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ROMA SURRECTA: Portrait of a Counterinsurgent Power, 216 BC - AD 72

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Abstract

This study evaluates the military history and practice of the Roman Empire in the context of contemporary counterinsurgency theory. It purports that the majority of Rome's security challenges fulfill the criteria of insurgency, and that Rome's responses demonstrate counterinsurgency proficiency. These assertions are proven by means of an extensive investigation of the grand strategic, military, and cultural aspects of the Roman state. Fourteen instances of likely insurgency are identified and examined, permitting the application of broad theoretical precepts to episodes spanning 300 years of Roman power. In summary, Rome demonstrates remarkable counterinsurgent sophistication, suggesting far more savvy and doctrinal agility than is afforded the Roman Empire by most modern observers.

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Advised by Dr. Michael Horowitz

"Vercingetorix throws down his arms at the feet of Julius Caesar"
Lionel Royer, 1899

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"With two thousand years of examples behind us we have no excuse, when fighting, for not fighting well."

- T.E. Lawrence, letter to B.H. Liddell Hart

I. INTRODUCTION

i. Masada, AD 72

In a lonely patch of desert, a band of insurgents made their last stand against the strongest military power in the world. They were men of fierce religious and ideological conviction, committed to the destruction of a government they viewed as sacrilegious and corrupt. To this end, they had embraced the tactics of terrorism, harnessing acts of assassination, kidnapping, and targeted violence in an attempt to realize their political goals. They stood opposed by a force roughly fifteen times their size, equipped with vastly superior war-fighting knowledge and battlefield technology. It was an army with a clear objective: the stabilization of local rule and the neutralization of lingering sources of unrest. These isolated insurgents represented the final, hard-line supporters of a movement that had taken years to suppress. Cordoning off all possible avenues of escape, the force advanced methodically, making use of the overwhelming manpower and material at its disposal. When the final confrontation came, the insurgents chose martyrdom; their opponents, meanwhile, sent an unmistakable signal that further revolt would not be tolerated. It was a textbook conclusion to an episode that might sound familiar to any student of counterinsurgency, from French Algeria and British Malaya to American Vietnam to the contemporary challenges of Iraq and Afghanistan. This particular encounter, however, did not take place in this decade, century, or even millennium. Instead, it occurred at the Judaean fortress of Masada, some 2,000 years ago.

In AD 72, the Roman Empire – uncontested superpower of the Western world – had entered the final stage of her operations against Jewish rebels in the province of Judaea. Having reasserted control over local population centers and retaken the crucial city of Jerusalem, the Romans advanced on Masada, last pinprick of resistance in the failed Jewish revolt.[1] Masada represented a foreboding target, cresting a plateau that rose as much as 1,250 feet above the desert floor and enclosed by massive fortifications that ran the summit's perimeter.[2] The fortress was manned by 962 of the Jewish *Sicarii*, zealots whose rallying cry of "No Lord but God" had sparked widespread resistance against the provincial government of the hated Roman suzerain.[3] For the *Sicarii*, the starkness of their rhetoric was matched by the violence of their actions: they had slain a Jewish high priest in broad daylight, and overseen any number of political murders in order to sustain momentum against their Roman occupiers.[4] Of the revolt which had swept Judaea six years earlier, they were all that remained.

The intensity of the Roman response, however, stands as one of the most disproportionate outlays of military force in ancient history. Against a ragtag array of 962 insurgents, the Romans deployed a crack army of 15,000. Included in these assets were the power and resources of an entire legion, at a time when only twenty-nine legions existed to police and defend an empire of 1.5 million square miles and seventy million souls.[5] The method by which Rome reduced the fortress was similarly overwhelming. In an effort that may have stretched into years, army

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[1] Susan Sorek, *The Jews Against Rome* (New York: Continuum Books, 2008), 137-141.
[2] Ibid, 141.
[3] Ibid, 143; Joseph., *BJ* 7.10.1.
[4] Solomon Zeitlin, "The Sicarii and Masada," *Jewish Quarterly Review Vol. 57, Num. 4* (1967): 251-270, 259.
[5] Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), 3; Susan Mattern, "Counterinsurgency and the Enemies of Rome," in *Makers of Ancient Strategy: From the Persian Wars to the Fall of Rome*, ed. Victor Davis Hanson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010): 163-185, 163.

engineers assembled a giant ramp of earth and timber that rose hundreds of feet into the air.[6] As

the man-made structure loomed higher, the hope of the Jewish defenders dwindled further.

Eventually, as Masada's walls began to crumble before Roman siege engines, all but seven

noncombatants took their lives in a ritual suicide.[7] The *Sicarii* achieved immortality. The

Romans effectively subdued Judaea for the next sixty years.[8]

For traditional students of Roman military history, Masada raises important questions.

Why did Rome direct so many resources toward so marginal target, necessitating the

establishment of massive camps and the provisioning of millions of gallons of water?[9] Why,

instead of a more limited blockade or more direct assault, did Rome undertake such a

complicated and time-consuming feat of engineering? Indeed, why was Rome so intent on

capturing Masada in the first place, a fortress of questionable strategic value and a negligible

security threat?[10] Edward Luttwak offers a convincing explanation:

> This was a vast and seemingly irrational commitment of scarce military manpower – or was it? The entire three-year operation, and the very insignificance of its objective, must have made an ominous impression on those in the East who might otherwise have been tempted to contemplate revolt: the lesson of Masada was that the Romans would pursue rebellion even to mountain tops in remote deserts to destroy its last vestiges, regardless of cost.[11]

The Roman experience against Masada cannot be understood in the context of a traditional

military engagement. Its investment was too much; its aims and immediate payoff too marginal.

Instead, the stunning siege and capture of Masada was conceived as theater, intended not for a

garrison 962 ill-equipped rebels, but for the citizens of Judaea itself. It was an operation which

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[6] Sorek 2008, 143.
[7] Joseph., *BJ* 7.9.2.
[8] Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome*, A.D. 66-70 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 260.
[9] Sorek 2008, 143.
[10] Luttwak 1976, 3.
[11] Ibid, 4.

stressed governmental legitimacy and population-centrism. In short, it was the closing act of a deliberate, successful counterinsurgency campaign.

Neither can Masada be alone in this distinction. Rome grew to shoulder imperial commitments from North Africa to Britain to the Balkans. Polybius speaks proudly of "almost the whole inhabited world" being brought under Roman control within a generation.[12] With this increasing empire came increasing incidents of unrest, rebellion, and revolt. In our scant number of surviving texts, one scholar counts no less than 120 major insurrections between the ascension of the first emperor Augustus in 27 BC and the reign of the seventeenth emperor Commodus in AD 190.[13] The real number is doubtlessly much higher.[14] Yet despite this multitude of challenges, the Roman Empire survived – and thrived – in the West for over 600 years.[15] Rome could not have achieved such success without an effective and well-formulated counterinsurgency strategy. It is the purpose of this study to examine the context, reality, and theoretical grounding of this ancient practice in light of contemporary counterinsurgency doctrine.

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[12] Polyb. 1.1.

[13] Thomas Perkary, "Sedito, Unruhen und Revolten im romischen Reich von Augustus bis Commodus," *Ancient Society 18* (1987): 133-150.

[14] Mattern 2010, 163.

[15] Arthur M. Eckstein, "Rome in the Middle Republic," in Kimberly Kagan, *The Imperial Moment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010): 32-60, 56; Jonathan P. Roth, *Roman Warfare*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 264-265. The lifespan of the Western Roman Empire is a subject of much debate. Here are used the endpoints 146 BC (the fall of Carthage and neutralization of the Achaean League) and 476 AD (the deposition of the final Western Emperor by the German king Odoacer). Approximated to 600 years for the purpose of this study.

ii. Definitions and Criteria

Evaluation of Roman counterinsurgency through the lens of modern scholarship must begin with an appropriate definition of terms. Insurgency and counterinsurgency are multivariate phenomena with a range of traits and common attributes. By identifying these characteristics, it is possible to create a set of criteria by which Roman practice may be judged. Although counterinsurgency literature has ballooned in recent years, this study restricts itself to two central texts. David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* informs most of the concepts explored in this paper. While Galula's famous document is now nearly a half-century old, it remains a foundational and frequently-cited work in contemporary inquiries. Where a more recent perspective is required, Galula is supplemented by FM 3-24, the counterinsurgency field manual published jointly by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps and updated most recently in 2006. The prescriptions of these texts are taken at face value; it is beyond the purview of this study to explore nuances in modern definition.

a. Insurgency

There is a tendency to conflate the notions of insurgency and irregular war. While the two concepts are related, they are not synonymous. A successful insurgency often harnesses asymmetrical tactics, but its scope goes further. In the words of Galula, "Insurgency is the pursuit of the policy of a party, inside a country, by every means."[16] FM 3-24 refines this definition by qualifying insurgency as an organized, protracted politico-military struggle which weakens the legitimacy of a government or other political authority.[17] An insurgency may utilize

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[16] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964; 2006), 1.
[17] *FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency* (Headquarters Department of the Army, 2006), Section 1-2.

violence, but only if it is directed toward a larger, Clausewitzian objective. Insurgents are not

brigands; it is the accruement of political capital, not economic gain, which directs the course of

their movement. Gradually, increased political authority strengthens the insurgent cause,

affecting a proportional reduction in the power of the existing state.[18] Because insurgent strength

is measured entirely by its political legitimacy, population persuasion constitutes the central

purpose of every insurgent action.[19] In an ideal insurgency, the insurgent movement will grow

from small to large. Conversely, the counterinsurgent will decline from large to small in direct

relation to this insurgent success.[20]

An insurgency's beginnings are necessarily tenuous and uncertain. At the offset, its chief

strengths are intangible. In Galula's assessment, "The insurgent has a formidable asset – the

ideological power of a cause on which to base his action…The insurgent's strategy will naturally

aim at converting his intangible assets into concrete ones."[21] Accordingly, an insurgency's

cause is critically important; it must be capable of attracting the largest number of supporters

while repelling the least number of opponents. The cause (or series of causes) should also be

acute, sustainable, and not easily co-opted by the existing state.[22] After establishing its

ideological roots, insurgency takes time to develop. A central core of supporters is slowly

augmented by other factions with their own varying interests. While such coalition-building

adds strength, it also increases the danger of potential disunity.[23] Such fragmentation is often

averted by the presence of a strong leader.[24] All the while, shock and overt aggression are

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[18] Ibid, Section 1-3.
[19] Galula 1964, 5.
[20] Ibid, 4.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid, 11-13.
[23] Ibid, 30-31.
[24] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-59.

avoided until the insurgency is thought capable of withstanding the initial counterinsurgent response.[25] This grants insurgents the important advantage of strategic initiative; the existing state will invariably begin any confrontation as the reactive power.[26]

Once an insurgency begins its active struggle against the existing state, violence becomes an important aspect of its survival and further evolution. These first attacks are asymmetrical (the insurgent faces a severe material disadvantage), and are directed more toward persuasion than attrition. The ambush of a counterinsurgent patrol, for instance, may be intended to win local support or implicate the wider population against the existing state.[27] Other operations may explicitly target moderates and counterinsurgent sympathizers, intended to rally support through coercion and fear.[28] Meanwhile, the insurgency protects itself from reprisal by making use of difficult terrain and scattered population centers.[29] Any success, either real or fabricated, is harnessed to great propaganda effect.[30] As the insurgency grows, its use of violence becomes more ambitious and bold. Guerilla forces are transformed into standing armies, posing a challenge to the existing state's conventional superiority.[31] A formal counterstate emerges, within which the insurgency must adopt the governmental functions previously held by the counterinsurgent.[32] This transformation is reflected by the three-step approach envisioned by Mao Zedong's Theory of Protracted War, in which strategic defensive turns to strategic stalemate before the insurgent undertakes the strategic counteroffensive to eradicate the old

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[25] Galula 1964, 6.
[26] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-9.
[27] Galula 1964, 33-35.
[28] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-28 to 29.
[29] Galula 1964, 23-24.
[30] Ibid, 9.
[31] Ibid, 39.
[32] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-33.

government's remaining military capability.[33] While this process guarantees final insurgent victory, it also increases insurgent vulnerability. A premature shift from unconventional to conventional tactics consolidates the insurgency's resources in one place, leaving it open to destruction.[34]

This definition presents a solid set of traits which any instance of insurgency – even cases two millennia past – should be expected to demonstrate. A strong ideological cause is used to build a coalition of support, united tenuously and often by the aid of an influential leader. When violence erupts, its methods are primarily asymmetrical and directed as much toward political utility as toward directly undermining the existing state. Mounting popular support and material capability permits the use of conventional force, but also pose new dangers as previously disparate insurgent elements are united in a standing army. All the while, the population remains a primary focus, and insurgent success is tied directly to political legitimacy. As this study progresses, these criteria will be continually referenced and applied.

b. Counterinsurgency

Just as insurgency demands the acquisition of political authority at the expense of the existing state, so counterinsurgency requires the neutralization of insurgent authority and restoration of governmental legitimacy. FM 3-24 defines counterinsurgency as the, "Military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency."[35] The possession and employment of superior force – critical in conventional military encounters – is often ineffective or counterproductive in counterinsurgency

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[33] Ibid, Section 1-31.
[34] Galula 1964, 36.
[35] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-2.

operations.[36] Because an insurgency cedes force superiority in favor of tactics of disruption and

attrition, the state's inherent conventional advantage is of limited use.[37] There is no physical

center of gravity, and the resources necessary to eradicate every insurgent cell are typically

beyond that of the strongest state.[38] Instead, successful counterinsurgent action depends on

reducing insurgent support among the population. This requires a conscious strategy by which

government authority is reasserted, either by peaceful consent or violent coercion.[39] As the

counterinsurgent gains legitimacy, the insurgent loses it, being deprived of vital support in the

process.

