

Tacitism: Ethics, Politics and Europe 16th-18th c.

Warsaw 18-20 September 2025

Rooted in the works of the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus, the Tacitist voice exerted an important influence on political discourse during the long century from the late 16th to the early 18th century. From marginal and suppressed beginnings, often associated with Machiavelli but decisively different, it facilitated the rise of Reason of State as an accepted political discourse, the rationalisation and professionalisation of politics and diplomacy. It was crucial to secularisation and toleration, and 'popular' in its own very specific way. The views, tone and style connected with Tacitism can be found in wide variety of genres, ranging from history to advice-books and from political thought to satire.

This conference aims to bring together scholars working on Tacitus and/or all varieties of Tacitism, early-modern political thought, and neighbouring disciplines, in order to build towards a general history of Tacitism. The conference is organised within the framework of the NCN-project *Origins of Secularisation: Tacitism from the 16th to the 18th centuries*, which has the composition of the synthesis on the general history of Tacitism as one of its stated aims.

The phenomenon of Tacitism, recognised as such since the seminal study by Giuseppe Toffanin of 1921, has received constant, and growing, attention in the scholarship in early-modern history and intellectual history of the past few decades. This has resulted in a large number of studies on the Tacitism of individual authors and their contexts. These in turn create a need for synthesis.

The dual conferences in Reims and Caen in 2014 laid the foundations for the development of such a synthesis. Ten years on, we want to draw up a balance, chart the progress in this field, and include the new directions and results that have emerged since 2014.

In this conference, we will be looking at topics like:

- What are the international dynamics of Tacitism?
- What to the various 'national' sub-varieties of Tacitism look like?
- Sub-genres in which the Tacitist voice plays a role
- Which varieties of Tacitism do we need to distinguish?
- What is relation between the study of Tacitus and the study of Tacitism?

Language

The preferred language of the conference is English, but we welcome presentations in French, Italian or Spanish. We organise panels for each of these languages, chaired by the people listed below. If you plan to contribute a paper in French, Italian or Spanish, please indicate this on your abstract and we put you in contact with the chair in question. Please submit an abstract in English, for the sake of effective circulation.

- Italy: Alberto Clerici
- Spain: María Concepción Gutiérrez Redondo
- France: Lucie Claire

Practical information:

Main organisers: Jan Waszink and Anna Laskowska.

Venue: Institute of History PAN, Rynek Starego Miasta 31, 00-272 Warsaw, Poland

Papers of 30 minutes maximum

Online participation possible. We especially welcome presentations by PhD-students and early-career scholars. We plan to publish the papers after the conference in a collective volume.

Send abstract of 250 words max. by **15 April 2025** to TacitismConference@proton.me