

**INSTITUTE FOR
ADVANCED JESUIT STUDIES**

BOSTON COLLEGE

CALAMITY FROM WITHIN

JESUITS, PAPAL LEGATES AND CHINESE IMPERIAL ENOYS IN
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018

BURNS LIBRARY



INSTITUTE FOR
ADVANCED JESUIT STUDIES
BOSTON COLLEGE

BOSTON COLLEGE

INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED JESUIT STUDIES
140 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
CHESTNUT HILL, MASSACHUSETTS 02467
WWW.BC.EDU/IAJS



EUGENIO MENEGON
ELISA FREI



Eugenio Menegon is Associate Professor of Chinese History at Boston University, and Collaborative Scholar at the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies at Boston College. He has published extensively on the history of Chinese-Western relations, and is the author of *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China*, Harvard Asia Center and Harvard University Press, 2009, which was the recipient of the 2011 Levenson Prize in Chinese Studies (Association for Asian Studies). His current book project is an examination of the daily life and political networking of European residents at the Qing court in Beijing during the 17th-18th centuries.



Elisa Frei is an Institute Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies. She received her doctorate in the History of Societies, Institutions, and Thought at the University of Trieste/Udine in 2017. During her yearlong residency at Boston College, Frei is developing her doctoral dissertation, *Outpouring of Hearts on Fire: Italian Jesuits Asking for the Indies (1678-1730 ca.)*, into a monographic-length publication as well as publishing articles, presenting her work at academic conferences, and engaging in other Institute initiatives.

Introduction

Christian Dupont, Burns Librarian
Casey Beaumier, Director, Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies
Professor Eugenio Menegon, Boston University

For the Greater Good of Our Order. Jesuits Betting on the Rites Controversy

Dr. Elisa Frei,
Fellow Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies

The Tragic Jesuit Embassy of the Kangxi Emperor to Pope Clement XI

Eugenio Menegon, Associate Professor of Chinese History
Boston University

Questions

CALAMITY FROM WITHIN

Jesuits, Papal Legates, and Chinese Imperial Envoys in the Eighteenth Century

The Chinese Rites Controversy developed into a political, theological and intellectual struggle between monarchs, popes, diplomats, theologians and philosophers that lasted over a century (1635-1742) and left many victims in its wake—a “calamity from within” the Church and the Jesuit order.

The Controversy centered on the following questions: Were Chinese family ancestral rituals and ceremonies to Confucius civic in nature? Could Chinese converts engage in these rituals and ceremonies without compromising their new Christian religion? The Jesuit missionaries in China believed they could, and in 1700 they found in the Kangxi Emperor of the Qing dynasty an advocate for their position. Other missionaries and, ultimately, the papacy, did not concur, and labeled the rites as idolatrous.

Frei and Menegon will focus their presentations on the lives of some Jesuits of the China mission who traveled across the oceans, cared deeply about the issues, took sides, played politics, and suffered dire consequences for doing so. Their experiences represent a microcosm of the Controversy and reveal its global reach as a clash of cultures and a unique phenomenon in early modern intellectual and religious history.



The Imperial Red Decree (1716) in Manchu, Chinese and Latin, signed by all Beijing missionaries, requesting the pope for the return of the Qing Jesuit envoy from Rome