By the nature, initial insurgent acts catch the existing state off guard. Counterinsurgency

constitutes a "learning competition" whereby the status quo power struggles to keep up with the

actions of its rogue element.[40] Quick adaptation to the insurgent threat is prevented by a rigid set

of social, political, and military controls.[41] Once the state has reoriented toward the insurgency

challenge:

> Counterinsurgents face a populace containing an active minority supporting the government and an equally
> small militant faction opposing it. Success requires the government to be accepted as legitimate by most of
> that uncommitted middle, which also includes passive supporters of both sides. Because of the ease of
> sowing disorder [for the insurgent]…a solid majority is often essential.[42]

While support of the population is vital to counterinsurgent victory, this support is also

conditional. The state must demonstrate its power to neutral observers, contrived in such a way

as to reduce sympathy for the insurgent in the process.[43] If the counterinsurgent is unable to

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[36] Ibid, Section 1-1.
[37] Galula 1964, 4.
[38] Ibid, 50-51.
[39] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-113.
[40] Ibid, Section 1-1.
[41] Galula 1964, 7.
[42] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-108.
[43] Galula 1964, 54-55.

muster this effort, it will be unable to achieve sustainable advantage. Simply killing insurgents is insufficient unless doing so entails a permanent drop in insurgent support.[44]

Galula offers a series of concrete steps which, coupled with the systematic clearing and holding of population centers, are intended to reduce insurgent sympathy and capability.[45] This begins with the expulsion of active insurgent cells and persuasion of the neutral population through demonstration of military superiority. Next follows a broader diplomatic offensive directed toward moderates and passive insurgent supporters. This action is intended to divide the insurgents from the people, reaffirming the legitimacy of existing government. Remaining insurgents among the population are eliminated and power is returned to local elites. The final traces of insurgency, now isolated and withdrawn to their respective strongholds, are neutralized. Such suppression takes advantage of wedge-driving mechanisms like offers of amnesty as well as the direct levying of force. Since the insurgency can no longer draw additional recruits, military might becomes correspondingly more effective. According to FM 3-24, all insurgent sanctuaries must be eliminated for a counterinsurgency operation to see success.[46]

This definition of counterinsurgency suggests a sophistication which might nevertheless find corollaries in ancient practice. Its most salient points are the restoration of governmental legitimacy, the isolation and eradication of insurgent forces, and an overriding emphasis on population-centrism. Conventional military superiority is used for the purpose of persuasion, reducing insurgent support by targeting its underlying political authority. Meanwhile, direct attacks on the insurgency are accomplished through a combination of military and diplomatic

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[44] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-2.
[45] Galula 1964, 52; 76-94. Until noted otherwise, all information drawn from Galula's "Operations" chapter on counterinsurgency implementation.
[46] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-85.

initiatives. These general counterinsurgency principles will be consulted and contrasted with regard to ancient precedent throughout the length of this paper.

<div align="center">iii. Modern theory, ancient practice</div>

It may seem an odd fit to apply these modern theoretical concepts to ancient Roman military practice. Popular conceptions of Rome see images of savage gladiatorial combat and mercilessly advancing legions. Romans are the crucifiers of Jesus in *Ben-Hur* and Kirk Douglas in *Spartacus*. A cursory familiarity with Roman history – dominated by incidents of warmongering and ruthless reprisals – hardly paints a more flattering picture. Even Roman culture permeates with bloodlust and violence: two of the city's most celebrated founding myths concern fratricide and a glorification of rape.[47] Romans are not politically aware and socially conscious occupiers; they are brutes. Yet, despite wide-ranging incongruities between Rome and modern counterinsurgent powers, the application remains well founded. It functions by means of two central propositions: that nearly all of Rome's military challenges can be understood as insurgencies and that Rome's reaction evidences many of the tenets still foundational to counterinsurgency theory today.

Insurgents against Rome. Following Rome's emergence as the sole superpower of the West after the concurrent obliteration of Carthage and defeat of the Achaean League in 146 BC, the nature of Rome's security challenges changed decisively. Besides a disastrous campaign

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[47] Livy 1.7; 1.9. Death of Remus and Rape of the Sabine Women.

against the Parthians in 53 BC, Rome faced no significant external threat for several centuries.[48]

Instead, Rome was beset by revolts: revolts in Italy, Iberia, Gaul, Germany, North Africa,

Britain, Judaea, and nearly every other part of the empire at one time or another. The individual

causes of these revolts vary (and for many, the particulars have been lost to time), yet it is

possible to pick out a number of traits common between them. In his analysis of five major

rebellions, for instance, Stephen Dryson identifies a backlash against local "Romanized" elites, a

cause shrouded in nativist and religious rhetoric, and the gradual transition from irregular to

regular warfare.[49] Modern understanding of insurgency – characterized by a challenge to

governmental legitimacy, an overriding political objective, and a movement from guerilla to

conventional tactics – bears close resemblance to these ancient cases.[50]

Rome as counterinsurgent. Even as Rome grappled with insurgency, it showed

remarkable proficiency in resisting its effects and neutralizing its causes. Rome's success on the

first count should be self-evident. Despite technological limitations in which communication

could take weeks and sizable troop mobilization the better part of a year, the Western Roman

Empire was able to retain its diverse and distant provinces for six centuries. Moreover, Rome

consistently stamped out insurgency (often for decades) with a limited intelligence network and

an army notoriously ill-equipped for low-intensity encounters.[51] Following the failed rebellion

of the Gallic Vercingetorix against Caesar in 52 BC, for instance, Gaul transformed into a

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[48] Cassius Dio, 40.16-30; Graham Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries A.D., 3rd ed.* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 29. Crassus' failed subjugation of Parthia and gradual reduction of the Parthian menace. While wars with Parthia continued, they did not again represent a credible threat until the emergence of the Sassanids in AD 226.

[49] Stephen Dryson, "Native Revolts in the Roman Empire," *Historia 20* (1971): 239-74.

[50] Galula 1964, 1-5.

[51] Luttwak 1976, 41.

productive and relatively peaceful province for the next sixty years.[52] This outcome was no

accident. In the words of Jonathan Roth, "Caesar realized winning the war was generally less

important than winning the peace."[53] Through winning this peace, Roman practice evidenced

advanced anti-guerilla techniques, concern for governmental legitimacy, and an overriding trend

of population-centrism.

iv. Caveats and significance

Any argument which incorporates two distinct periods of history must navigate serious

pitfalls. This statement is doubly true when one of those periods concerns ancient Rome. In the

past decade, Roman-American comparisons have become an absurd and endemic feature of U.S.

political discourse. Cable news personalities draw contrasts between the imperial excesses of

gladiatorial combat and MTV, while prominent intellectuals suggest American "decline" can be

averted by studying the collapse of the Western Roman Empire.[54] As one example, Cullen

Murphy's 2007 *Are We Rome?* closely approximates Rome and America's global military

commitment and reliance on soft power.[55] Other superficial likenesses have been found in the

two powers' love of spectacle, maritime dominance, and even their highway systems.[56] Such

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[52] Roth 2009, 112.
[53] Ibid, 106.
[54] Vaclav Smil, *Why America is Not a New Rome* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), x.
[55] Cullen Murphy, *Are We Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007), 71-73.
[56] Smil 2010, 157-158.

strained parallels are hardly a new phenomenon; indeed, Rome has remained a fixture of the Western imagination for centuries.[57]

Nearly all of these comparisons are ill-founded at best and revisionist at worst. Disregarding the obvious technological divide (a Roman *gladius* is not an M1 Abrams), the realities of Roman thinking are simply not communicable those of the modern day. The Roman Empire existed long before the emergence of nation-states: there were no clearly delineated borders, nor even understanding of basic geography.[58] Moreover, Roman values were entirely devoid of contemporary notions of liberalism. Prestige and victory reigned supreme; human life was cheap and notoriously expendable.[59] It speaks volumes that, despite a slave population which blossomed into the millions, almost no challenge to slavery as an institution can be found in all of antiquity.[60] In the words of Vaclav Smil, "A systemic appraisal of fundamental realities [between Rome and America] exposes truly profound differences that make casual comparisons of the two empires at best misplaced but more often irrelevant."[61] Such parallels may be entertaining, but they have little place in serious academic inquiry.

Accordingly, while this study contrasts Roman counterinsurgency practice with contemporary theory, it draws few comparisons between particular ancient and modern engagements. It would be misguided, for instance, to assess AD 2004's Second Battle of Fallujah in the context of AD 60's siege of Jerusalem. While certain similarities exist in the

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[57] C. Edwards and G. Woolf, "Cosmopolis: Rome as world city," in *Rome the Cosmopolis*, ed. C. Edwards and G. Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1-20.
[58] G. Woolf, "Roman peace," in *War and society in the Roman world*, ed. J. Rich and G. Shipley (London: Routledge, 1993): 171-194, 179; Susan Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 24.
[59] Mattern 1990, 22.
[60] David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 44; Keith Bradley, "Review Article: The Problem of Slavery in Classical Culture," *Classical* Philology, Vol. 92, No. 3 (Jul. 1997): 273-282, 277.
[61] Smil 2010, xi.

operational intent of a U.S. Soldier or Marine and that of a Roman legionnaire, the gulf in

mindset and tactics is wide enough to render any more specific exercise moot. It may be

possible to appreciate and even learn from Roman behavior, but it will never make sense to

emulate it. The divide between civilizations is simply too vast. Just as Polybius concluded that

Roman ascent was "An event completely without precedent in the past," neither does it enjoy an

accurate parallel among the powers of today.[62]

If this study has little place in the "Rome and America" brand of pop literature, however,

it still occupies an important gap between classical inquiry and military-scientific assessment.

Despite Rome's suitability as an ancient counterinsurgent practitioner, scholarship in this area is

remarkably sparse. Only one work – an essay by Susan Mattern entitled "Counterinsurgency and

the Enemies of Rome" – confronts the relationship between ancient practice and contemporary

doctrine directly.[63] While an excellent start, this piece is short and intended as only a

rudimentary introduction to the topic. Other scholarship targeted toward particular episodes in

Roman history makes use of the term "insurgent," but usually as a synonym for "guerilla," and

without attributing it to the more specific definition propagated by theorists like Galula.[64] This

linkage demands additional research. Such an examination holds potential for both classicists'

understanding of Roman occupation and modern theorists' understanding of counterinsurgency's

doctrinal evolution.

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[62] Polyb. 1.1; Smil 2010, 172.
[63] Mattern 2010.
[64] For two examples of Roman revolts cast explicitly as insurgencies (also explored later in this study), see Peter S. Wells, *The battle that stopped Rome: Emperor Augustus, Arminius, and the slaughter of the legions in the Teutoburg Forest* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003) and Barry Strauss, *The Spartacus War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

The potential for military-scientific inquiry to spur new developments among Roman

historians is already a well-attested phenomenon. In 1976, Luttwak published his boldly titled

study, *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire.* Its intent was nothing less than the wholesale

systemization of Roman security strategy and statecraft, based on a handful of primary sources

and a scattering of archaeological ruins.[65] Anticipating a backlash, the book's foreword had

conceded that, "Specialists will doubtless find errors or disagree with [these] conclusions."[66]

This is exactly what happened. Luttwak's sweeping hypothesis concerning Roman frontier

systems has been alternately critiqued and derided ever since.[67] Yet these attempts to rebut

Luttwak's claims have produced a stunning series of archaeological and conceptual

breakthroughs in the past three decades. Understanding of Roman frontier policy is now

appreciably better than it was at the time of Luttwak's manuscript. The spark of a similar debate

concerning Roman occupation practice might do much to aid understanding of how Rome

interacted with her peacetime populations and dissuaded potential belligerents.

This study may also refine counterinsurgency's wider historical context. Popular

conception sees insurgency and counterinsurgent response emerging in their current iterations

only very recently. According to FM 3-24, "Before World War I, insurgencies were mostly

conservative; insurgents were usually concerned with hearth, home, monarchies, and traditional

religion. Governments were seldom able to defeat these insurgencies; violence would recur

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[65] Luttwak 1976, 1-5.
[66] J.F. Gillian, foreword to *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Luttwak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), x.
[67] For a very small sampling of this debate, see E. Wheeler, "Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy," 2 parts. *Journal of Military History 57* (1993): 7-41; 215-240 and Peter J. Heather, "Holding the Line: Frontier Defense and the Later Roman Empire," in *Makers of Ancient Strategy: From the Persian Wars to the Fall of Rome*, ed. Victor Davis Hanson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010): 227-247.

when conditions favored a rebellion."[68] While FM 3-24 is a handbook, not an academic paper, this summary is broadly reflective of most theorists' understanding of ancient counterinsurgency. If the dual propositions of this study are correct, however, such a far-reaching statement requires refinement. Sources can go decades after a Roman counterinsurgent response without attesting to renewed revolt in a target province. At least in the case of Judaea, there is reason to believe that such long and peaceful silence mirrored reality of the day.[69] Allowing for the universality of violence in the Roman experience (death by brigands was considered as common a cause of death as sickness and old age), Roman practice likely averted more serious incidents of unrest and revolt.[70] Consequently, it may no longer be sufficient to dismiss all pre-1914 counterinsurgency without additional examination.

Ultimately, the greatest significance of this study lies in the continuing relevancy of the theory it seeks to parse and apply. Since the 2001 American invasion of Afghanistan, counterinsurgency studies and literature have proliferated. Future conflicts are increasingly viewed through the lens of contemporary challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, for instance, has urged a realignment of American military development toward those of irregular, low-intensity threats.[71] The threat of the next big war is waning; future security challenges may depend as much on the winning of hearts and minds as on the merits of air supremacy or maneuver warfare. Accordingly, it seems a far from worthless exercise to investigate distant counterinsurgency precedent in light of modern conception and development.

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[68] FM 3-24 2006, Section 1-17.
[69] Goodman 1987, 233-240.
[70] Brent Shaw, "Bandits in the Roman Empire," *Past and Present 105* (1984): 3-52, 9.
[71] Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (January-February 2009): 28-40.

The operations of the first and twenty-first centuries may be different, but they are not as different as we think.

v. Research design

The remainder of this study consists of four parts. These sections present a thorough exploration of the context, practice, and theoretical grounding of Rome's insurgency challenge and counterinsurgent response: an exploration of wider Roman history and relevant socioeconomic, military, and cultural trends; an examination of fourteen insurgency-related instances preceding AD 72; an analysis of these broad patterns and specific episodes through the lens of modern theory and ancient reality; and a conclusive summary of findings.

Following this Introduction, Part II will define the wider framework within which Roman counterinsurgency functioned. It will begin with a brief overview of Rome's historical timeline. From there, it will elucidate elements of Rome's so-called "grand strategy:" her economic motivators, security conceptions, and underlying values system. This will be followed by an illumination of the capabilities and development of the Roman army, in light of both its war-fighting and occupational roles. Finally, this section will investigate the phenomenon of Romanization, considering its mechanisms of operation and effect on subject populations.

Part III will present a wide-ranging selection of insurgencies drawn from antiquity and ordered by the nature of the Roman response. Earliest cases offer Rome's first serious insurgency challenges: the Second Punic War of 218-202 BC, The Fourth Macedonian War of 150-148 BC, and the combined Lusitanian and Numantine Wars of 155-133 BC. From there,

two traumatic Italy-based insurgencies will be examined, the Social War of 91-88 BC and Third Servile War of 73-71 BC. Moving on, common themes among Rome's provincial revolts will be revealed: the revolt of Vercingetorix in 52 BC, the Dalmatian and Pannonian Revolts of AD 7, the revolt of Florus and Sacrovir in 21 AD, the revolt of Tacfarinas in AD 15-24, the revolt of Boudicca in 60/61 AD, and the Batavian revolt of AD 69-70. Next will be discussed two insurgency situations settled by unusual means: the revolt of Arminius and Battle of Teutoburg Forest in AD 9 and first-century AD relationship with the bandits of Mauretania and Iusaria. Finally, the Jewish War of AD 66-72 – our best documented insurgency in Roman history – will be explored in depth.

