness. We experience sequence and duration in our drive for salvation while time itself waits, like us, for redemption.

