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Zum Vortrag: The “Holy Court” (La Cour Sainte, 1624) written by the famous Jesuit rhetorician Nicolas Caussin (1583-1651) was one of the bestsellers of the early modern period, and it was translated into most European languages. Aimed mainly at noblemen and noblewomen, it sought to convince them that noble honour and Christian morality were not contradictory by nature, but that they could be reconciled. Important additions to the book, which Caussin rearranged throughout his lifetime, can be dated to his exile from court (1637-43), which ended his brief spell as confessor to Louis XIII. The spectacular disgrace of the Jesuit confessor was orchestrated by Cardinal Richelieu with whom he had disagreed over the nature of France’s engagement in the Thirty Years War. Far from Paris and condemned to silence, Caussin reflected extensively on the biblical prophets but also on Seneca. The new chapters within the “Holy Court”, addressed to the “directors of the royal conscience”, were the outcome of his meditations and attested a profound experience of crisis which led him to rethink the role of royal confessors as counsellors. This lecture will enquire how and why the Jesuit confessor engaged with Seneca and how Caussin’s positions can be situated within the wider context of seventeenth century European Neo-Stoicism.

Der Eintritt ist frei. Um Anmeldung wird gebeten unter dekanat.mwk@uni-erfurt.de.