Part IV will apply the precepts of contemporary counterinsurgency theory to Roman practice exhibited in Part III and informed by the overriding factors of Part II. Both of this study's foundational propositions will be addressed. These verdicts will be contrasted with the likely understanding of actual Roman practitioners: how did Rome conceive "insurgency" as distinct from other provincial disturbances, and to what extent did Rome engineer a conscious "counterinsurgency" response? The answers to these questions will complete the development of a comprehensive historical, theoretical, and practical framework for Rome's insurgency challenge and counterinsurgent response.

Part V will offer a summary of findings and a brief meditation on the broader significance of this study. While this paper's principle focus is the proof of its dual propositions, this is not its only focus; attempts will also be made to establish Rome's place in a broader heritage of successful counterinsurgent powers.

A word on chronology. While well attested instances of revolt persist through Roman history until the loss of literary sources in AD 235, this study has chosen to end with the conclusion of the Jewish War in AD 72.[72] Events beyond this date may be discussed, but they do comprise points of serious investigation. From the perspective of ancient revolts, this boundary encapsulates the two best-recorded rebellions – the war of Vercingetorix via Caesar and the Jewish War via Josephus – while also including instances of insurgency in nearly every part of the Roman Empire. That said, Roman counterinsurgency did not end in AD 72, and further research would do well to investigate major policy shifts and insurgency episodes of the early-to-mid second century.

II. CONTEXT

i. Historical Overview

Although this study principally concerns the counterinsurgency practice and development of Rome from the start of the Second Punic War in 218 BC to the conclusion of the Jewish Wars nearly 300 years later, it is important to understand the place of these events in the wider arc of Roman military history. Rome's rise was hardly inevitable, and her decline was far from fated. According to Livy, Rome was founded in the year 753 BC by two brothers, Romulus and Remus, after having been reared and suckled by a she-wolf.[73] While not possible to assess the veracity of these claims (Livy did not begin writing his history until the 20s BC), archaeological evidence suggests that the hills of Rome were inhabited by the late Bronze Age,

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[72] Mattern 1990, ii. Concise explanation of the chronological challenges inherent to examinations of Roman history.
[73] Livy, 1.4-8.

c. 1000 BC.[74] For many centuries, Italy was a web of small city-states; among them, Rome was

neither unique nor particularly powerful. With Rome's conquest of the neighboring city of Veii

in 400 BC, however, her fortunes began to change.[75] Increased reserves of material and

manpower were coupled with the innovative military reforms of Camillus, permitting the

creation of the powerful Republican army.[76] These advances broke the deadlock on the Italian

peninsula, and Rome began to absorb cities farther and farther afield. By 270 BC, Rome was the

undisputed master of Italy.[77]

War had become an annual exercise for Rome and her allies. According to the *Oxford

Classical Dictionary*, "It was inevitable that, after completing the conquest of peninsular Italy,

the Romans would embark on military adventures beyond its borders."[78] Such adventures were

inaugurated by Rome's 262 BC challenge to Carthage, the great North African naval power, over

control of Sicily.[79] The resulting struggle raged for much of the next sixty years. It saw the

emergence of the Roman navy, the famous campaigns of Hannibal, and huge Roman gains in

Sicily and Iberia.[80] Throughout this period, Rome also launched expeditions north against the

Gauls and east against the Illyrians and Macedonians.[81] The momentous year 146 BC witnessed

the destruction of Carthage in the Third Punic War and effective absorption of Greece and

Macedonia through the defeat of the Achaean League.[82] Further gains in the late second century

BC included the incorporation of North Africa, Iberia, and Asia Minor and deepening incursion

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[74] Livy, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*; Rome (history), *Oxford Classical Dictionary*
[75] Roth 2009, 16.
[76] Ibid, 19.
[77] Ibid, 38.
[78] Rome (history), *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Roth 2009, 40; 44; 45-50.
[81] Rome (history), *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.
[82] Ibid.

into Europe. Conceptions of empire (or *imperium*, meaning "power asserted") became increasingly common.[83] As Rome's dominion expanded, she came into contact with new powers – which, in turn, provided targets for further conquest.

Yet for all of Rome's success, she became undermined by powerful social and economic forces at home. Thanks to victories abroad, hundreds of thousands of fresh slaves had streamed into farming estates of the rich, displacing the traditional small-time Italian farmer and creating a new class of unemployed and discontented city-dwellers.[84] With a diminishing pool of Roman landowners, the Republican army – with land ownership a foundational requirement of service – was drawing fewer and fewer recruits. This challenge was addressed by the consul Marius, whose series of reforms led to the creation of a volunteer, semi-professional Roman army with regularized payment and dates of service.[85] However, Marius' changes also marked a shift in focus from the glorification of the Republic to the glorification of individual commanders; with soldiers now serving far from home and for years at a time, service to the Republic was becoming an increasingly abstract notion.[86] Powerful men armed with loyal legions began to challenge each other for control of the Roman state: Marius and Sulla, Sulla and Pompey, Pompey and Caesar, and – most critically – Mark Antony and Octavian Augustus.[87]

Augustus' victory over Antony in 31 BC's Battle of Actium spelled a decisive shift in the course of Roman history. Through a skillful series of settlements, Augustus transformed the complicated power distribution of the Republic into a virtual monarchy.[88] He further

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[83] Eckstein 2010, 35.
[84] Rome (history), *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.
[85] Roth 2009, 91.
[86] Webster 1998, 22.
[87] Rome (history), *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.
[88] Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939; 2002), 313-331.

standardized the Roman army, and – especially following the traumatic loss of three Roman

legions in the Battle of Teutoburg Forest in AD 9 – focused as much on territorial consolidation

as on any new gains.[89] The threat of this period was not foreign invasion, but internal revolt: the

first century and second centuries AD saw many insurrections, but far fewer wars of conquest.

Rome had reached the limits of those populations she could effectively subjugate and control.[90]

Where Rome annexed new territory, it was now typically that of previous satellites or affiliates.[91]

Unfortunately, this practice saddled Rome with mounting imperial commitment, necessitating

additional troops and more sophisticated border protections.[92] By the turn of the second century

AD, Rome's situation was much analogous to that of the British Empire at the turn of the

nineteenth, in which Britain buckled under the weight of maintaining her "formal" empire after

being forced to absorb her "informal'" one.[93] Meanwhile, the Germans to the north and Persians

to the east grew steadily stronger.[94]

These troubles were exacerbated by a reemergence of civil war. The years AD 235 to

284 saw no less than eighteen emperors, almost all of whom had to defeat multiple claimants to

the purple before being killed in turn.[95] This strife was coupled with unprecedented external

attack: in the year AD 260, for instance, Rome (without a sitting emperor) faced a massive

Persian invasion and German incursion deep into Gaul.[96] Despite these grave dangers, Rome

was able to recover. In AD 285, the emperor Diocletian split administration of the empire into

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[89] Roth 2009, 134; 156-157.
[90] Luttwak 1976, 13-19; 45.
[91] Ibid, 24-25.
[92] Ibid, 60.
[93] Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: a Short History of British Imperialism 1850-1970* (London: Longman, 1984), 116-118.
[94] Rome (history), *Oxford Classical Dictionary.*
[95] Ibid.
[96] Roth 2009, 223.

East and West. This shift allowed for two rulers, and – at least in theory – encouraged collaboration in handling foreign threats.[97] Although this system operated with moderate success until AD 337, thereafter competition between various heirs and usurpers plunged the empire into renewed anarchy. While the Eastern Empire would persist until AD 1453, the West had entered a downward spiral.[98] Rome increasingly relied on German mercenaries (*federates*) to ensure her security, ceding massive amounts of land to these barbarians in payment.[99] By AD 455, Roman control was restricted to Italy. By AD 476, a leader of the *federates* deposed the Roman emperor, and the Western Roman Empire effectively ceased to exist.[100]

This overview suggests that, after 146 BC, the empire's largest threats were very often internal. In the first century BC and third century AD, the danger was civil war; it the first and second centuries AD, it was revolt. Even Rome's decline, popularly associated with images of barbarian hordes sweeping across Europe, was largely a consequence of provincial disunion and unrest.[101] Accordingly, the control and policing of target populations would have remained a pressing concern for generations of Roman statesmen and military practitioners. Their resultant policy prescriptions – their counterinsurgency doctrine – would have been reflected and informed by three broad factors: Roman grand strategy, the capabilities and development of the army, and the cultural phenomenon of Romanization. It is to these categories that this study now turns.

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[97] Rome (history), *Oxford Classical Dictionary.*
[98] Ibid.
[99] Richard S. Cromwell, *The Rise and Decline of the Late Roman Field Army* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1998), 28.
[100] Ibid, 50.
[101] Roth 2009, 266.

ii. Grand Strategy

A study of the evolution of Roman grand strategy illuminates how Rome viewed her growing imperial obligation – and, by extension, why she developed the counterinsurgency practice she did. That said, "Grand Strategy" is a difficult and abstract concept, and one whose applicability to the Roman Empire some scholars have brought into serious question.[102] Paul Kennedy defines grand strategy as, "The integration of a state's overall political, economic, and military aims, both in peace and war, to preserve long-term interests, including the management of ends and means, diplomacy, and national morale and political culture in both the military and civilian spheres."[103] In one sense, Kennedy's definition suggests an administrative and political cohesion which ancient Rome obviously lacked. Rome had no general staff and limited institutional memory.[104] There were no treatises of "lessons learned," or formalized education in the art of statecraft. The empire may have possessed a centralized command structure, but with communication taking weeks and mobilization taking far longer, Rome was unequipped to enact a sophisticated strategic agenda; it remained a fundamentally reactive power.[105]

Yet in other ways, the characterization is accurate. As Kimberly Kagan observes, "To say that the Roman Empire had no grand strategy because it had no long-term plan is to define the concept incorrectly and condemn the field of grand strategy for all time."[106] Rome had objectives which transcended the whims of individual emperors, and broad principles toward

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[102] Benjamin Isaac, *The limits of empire: The Roman imperial army in the East* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 1-2.
[103] Paul Kennedy, "Grand Strategy in War and Peace: Toward a Broader Definition," in Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ix, 4-5.
[104] Wheeler 1993, 8.
[105] Goodman 1987, 248.
[106] Kimberly Kagan, "Redefining Roman Grand Strategy," *Journal of Military History 70, 2* (2006): 333-362, 362.

which she consistently directed her impressive force. These principles were guided by three grand-strategic motivators: economy, security, and values. Each offers a different perspective on Rome's development, as well as a different contextualization of her counterinsurgent duties.

a. Economy

In many ways, Rome's early forays into foreign conquest were less a consequence of imperial ambition than aristocratic competition.[107] Under the Republican system, a successful war promised a magnificent *triumph* (to win the favor of the people), recognition from the Senate (to win powerful political capital), and fabulous personal wealth (to live out a happy old age).[108] The staggering financial gain from some conflicts was enough to affect permanent shifts in the power distribution of the Roman state. Scipio Aemilianus' sacking of Carthage at the conclusion of the Third Punic War gained him a fabulous fortune and ensured his place as Rome's premiere statesman.[109] Meanwhile, it was Caesar's famous Gallic campaigns which won him the riches to assert his famous dictatorship, and it was those same riches which laid the foundation of Augustus' rise to power.[110] Such individual treasure-seeking was the de facto policy of the Roman state; according to Guideo Clemente, "The Roman government was, especially in the Republican period…not an organism capable of extrapolating and isolating its general and theoretical economic objectives from those of the same groups which dominated [it]."[111]

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[107] Mattern 1990, xii.

[108] John Rich, "Fear, greed and glory: the causes of Roman war-making in the middle Republic," in *War and society in the Roman world*, ed. J. Rich and G. Shipley (London: Routledge, 1993): 38-68, 65.

[109] Cic. Repub. 6. For an illustration of Scipio Aemilianus' lasting reputation, see his central role in Cicero's "Somnium Scipionis," written a century after his life.

[110] Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41-42.

[111] Guideo Clemente, "Sicily and Rome: The Impact of Empire on a Roman Province," in *Forms of Control and Subordination in Antiquity*, ed. Toru Yogi and Masaoki Doi (Leiden: Brill, 1986): 105-120, 114.

Gradually, however, Rome's inclination to "loot and leave" was challenged by mounting

imperial obligation. A region emptied of valuables was not emptied of people; native inhabitants

might pose threat to future Roman operations unless properly subdued. The Romans hated these

early pacification campaigns. In 149 BC – at a time when volunteers were racing for the

opportunity to participate in the Third Punic War – widespread rioting took place at the thought

of serving in poor, revolt-infested Iberia.[112] The incongruity of a plunder-based economy and

province-sized responsibilities would become increasingly apparent. In the judgment of

Wolfgang Rubinsohn:

> Roman unwillingness to undertake systemical military and administrative obligations caused the new, post-167 BC 'Roman Order' to destabilize the areas it affected, thereby providing fertile breeding ground for a nostalgia for a largely illusionary happy past, which found its expression in resistance movements. An adequate solution of economic and public-security problems could have saved much misery and bloodshed, but in the end only the Principate proved equal to this task.[113]

After Rome's first foray into Greece and Macedonia in 200 BC, she withdrew her entire force

without garrison or binding treaty.[114] By 146 BC, however, it had become clear that peace (and

the opportunity for future economic gains) could only be guaranteed through direct occupation

and eventual administration.[115]

While the civil wars of the first century BC delayed this administrative transformation,

they could not stop it. With Augustus' founding of the Principate in 27 BC, Rome rapidly

transitioned from a conquest state to a tributary empire.[116] In provinces across the Roman

dominion, irregular exactions of wealth were replaced by regular tax collection and census-

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[112] John Karl Evans, "Resistance at Home: The Evasion of Military Service in Italy during the Second Century B.C.," in *Forms of Control and Subordination in Antiquity*, ed. Toru Yogi and Masaoki Doi (Leiden: Brill, 1986): 121-140, 132.

[113] Wolfgang Zeev Rubinsohn, "Macedonian Resistance to Roman Occupation in the Second Half of the Second Century B.C.," in *Forms of Control and Subordination in Antiquity*, ed. Toru Yogi and Masaoki Doi (Leiden: Brill, 1986): 141-158, 147.

[114] Eckstein 2010, 45.

[115] Rubinsohn 1986, 146.

[116] Woolf 1998, 43.

taking.[117] This shift in Rome's economic model also marked a decisive shift in her relationship

with the provinces. No longer were foreign peoples simply targets for conquest and periodic

shake-downs; now they were populations whose allegiance to Rome was necessary for the

empire's continuing existence. The religious oaths associated with the fourteen-year census

attest to the seriousness of this dependence.[118] Counterinsurgency operations were now not just

a pain, but a necessity. Any disturbance that threatened flow of money to the imperial coffers

could not be tolerated, and sanctity of the empire became central to Roman strategy. In the

words of Florus, "It is more difficult to govern a province than to acquire one: for they are

conquered by force, but they must be retained by law."[119]

Rome's reliance on her provinces – and her imperative to keep them safe and secure – is

best illustrated by what happened when these efforts finally failed. The late fourth-century

emperor Theodosius, not wanting to levy legions from his tax base (and hence reduce revenue),

permitted the increased hiring of *federates* in legionnaires' place.[120] However, this growing

barbarian presence led to mounting unrest and disrupted tax collection in much of the empire.[121]

Consequently, "In a kind of vicious circle the system further reduce tax revenues and funding for

the Roman regular army and led to the replacement of regulars with still more *federates* because

the regulars could no longer be kept up to strength."[122] Although Rome had neither sought nor

easily accepted a tax-based economy, by the late Principate she had grown to be entirely

dependent on one. Its collapse would spell the rapid diminution of the Western Roman Empire.

