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Orationes et carmina aliaque exercitia: Performing and Learning Classical Languages in a Restoration Schoolroom

Thursday, 29th June 2017, 6 pm
Zentrum für Alte Kulturen („Atrium“)
Langer Weg 11, SR 5



The *Orationes* manuscript (CCA Lit. MS E41, Canterbury Cathedral Library) is a unique source of Restoration school drama. Running up to 656 folio pages, the manuscript contains plays and speeches performed and partly composed by the students of the King's School, Canterbury, in the second half of the 17th century. The manuscript has been digitized as part of the on-going *Orationes* project, funded by the Academy of Finland (2011-2015). The texts in the manuscript – written in English, Latin and Greek – are divided into four subgenres according to the occasion of performance (marking Lent, Charles II's birthday, the Gunpowder plot and Christmas). The texts have been arranged in yearly cycles, with seventeen cycles and 68 individual performances in total. In my presentation, I discuss the school exercises and practices that lie in the background of the King's School performances. Connecting them to the broader educational context of the seventeenth century, I explore the role of performance in learning classical languages in Restoration grammar schools.