



JESUIT STUDIES CAFÉ

Fall 2025

This fall, we will discuss the history and culture of the Society of Jesus

All conversations will take place on Zoom.

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COLLABORATING
PARTNERS:



Our Speakers



Simon Ditchfield

University of York, United Kingdom

Thursday, October 9

9:20-10:00 am U.S. Eastern

*The Accidental Historian:
The Case of Daniello Bartoli, S.J. (1608–85)*

The author of the first published attempt to write a global history of the Society (1653–85), Daniello Bartoli, actually did not see himself as a historian. Nor did most of his contemporaries, who admired him for his preaching, his moral essays, and his skills as a natural philosopher (he published works on acoustics and ice properties). So how did he come to write a series of volumes that so impressed readers like Giacomo Leopardi, who called him "the Dante of baroque prose," and whose work was reprinted in the nineteenth century to teach schoolchildren how to write good Italian? This presentation will aim to understand Bartoli in the round: not only as a historian but also as a hagiographer, moral essayist, and natural philosopher.



Micah True

University of Alberta, Canada

Thursday, November 13

9:20-10:00 am U.S. Eastern

*Reconsidering the Seventeenth-Century Jesuit
Relations from New France*

The Jesuit Relations from New France—annual mission reports produced between 1632 and 1673 by Jesuit missionaries in Eastern Canada—are among the most frequently cited sources on the early history of French North America and Indigenous-European encounters. But they are also ripe for reevaluation. Drawing from his new book (The Jesuit Relations: A Biography), Micah True brings to light little-known aspects of these well-known texts and shows how they can help us better understand the history of the Jesuits in New France.



Francesco Gusella

University of Naples "L'Orientale", Italy

Thursday, December 11

9:20-10:00 am U.S. Eastern

*The Good Shepherd Rockery from Portuguese India:
Emulation and Dissimulation in a Case of Missionary Art*

Francesco Gusella analyzes the composite ivory carvings of the Good Shepherd Rockery from Portuguese colonial India, focusing specifically on the origin of this subject's iconography between the 1570s and 1650s. By examining material evidence from South Indian sites alongside Jesuit accounts of the Latinization of Saint Thomas Christians, the study reveals that the original design of these ivories came from the iconographic program of the so-called Persian Crosses—a particular type of sacred stone relief associated with the Nestorian Christians of South India.