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[117] Ibid, 43-44.
[118] Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provinicial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 359.
[119] Florus 2.30.29.
[120] Cromwell 1998, 27.
[121] Ibid, 47.
[122] Ibid, 47-48.

b. Security

Key to an understanding of Roman grand strategy is an appreciation for the persistent paranoia that inhabited the Roman psyche. To the policymakers in Italy, all peoples outside the provinces (and many in them) were faceless enemies in the process of biding their time.[123] Such bias dated to as early as the Gallic invasion and occupation of Rome in 387 BC. This event was deeply traumatic for the Rome's historical consciousness; according to Livy, "[The survivors] became hardened by misery, and turned their thoughts…to the sword in their right hands, which they gazed upon as the only things left to give them hope."[124] In consequence, security was a chief obsession for every generation of Roman policymakers, and the casus belli of conflicts across every frontier of the empire often became the preemption of nonexistent or contrived threats.[125] Many "defensive" wars were conceived with notably offensive aims.

These security conceptions were further complicated by the fact that, for much of the empire, Rome recognized no established frontier. Cicero, speaking of Roman-administered Macedonia, characterized it as "a land which has on its borders so many tribes of barbarians that its commanders…have always had only just those boundaries which were also the boundaries of their swords and javelins."[126] A province was not necessarily considered part of the empire. To some observers, for instance, the revolts in Dalmatia and Pannonia AD 9 and Judaea in AD 69 constituted "foreign" wars.[127] Conversely, however, conceptions of Roman imperium could far outrange her tax collectors and local garrisons. As early as the second century BC, statesmen had no qualms issuing orders – and receiving results – from distant states otherwise independent

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[123] Mattern 1990, 66.
[124] Livy 5.42.8.
[125] Mattern 1990, 214-215.
[126] Cic. Pis. 38.
[127] Mattern 1990, 5.

from Roman rule.[128] At the end of his reign, Augustus spoke in the same breath of limiting his

empire to the Danube River and exercising his control over the Dacians who lay beyond it.[129]

Similarly, he took pains to emphasize the subservient embassies he had received from as far

afield as India, implying his power over such territory.[130] Rome asserted suzerainty over

boundless tracts of land, some of which had never seen the boot of one Roman legionnaire.[131]

Even with the emergence of increasingly defined border fortifications, broader Roman

perceptions of the world changed little. Hadrian's Wall may have divided Britain and the vast

limes traced the Rhine frontier, but such structures were directed as much toward internal

stability as toward drawing a line between all things Roman and all things beyond her grasp.[132]

Commerce was common beyond such barriers, and the army still regularly penetrated regions far

removed from this zone.[133] Roman power recognized no easy limits. According to Greg Woolf,

"Romans did not conceive of the world as a mosaic of sovereign territories, and thought in terms

of peoples and places rather than states and spaces, connected not so much by frontiers and

international law as by routes and a variety of relationships with Rome."[134] This contemporary

analysis is echoed by the stark language of a much older one, and one which betrays Roman

perceptions of the empire's dominion. In the words of fourth-century AD statesman

Symmachus, "For who does not equate the judgment of our emperors with that of the entire

world?"[135]

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[128] Eckstein 2010, 48-52.
[129] Mattern 1990, 118.
[130] Ibid, 172.
[131] Luttwak, 60. Also see Isaac 1992, 26, and his suggestion that most Romans did not distinguish between vassal states and directly administered provinces.
[132] Shaw 1984, 12.
[133] Kagan 2006, 346-347.
[134] Woolf 1993, 179.
[135] Symmachus Or. 45-47.

The implications of this view are astounding, creating a situation in which Rome could conceivably view any disturbance – in any location – as a direct threat to the survival of the Roman state. In fact, this is much the method by which the Roman peace functioned. A challenge to Roman power might meet with initial success (the legions were scarce and often scattered), yet such action set the agitator beneath a sword of Damocles. Slowly and unfailingly, Rome would gather her legions to exact reprisal and avenge her injury a hundred-fold.[136] The hammer blow might take years to fall, yet few could doubt the end result: Roman retaliation was one of the terrible certainties of the ancient world.[137] Given the remarkable range of actions which could spark this punitive response, it is little wonder that some tribes sent embassies to Rome to offer preemptive surrenders, often begging the emperor to accept their subordinate position.[138]

Rome's security, therefore, was grounded in deterrence. In Luttwak's judgment, "Above all, the Romans clearly realized that the dominant dimension of power was not physical but psychological – the product of others' perceptions of Roman strength rather than the use of this strength."[139] Rome's horrific treatment of rebels and other instigators has long been regarded as a central aspect of imperial practice.[140] Less appreciated is the fact that, through these brutal demonstrations of Roman might, the empire dissuaded countless other incursions and disturbances from occurring in the first place. Rome demanded respect based on superiority of force, and used awe and terror to cull both provincial residents and distant barbarians into

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[136] Mattern 1990, 116.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid, 117.
[139] Luttwak 1976, 3.
[140] J.E. Lendon, *Empire of honour: The art of government in the Roman world* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 4; Mattern 2010, 117; Isaac 1992, 425.

submission.[141] This focus on the psychological impact of military operations would become a

staple of Roman grand strategy.[142] As this study will reveal, this overarching strategic concept

would also help direct the population-centrism crucial to Rome's counterinsurgency practice.

c. Values

The last determinant of Roman grand strategy was the distinct values system that

permeated the lives of Rome's elite. As has been observed earlier, the Republic was rife with

aristocratic competition, and wars abroad served as a means toward domestic advantage. Yet the

reason for war's political significance – far and above its economic benefit – was due to the

central role of victory in Roman society.[143] Embodied by the goddess Victoria, notions of

military success were closely tied to conceptions of religious piety. A campaigning general

became a conduit for the gods, and a *winning* general was one who approached the status of

demigod.[144] With the adoption of the Principate, conflict and victory became the exclusive

domain of the emperor. Governors and legates were heavily restricted in their ability to wage

war without imperial consent.[145] Even when these men did conduct a campaign and win a

victory, it was the emperor who took the credit.[146] This did nothing to stem Victoria's

popularity; throughout the Principate, hers was an overwhelmingly popular portrayal in literature

and coinage.[147] Victory offered a foundational Roman virtue, an expression of Roman might,

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[141] Mattern 1990, 172-173.
[142] Ibid, 221.
[143] Ando 2000, 278-279.
[144] Ibid, 284.
[145] Mattern 1990, 10.
[146] Ibid, 10-12.
[147] Ibid, 168.

and – most significantly – the glue which bound Rome's fifty-million inhabitants to their government and emperor.[148]

In understanding the centrism of such values to the Roman experience, it is revealing to examine the character and education of its decision makers. Amazingly, elites of both Republic and Principate knew very little about the fields of geography, history, and military science, and only rarely did they seek to consult those who knew more.[149] Reliance on experts, as when the emperor Claudius consulted learned freedmen, could be heavily criticized.[150] Instead, most Romans in positions of authority were trained as rhetoricians in the Greek style.[151] According to R. Syme, "Verse or prose, the ornamental or the obsolete prevails throughout the centuries, the rule of the Caesars reinforcing habits engrained in the educated class. An imperial people had little use for geography."[152] Marius famously derided those noblemen who, elected to consul, tried to learn generalship by acquainting themselves with Greek histories and military manuals.[153] Implicit in all this is the fact that the most powerful armies in the Western world were commanded by men more at home with the virtues of Homeric heroes than the precepts of good martial practice. They were literary scholars tasked with making war; it should come as no surprise, then, that the fulfillment of abstract values occupied such an important role in the formulation of Roman strategy.

If this values system assigned preeminence to the power of inherent Victoria, it also neutralized challenges to Roman might and abhorred the thought of weakness. In the natural

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[148] Ando 2000, 278-279.
[149] Mattern 1990, 2.
[150] Ibid, 7.
[151] Ibid, 15.
[152] R. Syme, "Military Geography at Rome," *Classical Antiquity 7, 2* (1988): 227-251, 229.
[153] Ibid, 223; Sall. Iug. 85.12

order of things, Rome was "superior" – this perception was attested to by peoples outside the empire as well as those within it.[154] Consequently, Romans understood that their superior state could never acknowledge defeat or entreat with others as equals without losing this coveted status. Such sentiment was captured by notions of *decus*, or national "face."[155] Rome's supremacy had to remain unassailable in all settlements; there was never a proper treaty unless the other party was cowed and terrified by Roman power.[156] Surrenders were always to be unconditional.[157] A peace negotiated with the Numantines by the consul Quintus Pompeius in 140 BC, for instance, was famously annulled by the Senate for having offered terms in advance.[158] Similarly, although Rome frequently took hostages to enforce peace provisions and instruct them in the Roman manner, there is absolutely no evidence that Rome ever reciprocated with hostages of her own.[159] Tribute was granted with great rarity, but demanded regularly.[160] Even continuing territorial acquisitions in Britain and Mesopotamia, never profitable or strategically viable provinces, can best be understood as an unwillingness to abandon ventures already started and hence risk the appearance of weakness.[161]

In studying the course of Roman strategy, modern observers – immersed in today's world of splintered beliefs and secular rationalism – might be inclined to discount the impact of abstract values on the policy formulation of the Roman state. This tendency is understandable but mistaken. In ancient times, the supply of books was limited; the selection even more so. For

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[154] Ando 2000, 328. The Parthians, Rome's eastern rival, nevertheless voluntarily returned the standards they had taken from Crassus in 53 BC and turned to Rome when it was time to crown their king.
[155] Mattern 1990, 174.
[156] Ibid, 183.
[157] Ibid, 218.
[158] Appian Hisp. 13.79.
[159] Mattern 1990, 179.
[160] Ibid, 22.
[161] Ibid, 160-161.

much of the empire's existence, religion offered a source of unity, not division. Cultural

mediums were few, and nearly all were monopolized by the emperor.[162] There was not even a

conception of "morality" distinct from the demands of Roman prestige.[163] Mattern puts it best:

> In each case we find that Roman thought on what seem to be the most practical questions involves issues of status or morality - thus the emphasis on terror and vengeance in Roman military strategy, or the powerful symbolism of dominance and submission, honor and deference that was attached to the collection of tribute.[164]

Roman values, embodied by the veneration and relentless pursuit of Victoria, exercised a

powerful influence on how Rome perceived both her empire and the world around her. Coupled

with an economy dependent on provincial stability and security based on deterrence and

disproportionate reprisal, it becomes clear that insurgency posed a dangerous threat. An

unanswered revolt might undermine the tax base, compromise Roman inviolability, and pose an

unacceptable attack on Rome's self-image. Accordingly, the neutralization of insurgency

presented a serious challenge across successive generations of Roman policymakers.

iii. Army

Rome's success began and ended with her conventional superiority in force of arms.

Contrary to popular belief, this was not due to special Roman *elan* (legionnaires were less heroic

Spartans than working professionals), nor to Rome's technical edge (Roman equipment was

often inferior to that of her opponents).[165] Instead, Roman prowess can be best attributed to the

stable institutions and methodological consistency of her armies. Pyrrhus of Epirus may have

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[162] Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988; 1990), 2-4.
[163] Lendon 1997, 41.
[164] Mattern 1990, 22.
[165] Luttwak 1976, 2.

been able to defeat individual Republican deployments, but he could not defeat a system that – like clockwork – assembled a new consular army every season.[166] Similarly, while it was relatively easy for German tribes to harass and evade a slow-moving imperial legion, it was nearly impossible to defend a fixed position against Rome's sophisticated siege practice and engineering prowess.[167] Roman operations were less *blitzkrieg* than bulldozer, applying gradual increments of force until the objective was either subdued or destroyed.[168] The Roman army was slow, plodding, and undeniably effective.

This assessment becomes more complicated if the army is also considered in its role as a force of occupation and development. Large-scale battles were uncommon occurrences in the Principate; for many regions, the Roman army was as much intended to ensure internal stability to check external threats. As the centuries passed, the army's focus would shift more and more toward these policing efforts, eventually ceding its high-intensity capability altogether. An understanding of the Roman army's counterinsurgency effectiveness, therefore, requires an appreciation of these three aspects: the army's military power, its occupational role, and the evolution which eventually blurred these two functions.

a. The army at war

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[166] Plutarch, Pyrrhus 21.9. Pyrrhus' 281-279 BC engagements against the Roman army caused him much consternation, leading him to declare, "If we are victorious in one more battle with the Romans, we shall be utterly ruined!"
[167] Luttwak 1976, 3.
[168] Ibid, 42.

It is important to appreciate Rome's military development in the context of her contemporary rivals. For many centuries, it was the Greek hoplite's long spear and protective phalanx formed the foundation of ancient warfare across the Mediterranean.[169] Such military organization was perfected by the Macedonians, whose armies under Alexander the Great were able to defeat the whole of the Persian Empire in a period of ten years. Macedonian *phalanges* (heavy infantry) – with spears extending as much as sixteen feet – were deployed alongside skirmishers and cavalry in a potent use of combined arms.[170] Opposing hoplite armies, unable to penetrate this bristling spear wall and subject to missile fire on their flanks, could offer little resistance. The Macedonian model permeated both the Western Mediterranean and the kingdoms of Alexander's Hellenistic successors as states from Carthage to Babylon all adopted roughly similar styles of warfare.[171] Battles between phalanxes are best imagined as shoving matches decided by grit and ending in a retirement.[172] Casualties were not catastrophic: historians suggest a 5 percent loss for the victors and 14 percent for the defeated army, which was able to affect a relatively bloodless retreat.[173] This was just as well; limited population pools meant that high battle death could devastate or eradicate entire city-states.[174]

Rome's military development followed a very different track. While the early Republic was as reliant on hoplites as its neighbors to the east, the Camillian Reforms of the fourth-century BC set the Roman military in a new direction.[175] Large and ponderous phalanx

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[169] Roth 2009, 11.
[170] *"Armies, Greek and Hellenistic," Oxford Classical Dictionary.*
[171] Roth 2009, 10-11.
[172] Ibid, 11-12.
[173] Philip Sabin, "The Face of Roman Battle," *Journal of Roman Studies 90* (2000): 1-17, 5.
[174] "Armies, Greek and Hellenistic," *Oxford Classical Dictionary.*
[175] Roth 2009, 11; 18-22.

formations were supplanted by battle lines of self-contained and tactically flexible units.[176] Over

time, the spear was discarded in favor of the short, stabbing *gladius*.[177] Meanwhile, a heavy

throwing javelin (the *pilum*) became an integral part of each infantryman's arsenal.[178] These

changes, while ceding the defensive benefit of a tight phalanx formation, greatly enhanced the

combat effectiveness of individual legionnaires. Further innovations, culminating with the

Marian Reforms of the first-century BC, resulted in widespread eligibility for military service,

equipment standardization, and the emergence of a semi-professional fighting force.[179]

Understanding her material and technical limitations (Romans were notoriously poor archers and

horsemen), Rome outsourced support roles to her provinces and satellite states.[180] This resulted

in the emergence of the *auxilia*, semi-autonomous units which provided both combined arms and

enhanced numbers to the Roman regulars.[181] By the time of the Principate, a typical Roman

legion – of which a relatively constant thirty would exist for the next 300 years – consisted of

4,800 legionnaires reinforced by roughly as many *auxilia* and additional detachments of

cavalry.[182]

     The superiority of the Roman model was demonstrated in 197 BC's Battle of

Cynoscephalae between a Roman consular army and a Macedonian force under King Philip V.

As the two armies closed, the fully formed Macedonian right showed success, "their arms…more

suited for the actual conditions of the struggle."[183] The Macedonian left, however, was unable to

assemble its complicated phalanx before meeting the Roman line and was subsequently

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[176] Ibid, 19.
[177] Ibid, 49-53.
[178] Ibid, 53.
[179] Webster 1998, 19-23.
[180] G.L. Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1914; 1971).
[181] Roth 2009, 147.
[182] Ibid, 146; Webster 1998, 110-111.
[183] Polyb. 18.25.

scattered.[184] Even as the Romans chased these retreating *phalanges*, they rapidly reoriented to roll up the Macedonian right. As Polybius observed, "The nature of the phalanx is such that the men cannot face round singly and defend themselves"; assailed on multiple fronts, the right's advantage was neutralized and its soldiers routed.[185] Unlike the Hellenes, the Romans were much more capable of punishing a fleeing enemy. The Macedonian army at Cynoscephalae was annihilated, reflective of wider Roman military practice in which half an opposing army was often captured or slain.[186] If Roman force and flexibility were able to decimate the premiere military in the West, they had even less trouble against the tribal tactics of European barbarians.[187] Writing from the fifth-century AD, Vegetius smugly observed in his *De Re Militari* that it took only a small number of Romans to triumph against any larger force in the known world.[188]

Also unique was the extent to which Rome incorporated engineering into her military arsenal. The legionary marching camp, in which an elaborate and uniformly designed fort was constructed at the end of each day's march, was a ubiquitous element of the Roman army.[189] According to Luttwak:

> [While] the strategic mobility of Roman forces was undoubtedly reduced by this tiring and time-consuming camp-building routine…[it] combined the tactical advantages of a bivouac with the convenience of billets, and had the added benefit of a guarded perimeter that could always be turned into a heavily fortified earthwork given more time and labor. The characteristically Roman institution of the marching camp was a crucial factor in the strength of an army whose peculiar quality was always resilience under stress.[190]

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[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid, 18.26.
[186] Sabin 2000, 5.
[187] Luttwak 1976, 42.
[188] Veg. 1.1.
[189] Luttwak 1976, 55.
[190] Ibid, 57.

The army had no porters or special construction crews; instead, every soldier was also trained as a builder and rudimentary engineer.[191] Rome also demonstrated a mastery of siege warfare. Circumvallation – in which fortifications were erected around an *enemy's* walls to prevent reinforcement and resupply – was a frequent Roman procedure.[192] Even on the open battlefield, Rome's pioneering use of artillery testified to her ingenuity and engineering prowess.[193] Giant bolts and heavy boulders decimated enemy armies from afar, forcing their initiative and demoralizing their men. Ultimately, these practices suggest a mindset which minimized casualties at the cost of increased effort and time investment. As one Roman general intoned, it was better to win victories by the shovel than the sword.[194]

Rome's tactical proficiency and unique engineering capabilities made her an undisputed master of high-intensity warfare. In a pitched battle situation, Rome enjoyed powerful advantage. Her small and flexible units could react quickly to changing battlefield conditions, exploiting openings unavailable to her more rigid and less disciplined opponents. If the enemy avoided confrontation and instead retreated to supposedly inviolable strongholds, Rome's task became only easier as she reduced her adversary through siege and starvation. In Luttwak's judgment, "As the degree of force concentration and combat-intensity increased, so did the tactical superiority of the Romans."[195] So long as Rome's opponents had fixed assets to defend, they remained vulnerable to the might of the legions.[196] Yet this conventional advantage was severely diminished against nomadic tribes or unanchored insurgents; utilizing guerilla tactics

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[191] Webster 1998, 118.
[192] See Appian Hisp. 91.398 and Caes. Gal. 7.68-71. Respectively, Scipio Aemilianus' circumvallation of Numantia in 134 BC and Caesar's similar circumvallation of Alesia in 52 BC.
[193] Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Complete Roman Army* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2003), 188.
[194] Roth 2009, 74.
[195] Luttwak 1976, 45.
[196] Ibid.

and lacking targetable assets, these groups struck at the Achilles' heel of the Roman army.[197]

Accordingly, the army's counterinsurgency development would encounter imperatives to fix this

failing.

b. The army in the provinces

Although the Roman army was well equipped for high-intensity exchanges, these

instances became increasingly rare during the long peace of the Principate. Many thousands of

legionnaires could spend their entire two-decade deployments without ever going to war.[198]

Moreover, the army rarely functioned in isolation; garrisons interacted regularly with local

populations, and many deployments (especially in the East) were directed more toward internal

stability than external defense.[199] According to Graham Webster, "The army was responsible for

law and order in the provinces as well as their defense, and in effect acted as a police force.

Such a force, in the modern sense, was unknown the ancient world and the protection of citizens

and their property was a constant problem."[200] Rome – master of victory by arms – would have

a difficult time adjusting to the demands of peace.

Rome's first foray into policing began innocuously enough. As the Roman army ranged

deep into Iberia and Gaul, its traditional campaigning cycle (in which citizen-soldiers were

released at the end of summer to tend their crops) became impractical.[201] Permanent winter

camps (*hiberna*) were established to ensure peace in occupied territory between military

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[197] Ibid, 45-46; 74.
[198] Roth 2009, 172.
[199] Benjamin Isaac, "Bandits in Judaea and Arabia," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 88* (1984): 171-203, 187-188.
[200] Webster 1998, 272.
[201] Ibid, 29-30.

expeditions.[202] With the professionalization of Rome's army and expansion of her dominion,

police and paramilitary duties became an increasingly important legionary function.[203] A letter

written by a Roman soldier stationed in second-century AD Alexandria states that, "We are

working hard because we are suppressing the uproar and anarchy in the city."[204] Other accounts

tell of legionnaires pursuing criminal investigations or conducting house-to-house searches for

weapons stashes.[205] Talmudic sources attest to daily urban patrols and the use of secret police to

root out criminals and conspirators.[206] There is no reason to think that the public viewed these

actions as universally oppressive; even in rebellion-minded Judaea, some residents appreciated

the security of a nearby Roman garrison.[207]

Maintaining peace in the provinces required a reconceptualization of friend and enemy,

and a reduction in the punitive measures so often favored by the Rome in times of war. For a

people schooled in bloodlust, this proved a monumental challenge. In the judgment of Benjamin

Isaac:

> The work of an army of occupation is basically different from that of a fighting army, but there is not
> usually a single, clear-cut process of reorganization which marks the transition. The work of an occupying
> army is rarely morally edifying in terms of military glory or plain human decency. It requires very special
> checks and balances for an occupation to be civilized in modern terms. These did not exist in the Roman
> Empire.[208]

While Isaac is correct in identifying the inapplicability of modern standards to ancient practice,

this does not mean that Roman behavior did not moderate. In fact, several episodes in the

imperial period speak to laws explicitly formulated to protect local citizens from unruly

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[202] Ibid, 30.
[203] Mattern 2010, 163.
[204] P. Mich. 8 477-78.
[205] Roy W. Davies, *Service in the Roman Army* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 178; 184.
[206] Isaac 1992, 115-16.
[207] Ibid, 116.
[208] Ibid, 2.

legionnaires. During a visit by Germanicus to Egypt in AD 19, the general mandated that "neither boat nor beast of burden [be seized] nor quarters [occupied]" without his explicit consent.[209] This sentiment was echoed by a prefect of Egypt in AD 42 who threatened severe penalty upon any soldier who made an unauthorized requisition of transport or travel.[210] Much provincial hatred toward Rome was due to actions of corrupt bureaucrats, not imperial mandate.[211] If the army failed to adjust to the role of occupier, it was not for lack of effort.

Instrumental to the army's peacetime transformation were the Roman *auxilia*. While archaeological evidence is limited, sources suggest that huge numbers of *auxilia* served as local peacemakers across the empire.[212] Many of these units were adopted from local militias, and they often stayed close to their homelands.[213] Both *auxilia* and legionnaires, deployed for many years at a time, formed family ties and sired children while on active duty.[214] These veterans' sons subsequently filled a larger and larger portion of the army's ranks.[215] By the beginning of Hadrian's rule in AD 138, only Rome's Praetorian Guard was still composed primarily of Italians.[216] The versatile *auxilia* were relied on for more and more functions of government, and Hadrian inaugurated a new unit type – the *numeri* – who fought alongside legionnaires and *auxilia* while maintaining their original tribal leadership and customs.[217] Meanwhile, the entire

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[209] Graham 1998, 271.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ando 2000, 365.
[212] Roth 2009, 147.
[213] Cheesman 1971, 15-20.
[214] Ibid, 32.
[215] Cromwell 1998, 1.
[216] Roth 2009, 205.
[217] Ibid; Graham 1998, 74-75.

army became less mobile as provincials found it possible to lead a fulfilling military career without ever leaving their home region.[218]

c. The army transformed

Although it lies beyond the main purview of this study, it is useful to chart the endpoint of the army's reorientation from conventional to asymmetrical threats. Roman of the first century AD would hardly have recognized the army of the third. The last known operation of an entire legion took place in the 240s AD; after that, the legion was a purely administrative grouping for a body of soldiers spread across hundreds of miles of territory.[219] Deployments were localized, and the gulf between soldier and civilian grew steadily smaller as the two roles began to merge.[220] Towns had grown up around military garrisons, of which these soldiers now also residents.[221] As Luttwak observes, "Cities were becoming forts, and their inhabitants, involuntary soldiers on occasion; and forts were becoming towns inhabited by artisan-soldiers, merchant-soldiers, or farmer-soldiers."[222] The army had redirected its efforts toward combating low-intensity threats in the absence of high-intensity ones.[223]

Unfortunately, when the threat of organized, conventional armies emerged again in the early fourth century AD, Rome's most powerful weapon of war – the legion – had depreciated tremendously. While Roman arms had languished for lack of a strong enemy, Rome's scattered enemies had gradually coalesced against the permanent presence of their own foe.[224] Soldiering

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[218] Ibid, 74.
[219] Roth 2009, 226.
[220] Luttwak 1976, 171.
[221] Ramsay MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 122-124.
[222] Luttwak 1976, 170.
[223] Ibid, 171.
[224] Heather 2010, 237.

was now a function of the frontier; hardly any of the domesticated peasants of Italy and Gaul even owned weapons.[225] Rome's consequent reliance on German *federates* (and resulting imperial decline) has already been discussed. The point of reiterating the army's failings here is to suggest that, just as the practices of the wartime army undermined its occupational role, so too did its embrace of paramilitary functions undermine its wider wartime capabilities. At its most basic level, this series of events differs little from the one proposed by doomsayers of America's expanded counterinsurgent capabilities. An unassailable conventional army, evolving to combat increasingly low-intensity challenges, was surprised and defeated when a new high-intensity threat emerged.

iii. Romanization

While Rome's counterinsurgency practice can be sufficiently contextualized by her grand strategic aims and army development, these factors are not enough to explain why insurgencies occurred in the first place. A revolt against Rome was not simply a repudiation of the empire's grand-strategic goals or military actions. It was also the function of a complex cultural interaction between Rome and the diverse peoples she governed. In Mattern's judgment, "One way to view insurgency, resistance, and banditry is as attenuated areas or holes in the network of social relationships that linked the empire together and bound it to the senatorial aristocracy and to the emperor."[226] Many of the most significant conflicts in Rome's imperial history took place in provinces that had been pacified for decades, and which enjoyed regular interaction with

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[225] Cromwell 1998, 1; 9.
[226] Mattern 2010, 178.

Roman nationals.[227] Accordingly, these revolts can be partially understood as nativist backlashes against the permeation of an unfamiliar and alien society. Roman control often outpaced Roman acculturation; this left "gaps" in the social fabric which found their expression through insurgency.[228]

The process of Roman acculturation is referred to broadly as "Romanization." This term encapsulates several distinct phenomena.[229] Such inquiry must consider both Rome's conceptualization of Romanizing cultures, and Romanizing cultures' perception of Rome. The former may be determined by examining Rome's civilizing imperative and the methods by which this Romanization took place. The latter may be learned through an assessment of the evolving beliefs and affiliation of provincial residents. These two questions present the final challenge to conceptualizing the broader framework within which Roman counterinsurgency functioned.

a. Rome and the world

This study has already described the economic realignment and military evolution which tied Rome closer to her provinces. Just as instrumental was a fundamental shift in the way Rome perceived her relationship with foreign populations. While Roman paranoia never disappeared, it was gradually supplemented by feelings of clemency and a desire to "civilize" the wider world.[230] Vergil expressed this sentiment in his *Aeneid*, written between 29 and 19 BC: "Let it be your task, Roman, to control the nations with your power (these shall be your arts) and to

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[227] Dryson 1971, 239.
[228] Shaw 1984, 41-42.
[229] Woolf 1998, 7.
[230] Webster 1998, 281-283.

impose the ways of peace; to spare the vanquished and subdue the proud."[231] Similarly, Augustus boasted at the end of his life that, "When foreign races could safely be spared, I preferred to preserve rather than exterminate them," suggesting his willingness to incorporate new peoples into the imperial framework.[232] Roman conceptions of the word "barbarian" reflect this more conciliatory attitude. Where the Greeks considered barbarians as alien peoples forever isolated by heritage as well as culture, Romans understood them only those who had yet to learn the ways of good society.[233] Barbarians could become civilized, and civilized barbarians could become Romans.

Romanization was the means by which this transformation took shape. Never a fully conscious or coordinated effort, Romanization functioned through a combination of socioeconomic, political, and cultural processes. Its initial methods were economic: Roman merchants ranged far beyond the reaches of imperial power, selling Roman wares and encouraging local consumption.[234] In much of Germany, for instance, tribesmen in the path of Roman caravans adopted Roman sensibilities without ever seeing a legate or legionnaire.[235] Merchants were followed by more formal indications of Roman control. The construction of roads, intended to facilitate military movement and communication, accelerated Romanization as local populations were drawn tighter into the imperial network.[236] Meanwhile, as more wealthy Roman citizens joined a community's social fabric, they injected massive amounts of money into the provincial economies.[237] These funds were often used in large-scale development projects

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[231] Verg. Aen. 6.851-853
[232] RG 3.2.
[233] Woolf 1998, 58.
[234] Ibid, 45-46.
[235] Wells 2003, 26.
[236] Woolf 1998, 88-90.
[237] Ibid, 70-71.

like the building of temples or *fora*, quintessentially Roman structures whose construction both

glorified their commissioners and regularized distinctly Roman conventions.[238] Such impressive

public works increased the significance of cities, urbanizing previously rural populations and

exposing them to further aspects of daily Roman life.[239] This steady progression could stir alien

peoples to be "living like Romans" within the space of a few generations.[240]

Rome's mechanisms of political control also contributed to the widespread acculturation

of the empire's inhabitants. Rome frequently oversaw her provinces through the manipulation of

existing power structures. Roman policymakers understood that dismantling traditional

institutions would be costly and counterproductive; wherever possible, they exerted control by

appealing to local elites.[241] They were aided by the practice of hostage-taking, where the sons of

aristocrats from across the empire were sent to Rome to receive their education. Although these

young nobles were hostages, the purpose of their relocation was not primarily coercive; they

were not kept under guard, and often had the free run of the city.[242] Instead, the Romans used

this opportunity to instill Roman sympathies and values, and the provision of hostages became a

means by which local kings could signal their good intentions.[243] For example, Livy tells of a

ruler who "sent his son to be educated at Rome, in order that he might even from childhood be

acquainted with the manners and the persons of the Romans."[244] Augustus was appreciative

enough of this process that he commanded hostages from the Aetolians to be cycled every three

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[238] Ibid; Fentress, E.W.B., *Numidia and the Roman army: Social, military, and economic aspects of the frontier zone* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1979), 164.
[239] Woolf 1998, 157.
[240] Webster 1998, 283.
[241] Ando 2000, 363.
[242] Joel Allen, *Hostages and Hostage-Taking in the Roman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 15.
[243] Braund, D., *Rome and the friendly king: The character of the client kingship* (London: Croom helm; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 9.
[244] Livy 42.19.

years, in order to have the maximum effect.[245] When these aristocrats eventually returned to their homelands, they carried the seeds of Romanization with them.

Most important in altering the dynamic between Rome and her provinces were underlying changes which blurred the boundary between indigenous and Roman custom. In the late Republic, Cicero had preached – but failed to see realized – *consensus* among the various political orders and peoples of Rome.[246] Under the Principate, such *consensus* came to fruition. For the first time in history, peoples across the Mediterranean world shared the same common deity.[247] This was due to the rise of the imperial cult, and the willing worship of the Roman emperor from the colonies of North Africa to the sophisticated city-states of Greece to the wilds of Gaul.[248] While the Augustan pantheon did not displace local gods, it effectively joined them, creating a powerful cultural tie which ran the length of the empire.[249] Other developments like the adoption of a universal civic calendar also helped foster notions of a single, Romanized community.[250] When foreign populations could claim ownership of the same traditions as Rome's urban elite, Roman self-identification became a logical next step.

The broad process of Romanization ultimately affected a revolution in who constituted "Romans," and a transformation in which the core regions of the empire overspilled the bounds of Italy. Rome – long a hegemonic city-state willing to exploit its subsidiary provinces – now became a territorial empire with residents scattered across the Mediterranean world.[251] Old orders were dissolved or recast in the spirit of pan-Romanism. The changing nature of Gaul

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[245] Braund 1984, 14.
[246] Ando 2000, 406.
[247] Ibid, 407.
[248] Ibid, 390; Braund 1984, 114.
[249] Ando 200, 392.
[250] Ibid, 407.
[251] Luttwak 1976, 30.

offer a salient example; according to Woolf, "One striking contrast with the Republican system was the extent to which Roman power now involved individual Gauls as well as communities, just as recruitment of individuals had replaced the use of tribal retinues to assist Roman armies."[252] Also reflective of this change was the expansion of Roman citizenship, an honor long reserved for residents of Rome and a select few Italian allies, to new and distant peoples. During his reign from AD 41-53, the emperor Claudius championed the rights of Gauls to hold Roman office, arguing that it was a strong Roman tradition to accept foreigners into the state.[253] As the empire developed, the institution of citizenship developed with it. Ultimately, Romanization drew disparate imperial populations closer toward the Roman ideal, challenging traditional distinctions between "us" and "them."

b. The world and Rome

Romanization would not present so significant a phenomenon if Roman culture had been embraced only half-heartedly or under duress. Understanding how Rome viewed the world does not necessarily reveal how the world viewed Rome; those in power enjoy the privilege of imagining a unity between conqueror and conquered that is not always shared by the other party. In this case, however, evidence strongly suggests that Roman identity was adopted sincerely and proudly.[254] Rome's martial prowess may explain her acquisition of empire, but this factor alone does not rationalize her empire's extreme longevity. According to Clifford Ando, "The study of Roman interaction with provincials at the local level…suggests that the internal stability of the empire relied not on Roman power alone, but on a slowly realized consensus regarding Rome's

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[252] Woolf 1998, 139.
[253] Ibid, 64.
[254] Ibid, 248.

right to maintain social order and to establish a normative political culture."[255] The Roman city

and imperial Principate became a focus of patriotic loyalties across the Mediterranean.[256] While

this process took time, it also ensured Rome's long-term survival.

Veneration of Roman identity and government became a defining characteristic of

peoples who had been considered barbarians a few generations before.[257] In Gaul, Woolf says,

"Men literally came down from the hills, shaved off their beards, and learned to bathe

themselves."[258] By the second century AD, Gallic commentators were condemning their old

roots and offering praise for the Roman civilization which now constituted their own.[259]

Throughout the empire, independent cities sought to reclassify themselves as Roman colonies, an

act which would cede their freedom in return for closer affiliation with the Roman state.[260]

Inhabitants placed increasing faith in the rationality and competence of Roman government, and

many voiced the belief that they were fundamentally safer under Roman rule.[261] The death of

emperor Nero in AD 68 – an event which could have spelled the disintegration of the empire –

instead affirmed Rome's cohesion as provincials maintained loyalty to the office of emperor in

the absence of an emperor himself.[262] Livy's pronouncement that "an empire remains powerful

so long as its subjects rejoice in it," long a Roman truism, became an accurate way to

characterize the relationship between imperial residents and their Roman rulers.[263]

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[255] Ando 2000, xi.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Webster 1998, 283.
[258] Woolf 1998, ix.
[259] Ibid, 4.
[260] Ando 2000, 407.
[261] Ibid, 325.
[262] Ibid, 293.
[263] Livy 8.13.16; Ando 2000, 58-59.

Contrary to vilifications of Rome as a militaristic tyrant, an examination of Romanization reveals a far less sinister reality. Yet just as significantly, this examination also suggests points of contention which might have added fuel to the fire of any anti-Roman movement or revolt. The increasing intrusion and economic clout of Roman merchants would have stirred hostility among those whose influence was threatened. Meanwhile, the Roman "education" of young indigenous nobles would rightly have been considered indoctrination, and despised by some who suffered the process. The intrusion of traditions like the imperial cult would certainly have caused anger among cultural conservatives intent of preserving their way of life. Underlying it all would have been the well documented tensions between pro-Roman apostates, anti-Roman hardliners, and the large swath of individuals caught in the middle.[264] It is toward a selection of such cases that this study now directs itself.

III. CASE STUDIES

i. Case Selection

This section presents an array of internal military challenges confronted by Rome between 216 BC and AD 72. By isolating the relevant facts of each episode, it is intended to show that these events – taking place in wildly different contexts and locales – each constituted an insurgency with an appreciable counterinsurgent response. Such an examination begins with Rome's ham-fisted operations of the third and second centuries BC, suggesting that Republican generals had difficulty disentangling the requirements of counterinsurgency from the very different demands of high-intensity warfare. This inquiry continues with the pivotal Italian

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[264] Woolf 1998, 22.

insurgencies of the first century BC, incidents which would have dramatically increased the salience of counterinsurgency to Roman policymakers. Afterward comes a recounting of the major provincial revolts from 53 BC to AD 70, as well as the remarkable characteristics they share in common. Next follows an examination of two insurgency situations which took place at the periphery of Roman power, and which were resolved through extra-violent or nonviolent measures. Finally comes a description of the Jewish War of AD 66-72, the best-documented uprising in Roman history whose events suggest a complex insurgency gradually overcome by a competent counterinsurgent response. In total, this chronology demonstrates both persistency of the insurgent threat and gradual refinement of Rome's counterinsurgency practice.

Cases have been selected via the application of four criteria: date, available primary documentation, evidence of imperial inclusion, and evidence of population-centrism. The rationale for AD 72 as an upper limit has already been discussed elsewhere in this study and will not be repeated here. Meanwhile, the scarcity of primary documentation severely limits available scenarios. Not only are ancient sources sparse, but their bias toward Roman supremacy inclines them to severely underreport instances of rebellion or revolt.[265] The next criterion, imperial inclusion, requires that an event have taken place within the bounds of what might plausibly be considered Roman control. This means that native resistance to invasion and first-time occupation, like what occurred during the final consolidation of Iberia under Augustus, cannot properly be considered insurgency.[266] The absorption of new territories and peoples into the empire took time, just as insurgencies take time to gestate.[267] Last, an instance of insurgency

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[265] Woolf 1998, 30.
[266] Mattern 1990, 100. The revolts which took place during Augustus' conquest of northwest Spain, called the Cantabrian Wars. These actions were concurrent with the first Roman incursion; accordingly, they are best understood as struggles of national preservation, not insurgency.
[267] Galula 1964, 2.

must demonstrate the presence and strategic use of neutral populations, not just reliance on irregular warfare. For instance, while the Mithridatic Wars of 88-63 BC showed effective use of guerilla and terror tactics, they still constituted a conflict between two regular state actors.[268]

Alongside these four criteria rest other restrictions. With 120 major recorded revolts between 27 BC and AD 190, it is not possible to adequately treat them all.[269] For every case that can be selected, there are other, similar cases that cannot. Moreover, of these instances that *are* expanded, available information differs wildly. Roman naval development and attitudes toward piracy – arguably related to Rome's struggles with land insurgency – is kept beyond the purview of this study. Domestic sedition and conspiracy through the use of state institutions is similarly excluded. Most significant is omission of the great civil wars of the first century BC and AD 69's "Year of the Four Emperors." Although some aspects of these historical episodes may resemble insurgency, battles for legitimate governmental succession remain fundamentally different entities. After initial confusion, civil war quickly evolves into a quasi-international war between two or more parties; the same cannot be said for insurgency.[270]

The intent of these case studies is to complete the framework (begun in Part II) within which both the abstract principles and individual contexts of Roman counterinsurgency can be placed. Although limited observations may be drawn through discussion of each example, broader analysis is reserved for Part IV. As always, however, the three main premises of this study remain unchanged: that Rome faced recognizable insurgency, that Rome adopted distinct

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[268] App. Mith. 3. Although King Mithridates of Pontus began his wars against Rome with the mass slaughter Roman citizens and evaded many subsequent attempts to bring him to battle, he was clearly still a national ruler; not an insurgent leader.
[269] Pekary 1987, 133-150.
[270] Galula 1964, 2-3.

counterinsurgency practice, and that this practice resembles many of the precepts still foundational to contemporary theory.

ii. Insurgency in infancy

Rome was not always an imperial power, and her leaders did not always have to concern themselves with the regular administration and preservation of provinces. As this transformation occurred, it brought new challenges which forced Rome to adapt in order to combat effectively. Rome's first real encounter with counterinsurgency came during the midst of the Second Punic War starting in 216 BC, when a number of Roman *socii* (friendly but effectively subordinate Italian city-states) rose up and threatened to join Hannibal's peninsular campaign. The next instance came with Rome's experiences preceding and during the Fourth Macedonian War of 150-148 BC. The final example inaugurated Rome's long frustration policing the provinces of Iberia, embodied by the Lusitanian and Numantine Wars of 155-139 BC. These three cases were foundational in reorienting Roman thinking toward counterinsurgency and away from regular war.

a. Second Punic War

Rome's first flirtation with counterinsurgency occurred in the midst of the Second Punic War, when Hannibal's forays into Italy and victory at the battle of Cannae made the Carthaginians "masters of nearly the whole of the Italian coast."[271] For the Romans' part, they "despaired of retaining their supremacy over the Italians, and were in the greatest alarm, believing their own lives and the existence of their city in danger."[272] Early developments seemed to justify these fears. The *socii* – cooperative but never satisfied with Roman predominance – began to defect to Hannibal's army. By 216 BC, Hannibal had won six pitched battles against the Roman army; his success offered a rallying point for those disenchanted with Roman rule.[273] The willing surrender of Capua, an especially prosperous city-state, proved deeply traumatic for the Roman people.[274] Loyalties across the peninsula were growing increasingly tenuous, and Rome was in danger of crumbling as much through internal betrayal as through external attack.

Several actions were taken to avert this potential catastrophe. Prior to the defeat at Cannae, the Roman consul Fabius used his army to trail Hannibal's, avoiding battle while launching guerilla-style raids and deterring would-be defectors.[275] This strategy of attrition and intimidation (what would later be known as the "Fabian Strategy"), worked for a time, but proved deeply unpopular among Roman politicians who wanted quick and decisive results.[276] As years wore on and Rome again resorted to Fabian's precedent, Hannibal's army lost momentum and he proved incapable of directly attacking the heavily fortified city of Rome. Meanwhile, Rome besieged and captured Capua in 211 BC, killing its leading politicians and

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[271] Polyb. 3.118.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Livy 23.11.8.
[274] Polyb. 9.6.
[275] Roth 2009, 45-46.
[276] Ibid, 46.

enslaving its population, shipping them to every other nominally friendly city in Italy.[277] The

city itself, however, was spared. As Livy reasons:

> Sternly and swiftly was punishment meted out to those who had been most guilty, the population was scattered far and wide with no hope of return, the unoffending walls and houses were spared from the ravages of fire and demolition. The preservation of the city…afforded to the friendly communities a striking proof of her lenity; the whole of Campania and all the surrounding nationalities would have been horror-struck at the destruction of such a famous and wealthy city. The enemy, on the other hand, was made to realize the power of Rome to punish those who were faithless to her.[278]

Although Hannibal's presence in Italy continued several more years and the Second Punic War

itself another decade, Rome's action at Capua spelt an end to the internal threat to the Roman

state.

In some ways, this episode was not an insurgency, and it did not elicit a counterinsurgent

response. Major decisions were reached through pitched battles, not asymmetrical warfare.

Hannibal's incursion into Italy was a conventional operation; his recruitment of the *socii* was

only an incidental step toward his military goals. Yet the Carthaginian invasion also proved a

catalyst for tensions that had, in the case of Capua, existed for many years.[279] Accordingly, the

rebellions of the *socii* represented a political statement against Roman authority, and a cause

which enjoyed sympathy across Italy. Rome's consequent response was directed as much

toward population persuasion as toward the defeat of Hannibal's army. Fabian's strategy

strongly discouraged defection, while the harsh reprisals at Capua and other city-states sent a

powerful message to other members of Rome's dominion.[280] Any Italian leaders pondering

rebellion against Rome need only have looked to nearby Capuan slaves in order to reconsider

their actions. Rome's conduct in Italy suggests a counterinsurgency operation in the midst of a

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[277] Livy 26.16.5-6.
[278] Ibid, 26.16.10-13.
[279] Ibid, 23.2.3. The political elites of Capua appreciated that, should they not join Hannibal's movement, they would likely be murdered by a resentful population eager to escape Roman authority.
[280] Mattern 1990, 221.

much larger conflict. Her success, while much delayed, ensured Italy's loyalty for the next one-hundred years.

b. Fourth Macedonian War

The Fourth Macedonian War of 150-148 BC was a highly significant event in the course of Roman history. After this conflict, Roman policymakers became convinced that peace could only be preserved through direct administration of Macedonian lands, charting the fateful beginnings of Roman imperialism.[281] More significant to this study, the Fourth Macedonian War also represents a salient case of insurgency. The war's origins sprang directly from the harsh peace imposed on Macedonia at the end of the Third Macedonian War in 167 BC. This settlement had seen Macedonia's monarchy – once claimed by the likes of Philip II and Alexander the Great – effectively dissolved, and her former kingdom divided into four separate republics.[282] In Livy's judgment, this action was taken on account of, "[Fear] that if there were a common legislature for the nation, some relentless demagogue would turn the freedom given in healthy moderation into the license which brings ruin."[283] Some elites were forcibly relocated to Italy, and intermarriage and the trading of property between regions was prohibited.[284] The cumulative result of these restrictions was extremely negative; according to Wolfgang

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[281] Eckstein 2010, 56.
[282] Rubinsohn 1986, 142.
[283] Livy 45.18.
[284] Ibid, 45.32; 45.29.

Rubinsahn, "Macedonia after 167 BC was basically poor, lacking investment capital and employment opportunities."[285]

Not all Macedonians were opposed to Roman rule. A number of aristocrats, enjoying preferential treatment and lower taxes under the altered constitutional arrangement, were happy with this newfound peace.[286] When violence erupted in 163 BC, therefore, it was likely as much between local Macedonian factions as between Macedonians and Romans.[287] Although this unrest was quickly subdued, stirrings of revolt continued for the next decade. The Macedonian revolutionary Andriscus, whose first attempts to stir up the people met with failure, found support among transplanted Macedonian nationals residing in Asia Minor.[288] In 148 BC, Andriscus finally launched a successful coup, restyling himself as Philip VI (ancient sources more commonly refer to him as "Psuedo-Philip") and using a combination of popular persuasion and irregular tactics to stir others to his side.[289] Much of his national movement is unknown. Polybius reports frankly that, "A Philip [suddenly] appeared in Macedon as though he had dropped from the skies…it seemed an astonishing and inexplicable event; for there was nothing to give it the air of probability, or to supply a rational explanation of it."[290] After initial successes against both the Macedonian establishment and Rome, Pseudo-Philip launched domestic initiatives which Diodorus Siculus declares "a course of savage cruelty and tyrannical

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[285] Rubinsahn 1986, 142.
[286] Ibid, 144.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid, 145.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Polyb. 37.2.

disregard for law."[291] Psuedo-Philip was conclusively defeated in battle against Rome in 146 BC, and the threat of Macedonian revolt was ended.[292]

Although records of Andronicus/Pseudo-Philip's movement are extremely limited, several important observations can be made. Whatever the general Macedonian population thought about Rome, they did not join Pseudo-Philip's struggle en masse; not only did it take him years to build political momentum, but his harsh reprisals against domestic enemies suggest that disunion continued throughout the entire period. Moreover, even pseudo-Philip's actual resistance was strongly factional, comprised of various political and economic interests (as well as foreign mercenaries) whose only bond was a hatred for Rome.[293] The Macedonian state post-167 BC was effectively the result of foreign nation-building; since most of those foreigners had then *left* the state to its fate, this instability should not be surprising. Unfortunately, very little is known of Rome's response. Livy writes only that, "[Pseudo-Philip] was defeated and captured by Quintus Caecilius, and Macedonia was subdued again."[294] However, the fact that "many Macedonians were sincerely happy" at Roman victory suggests that Roman interaction with the population had not been ineffective, as does Macedonia's subsequent integration as a successful Roman province.[295] The significance of the Fourth Macedonian War lies in its demonstration of insurgency, an insurgency which propelled Rome toward permanent occupation across Greece.

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[291] Diod. Sic. 32.9A.
[292] Rubinsahn 1986, 146.
[293] Ibid, 145.
[294] Livy 50.14.
[295] Rubinsahn 1986, 146.

c. Lustianian and Numantine Wars

Rome's experiences in Iberia led directly to her first imperial responsibilities and her first prolonged encounters with asymmetrical warfare. The Second Punic War gave cause for Rome's initial incursion onto the peninsula as she was able to threaten Carthage's Iberian possessions. There was widespread animosity for Carthage among the Iberian tribes, and many came over to Rome voluntarily during the war; it would not be a stretch to suggest that the Romans were greeted as liberators. [296] Yet this state of affairs did not last. Following a series of conflicts during the first half of the second century BC, Iberia erupted in full-scale revolt following an invasion of Roman territory by the unaffiliated Lusitanians in 155 BC and an uprising by the nominally allied Celtiberians a year later.[297] When the Lusitanians offered peace in 147 BC, their emissaries were slaughtered, and one survivor, Viriathus, reignited a bitter guerilla war.[298] Concurrently, the Celtiberians, centered on the town of Numantia, rallied fresh insurrection in the face of Roman brutality.[299] The result was a series of extended campaigns waged by Rome against natives with alien practices and legitimate political grievances; these operations were extremely unpopular in Italy.[300]

This series of conflicts, known under the wide umbrellas of the "Lusitanian War" (155-139 BC) and "Numantine War" (143-133 BC), cover many years with little available documentation.[301] They are valuable, however, for the lessons they almost certainly internalized for future Roman military practice. As one example, Appian tells of how clemency was wisely

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[296] App. Hisp. 3.15.
[297] Roth 2009, 80.
[298] Ibid, 81.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Evans 1986, 132.
[301] Roth 2009, 80-81.

showed to the remainder of Viriathus' forces, as the Roman consul Caepio "took from them all their arms and gave them sufficient land, so that they should not be driven to robbery by want."[302] Such action (which led to long-term peace among the tribe) stands in marked contrast to savagery practiced by Rome during previous unsuccessful attempts to reach a settlement. Another important instance can be found in Scipio Aemilianus' final besiegement of Numantia in 133 BC, after having extracted separate settlements from their former allies.[303] His encirclement of the city was complete, fulfilling his intent that, "Nobody could have any dealings with them, nobody could come in, and they could have no knowledge of what was going on outside."[304] In a remarkable series of events, the Numantines nevertheless managed to dispatch a secret emissary to a nearby sympathetic city. When Scipio heard of this, he dispatched a contingent of his fastest men, who cut off the hands of those who had been swayed by the Numantines' plea.[305] This action, communicating both intimidation and relative moderation (more traditional Roman generals might have killed them outright), ensured that Numantia received no outside aid. Eventually the city capitulated and was razed, and Rome saw little trouble from Iberia for the next century.[306]

As is often the case in studying ancient history, only one source – the unspecific history of Appian – treats the Roman experience in Iberia with any depth. While the rebellion of the Celtiberians and Numantians in particular bears some resemblance to insurgency, it is not possible to determine how long their resistance movement had persisted beyond looking to

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[302] App. Hisp. 12.75.
[303] Ibid, 14.89. While Scipio plundered some cities on his way to Numantia, he famously spared others, proclaiming that the disloyal Caucaei could "return in safety to their own homes." Hence support for Numantia quickly deteriorated.
[304] Ibid, 15.91.
[305] Ibid, 15.94.
[306] Roth 2009, 86.

earlier revolts of the period.[307] More valuable is the information that remains of Roman

response, and a general trend that demonstrated the ineffectiveness of universally harsh reprisal.

Future episodes will demonstrate an increasing Roman willingness to offer concessions or

enticements to insurgents. Although it is not possible to prove that this reorientation occurred in

the aftermath of Rome's late second century BC Iberian campaigns, this seems likely. Rome's

indiscriminate use of force in 147 BC had elicited fifteen more years of violence and many

thousand more deaths; for any who suffered through the dangers and meager loot of those long

campaigns, this would have remained a very salient lesson.

iii. Insurgency at home

The first century BC brought two conflicts which drastically increased the relevancy of

unusual military threats sprung from untraditional origins. The Social War of 91-88 BC was the

final and most dangerous rebellion among the Italian city-states, and one which demanded

political as well as military solutions. Meanwhile, Third Servile War of 73-71 BC (made famous

by the participation of Spartacus) confronted Rome with a domestic insurgency without an easy

solution. These two cases exerted an appreciable impact on how Rome viewed her insurgency

challenge.

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[307] Ibid, 80.

a. Social War

Although the Social War of 91-88 BC represented highly significant event in the course of Roman history, its accounts survive mainly in fragments. The revolt, which spread rapidly among the assorted *socii*, began with the assassination of a Roman tribune advocating citizenship rights and senatorial representation for all Italians. Roman conservatives had been alarmed by this plan, thinking it, "Not unlikely that [the Italians] would form a faction in the Senate by themselves and contend against the old senators more powerfully than ever."[308] Their violent deed was enough to convince the *socii* that a grant of citizenship was no longer possible nor desirable; with all other options exhausted, they decided to rebel.[309] Secret plans were circulated among the various Italian allies, and hostages were exchanged in order to ensure that their intended act would take place. When a Roman proconsul was informed of the ongoing conspiracy and confronted those in the city of Asculum, he was cut down, and all other Romans present were slain.[310] As word spread, the Italians took up arms. Their rebellion had begun.

The *socii* mustered an impressive field army which (notwithstanding the inflationary tendencies of ancient historians) numbered nearly 100,000.[311] This was an extraordinary showing, and the resulting war led to a series of defeats and stalemates for the Romans.[312] Squeezed by the ongoing Mithradatic War in Asia Minor, Roman policymakers struggled to defuse the revolt before it toppled the state.[313] Their answer was not a military solution, but a

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[308] Appian BC 1.5.35.
[309] Ibid, 1.5.36.
[310] Ibid, 1.5.37.
[311] Ibid, 1.5.39.
[312] Roth 2009, 96-97.
[313] Ibid, 96.

political one. Rome had suffered heavily from the rebellion of the *socii*, and continuing to sap

the fighting potential of their countrymen made little strategic sense. According to Appian:

> The Senate also voted that those Italians who had adhered to their alliance should be admitted to citizenship, which was the one thing they all desired most…By this favor the Senate made the faithful more faithful, confirmed the wavering, and mollified their enemies by the hope of similar treatment.[314]

While diehards continued to hold out, their movement quickly lost momentum. By the end of 89

BC, nearly all Italians enjoyed the privileges of full Roman citizenship, and the remainder would

gain it shortly thereafter.[315] In one fell swoop, Rome had co-opted the rebels' cause and driven a

wedge between their various factions.

The question stands whether this rebellion constituted a civil war; disregarding the

question of formal citizenship, it is clear that the *socii* were thoroughly Romanized populations

who considered Romans their kinsmen.[316] They fielded a powerful conventional army and

established a formal capital, Italia, fulfilling two expectations of civil war.[317] In other ways,

however, the Social War better resembles the final stages of an insurgency. Although Appian

does not mention it, it is implausible that all the citizens of the *socii* spontaneously took up arms

against Rome without extended debate and persuasion of undecided neutrals. This effort would

have been led by those individuals most strongly affiliated with anti-Roman movements, and

parties who had been agitating against Rome well before the fateful assassination of 91 BC.

Using denial of citizenship to galvanize a larger population, they saw rapid success – at least

until the Senate robbed them of their call to arms.

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[314] Appian BC 1.6.39.
[315] Appian BC 1.6.53.
[316] Roth 2009, 96.
[317] Galula 1964, 3. Civil war grows to resemble international war; state structures and conventional forces are two of its foundational requirements.

b. Spartacus and the Third Servile War

One of the most famous insurgencies in the ancient world began at an undistinguished gladiatorial training school in Capua.[318] In 73 BC, the Thracian gladiator and former *auxilia* Spartacus led seventy-four others in an escape from captivity.[319] Not content merely to flee Italy, the small band sought a more general uprising against Roman rule; within a year, their original seventy-four had swelled to roughly 60,000.[320] Although the last of three Servile Wars in this period, Spartacus' movement – occurring in large numbers and amidst the heart of Italy – quickly became the most dangerous and scarring. According to Barry Strauss, "The story of Spartacus is…a classic case study of an insurgency, led by a genius at guerilla tactics, and of a counterinsurgency, led by a conventional power that slowly and painfully learned how to beat the enemy at his own game."[321] Romans saw Spartacus' rebellion far less charitably. As the confrontation gradually escalated, they were always loathe to refer to it as a "war"; Caesar purposefully avoids using the term when reflecting on Spartacus' tactics in his own writing.[322] Even Florus, writing nearly two centuries after the fact, calls the slaves "enemies" before interjecting, "I am ashamed to give them this title."[323] When Spartacus was finally defeated, the responsible general was curtly denied the honor of a triumph.[324]

Yet at their zenith, Spartacus and his followers posed a legitimate threat to Roman power. After their escape, the slaves had made their way quickly toward Mount Vesuvius, an excellent

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[318] Appian BC 1.14.116.
[319] Strauss 2009, 2; 17.
[320] Ibid.
[321] Ibid, 6.
[322] Ibid, 52; Caes. B Gall. 1.40.6.
[323] Flor. 2.8.12.
[324] Barry Strauss, "Slave Wars of Greece and Rome," in *Makers of Ancient Strategy: From the Persian Wars to the Fall of Rome*, ed. Victor Davis Hanson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010): 185-206, 187.

strategic choice which granted them both the capability to ambush and to affect speedy

withdrawals.[325] Their ranks grew quickly from word of mouth, and from successful early

victories against Capuan militiamen and eventually a proper consular army.[326] Despite their lack

of proper weaponry, the guerillas excelled at striking "soft" targets, terrorizing citizens and

freeing rural slaves.[327] Spartacus adopted the mantel of a mystical leader as well as a skilled

general, receiving a widely-publicized prophecy that he would become a liberator with "great

and fearful power."[328] With Spartacus' movement presenting a tantalizing opportunity for Italy's

rural slaves, they began escaping en masse to join their hero. Continual success, however,

brought new challenges. A growing slave faction pressured Spartacus to turn from irregular to

regular tactics, and to begin challenging Rome in the field.[329] Spartacus recognized the stupidity

of this idea, and the inevitability of defeat if brought to battle.[330] His goals remained the

exhaustion of the Roman army, an eventual escape beyond Italy, and the courting of Rome's

enemies in order to build a potent coalition.[331] Nevertheless, the bloodthirstiness of many of the

guerillas made this plan impossible. Spartacus was forced several times to permit other leaders

to leave in order to attack the Roman forces directly, diminishing the strength of his movement

in the process.[332]

Rome's response was initially feckless, as the small army dispatched to Vesuvius was

summarily slaughtered.[333] Two larger armies, each hastily raised and poorly led, were also

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[325] Strauss 2009, 41.
[326] Appian BC 1.14.116.
[327] Strauss 2010, 195.
[328] Strauss 2009, 37.
[329] Ibid, 65.
[330] Strauss 2010, 198.
[331] Ibid, 200.
[332] Strauss 2009, 66.
[333] Ibid, 52.

defeated by the irregular tactics of the insurgents.[334] Spartacus' use of local knowledge

contributed to more victories, and yet – when the Alps and an escape from Italy finally laid open

to him – he determined not to take it.[335] Although his reasoning is unknown, it is after this point

that Spartacus' movement gradually came undone. A new Roman general, Marcus Licinius

Crassus, adopted an outlook based on his long experience with asymmetrical war in Iberia.[336]

Strauss suggests that he modeled his strategy – location, isolation, and eradication – explicitly

from Scipio Aemilianus' treatment of Numantia more than fifty years earlier.[337] Crassus'

attempts to strangle the insurgents' supplies and block them from population centers proved

wildly effective. Yet Crassus' actions proved unpopular among politicians accustomed to

decisive engagements, and he was compelled to pursue more direct confrontation.[338] Although

Spartacus was able to escape several attempts in dramatic fashion, he could not run forever.

After another insurgent faction separated and were defeated, Spartacus recognized the

hopelessness of his situation, and died heroically in a one-sided battle against a large and well-

disciplined Roman army.[339] While isolated bands of runaway slaves would terrorize Italy for

another ten years, the core of the revolt had been broken.[340]

Ultimately, Spartacus' insurgency had been a race against time. His movement faced a

limited pool of sympathizers from the offset; urban slaves were generally too satisfied with their

current lot to risk rebellion, while (for obvious reasons) no other demographic would consider

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[334] Ibid, 52.
[335] Ibid, 73; 103-106.
[336] Ibid, 120.
[337] Ibid, 121-122.
[338] Appian BC 1.14.119.
[339] Strauss 2009, 181.
[340] Strauss 2010, 200.

joining a slave revolt.[341] Moreover, Spartacus understood that the Roman hammer blow would

fall at some point, and that he could not resist forever without expanding his base beyond Italy.

In Strauss' judgment, however, "Spartacus suffered the common fate of prudent revolutionaries

everywhere: he lit a fire that he could not put out."[342] Rome, for her part, had eventually found a

winning counterinsurgency strategy. Roman action at the end of the Third Servile War

demonstrates the length to which she wanted to avoid another such conflict as 6,000 rebels were

crucified along the entire road from Capua to Rome.[343] In addition to this powerful act of

deterrence, Rome also turned to more active policing and gradually decreased the number of

captives she took in battle.[344] Most importantly, Rome made the prospect of manumission more

attainable to her slave population, dramatically diminishing slave unrest.[345] Spartacus' revolt

had made a powerful impression on the Roman consciousness, and its practices – drawn from

past precedent – would be remembered in future counterinsurgent actions.

iv. Insurgency abroad

With the formalization of Roman rule across much of her dominion in the late first

century BC and first century AD, the character of Rome's military challenges began to change

rapidly. Instead of facing initial resistance from alien populations, the Roman now faced

concerted resistance from individuals who had spent their entire lives under Roman rule and

custom. The cases span a century and much of the Mediterranean: the revolt of Vercingetorix in

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[341] Strauss 2009, 46.
[342] Ibid, 186.
[343] Appian BC 1.14.120.
[344] Strauss 2010, 200.
[345] Ibid.

52 BC, the Dalmatian and Pannonian Revolts of AD 7, the revolt of Florus and Sacrovir in AD 21, the revolt of Tacfarinas in AD 15-24, the revolt of Boudicca in AD 60/61, and the Batavian revolt of AD 69-70. Excluding the revolt of Vercingetorix, documentary evidence is extremely sparse. The point of their retelling is to identify characteristics common among them, and traits which will prove revealing in Part IV's wider analysis.

a. Revolt of Vercingetorix

The revolt of Vercingetorix in 52 BC was as much a conflict among Gauls as against Rome. Thanks to the dual factors of military conquest and Romanization, Gaul of the first century BC was becoming increasingly Roman in character. The cultural divide was growing rapidly between the urbanized "new" Gaul and the tribal Gaul of old.[346] Vercingetorix was one such leader who, familiar with the ways of civilization offered by Rome, nevertheless agitated for Gallic independence. His movement worried other elites who had benefited under Roman auspices, and he was banished for trying to incite rebellion.[347] This turn of events did little to faze him. As Caesar recounts:

> Still he persisted, and held a levy of down-and-outs and desperadoes in the open countryside instead. After he had mustered this gang, every Arvernian whom Vercingetorix approached was won over to his own point of view. He urged them to take up arms in order to win liberty for all. Once he had assembled a large force, he exiled the opponents who so recently had themselves expelled him.[348]

Vercingetorix quickly consolidated his position, receiving the title of king from his supporters. He dispatched embassies to tribes across Gaul, demanding soldiers and hostages.[349] His efforts

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[346] Woolf 1998, 107.
[347] Dryson 1971, 242.
[348] Caes. B Gall. 7.4.
[349] Ibid.

produced an impressive conventional army, and his leadership succeeded in binding the disparate

interests of the Gauls together.[350]

Caesar, the general who had spent his last five years pacifying Gaul, confronted severe

challenges at the offset of the revolt. If he permitted even one Gallic ally who remained loyal to

be defeated by Vercingetorix, Roman protection would lose credibility, and tribes might flee to

Vercingetorix en masse.[351] Additionally, the rebels were able to use even small victories against

unprepared Roman garrisons to huge propaganda effect, greatly bolstering the strength of their

movement.[352] Caesar's solution was to range deep into rebels' territory, showing relative

clemency to those towns that surrendered quickly; his aim was to demonstrate insurgent

weakness, not simply launch brutal reprisals.[353] For his part, Vercingetorix resolved to adopt

scorched-earth tactics, burning any Gallic settlement that might drain resources if it had to be

defended.[354] He bluntly declared that "there would no refuge for Gauls to avoid taking part in

the campaign."[355] Yet Vercingetorix remained unable to defeat Caesar in the field, and he was

hindered by the unrest of those under his command.[356] Over a period of months, the rebels'

strongholds and bases of support were gradually neutralized, until they retreated to their final

stronghold at Alesia.[357] Despite a gallant defense, the Gauls could not overcome Roman

siegecraft, and Vercingetorix surrendered in an attempt to spare his remaining followers.[358]

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[350] Dryson 1971, 243.
[351] Caes. B Gall. 7.10.
[352] Dryson 1971, 249.
[353] Caes. B Gall. 7.12-14.
[354] Ibid, 7.14-15.
[355] Ibid, 7.14.
[356] Ibid, 7.20. In one instance, Vercingetorix was accused of treachery and of purposefully losing battles in order to defect to Caesar. He quickly put these concerns to rest, and was reaffirmed as the Gallic leader.
[357] Ibid, 7.69.
[358] Ibid, 7.90.

Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic War – our only record of Vercingetorix's revolt –
are unavoidably biased and limited. Because Caesar was the commander of this operation, he
does not enumerate on instances of Vercingetorix's successes, although it is safe to assume that
the Gallic leader achieved some victories in order to sustain his movement. Similarly, only a few
lines attest to Vercingetorix's rise to power, and hardly any text discusses Caesar's interaction
with the neutral Gallic population. These limitations notwithstanding, Vercingetorix's revolt is
significant for its repudiation of Romanization and expression of Gallic independence from a
generation that had never experienced it firsthand.[359] In Caesar's assessment, "The whole of
Gaul was united in the desire of restoring liberty…to such an extent that neither services
rendered nor the remembrance of friendship moved them, and they concentrated all their efforts
of will and resources on the war."[360] What began as a conflict between Gallic elites quickly
transformed into a movement which embraced tribes across the region, reawakening old passions
and driving toward a new notion of Gallic nationalism.[361] However, confronted with the armies
of Rome and ingenuity of Caesar, their rebellion could not last. The tribes of Vercingetorix's
coalition were slowly peeled away, while unaffiliated Gauls were persuaded by force of Roman
arms. Vercingetorix's forces were isolated and eradicated, and his movement crumbled.
Vercingetorix's cause, while strong, had not been matched by a similarly strong army.

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[359] Dryson 1971, 245.
[360] Caes. B Gall. 7.76.
[361] Dryson 1971, 245.

b. Dalmatian and Pannonian Revolts

Taking place in AD 7, the concurrent revolts of the Dalmatians and Pannonians in the ancient region of Illyria (roughly the modern day Balkans) would grow to have a powerful effect on the future course of Roman imperialism.[362] At the time of the rebellion, much of the territory had undergone Romanization for the last century, and Roman control was becoming increasingly solidified.[363] It was one measure of formalized Roman rule, the introduction of regular tribute, which drove these populations beyond the brink.[364] A native leader of the Dalmatians, Bato, excited these tensions toward revolt, while another Bato did the same for the Pannonians. Very little is known of these men except that they were both likely Romanized and well acquainted with the Roman army.[365] Cassius Dio tells us that an early success of Bato the Dalmatian caused the rebellion to grow exponentially as it was shown that the Romans could be beaten.[366] Another Roman army was defeated by ambuscade, and when the future emperor Tiberius marched against the Dalmatian rebels:

> Although Tiberius approached them, they would engage in no pitched battle with him, but kept moving from one place to another, causing great devastation; for, owing to their knowledge of the country and the lightness of their equipment, they could easily proceed wherever they pleased. And when winter set in (and the Roman army went to quarters) they did much greater damage.[367]

Initial Roman offenses were frustrated by the Dalmatians' and Pannonians' use of asymmetrical warfare. The guerillas also made masterful use of mountain fortresses, launching sporadic raids and acts of terror before retreating to safety.[368]

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[362] Mattern 1990, 88. It has been argued that the revolts of AD 6 – and Rome's difficulty in suppressing them – were the first illustration of the material limitations of the Roman army.
[363] Dryson 1971, 250.
[364] Ibid, 251.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Cass. Dio 54.29.2.
[367] Ibid, 54.30.5.
[368] Ibid, 54.30.6.

Despite a troop concentration that rivaled that of the civil wars, Rome proved unable to neutralize the insurgency by force alone.[369] Instead, Roman success came when generals took advantage of the infighting that had grown amongst the rebels' coalition. As tribes turned on each other to resolve personal power struggles, Rome conquered a few and "won over some of the others without a battle."[370] The campaign against the remaining hardliners became a brutal march from one town to the next. Romans arms reduced each stronghold in turn, driving the insurgents further and further from the general population.[371] Eventually, the Dalmatian Bato was captured. Asked why he had revolted for so long and so fiercely, he replied, "You Romans are to blame for this; for you send as guardians of your flock, not dogs or shepherds, but wolves."[372] Disregarding the issue of corruption on the part of individual administrators (almost a given in the ancient world), Bato's answer reflects the hostility that would have been accorded any Roman tax-collection effort. Coupled with a nativist backlash against the broadening incursion of Roman culture, the cause of the Dalmatian and Pannonian uprisings seems apparent.[373] The rebels' skilled use of terrain and guerilla tactics allowed them to avoid the rapid military defeat of Vercingetorix before them; when the insurgents finally succumbed, it was due as much to Roman diplomacy as Roman arms.[374]

c. Revolts of Florus and Sacrovir

Accounts of the revolt of Julius Florus and Julius Sacrovir in AD 21 Gaul are scarce even by the standards of ancient history. Its significance lies in the fact that it took place in a

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[369] Wells 2003, 46.
[370] Cass. Dio 54.30.6.
[371] Ibid 55.11-17
[372] Ibid 55.16.3.
[373] Dryson 1971, 253.
[374] Ibid.

thoroughly Romanized region, seventy-two years after the similar rebellion of Vercingetorix.

Florus and Sacrovir Gallic elites and honorary Roman citizens who ruled with Rome's blessing

and support; their defection came as a tremendous shock.[375] According to Tacitus, while the

principle stimulus was economic hardship, the revolt's deeper underpinnings were ideological.[376]

In small gatherings, Florus and Sacrovir spoke of "a grand opportunity for the recovery of

freedom," and appealed to the vitality of Gallic national character in contrast to the corruption of

Rome.[377] The insurgents were debtors and rural poor, and they committed early acts of brutality

against Roman civilians in order to affirm commitment to their cause.[378] In response, Roman

legions took brutal measures to ensure the loyalty of individual Gallic towns.[379] Meanwhile,

Tiberius, now emperor, adopted a demeanor of studious unconcern.[380] His attitude was reflective

of the previously identified Roman inclination to marginalize insurgency and irregular threats.

In private, he likely followed the rebellion with grave concern.

Inexplicably, the rebels resolved to offer battle. Tacitus describes a flowery speech in

which Sacrovir recalled, "The ancient glories of the Gauls…[of] how grand would be the

freedom of the victorious, [and] how more intolerable than ever the slavery of a second

conquest."[381] Tacitus also describes how Sacrovir's army was shortly annihilated, and how the

entire movement collapsed shortly thereafter.[382] In short order, Gaul once again became a

peaceful and productive Roman province; there is little indication of widespread reprisal in the

aftermath of the revolt. Significantly, however, Florus and Sacrovir's failed movement led to

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[375] Goodman 1987, 245.
[376] Tac. Ann. 3.40.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Ibid, 3.42.
[379] Ibid, 3.45.
[380] Ibid, 3.44.
[381] Ibid, 3.45.
[382] Ibid, 3.46-47.

wider changes in the relationship between Roman administrators and local Gallic elites. The

Druids – Gaul's ancient and influential religious order who had constituted a central part of

Gallic life for centuries – were curtailed and largely eliminated.[383] Rome therefore neutralized

the last bastion of Gallic power not associated with Roman rule.[384] In future, any leader seeking

authority would have to utilize explicitly Roman institutions, greatly diminishing the potential

use of anti-Roman sentiment. Consequently, while minor unrest would continue, nativist revolts

effectively ceased after this period.

d. Revolt of Tacfarinas

The revolt of the Numidian Tacfarinas from AD 15-24 offers a salient case of a long-

lasting insurgency defeated by means of sophisticated military practice. Like previous

rebellions, Tacfarinas' began largely as a struggle against Romanized elites who ruled under

Rome's auspices. Insofar as the roots of his movement are known, Tacifarinas formed his

coalition through a mix of persuasion and violent coercion.[385] He was uniquely qualified for this

effort; a former *auxilia* who had served in his homeland, he combined familiarity with Roman

tactics with a deep knowledge of Numidian territory.[386] Moreover, many Numidians shared a

concern over both the endangerment of tribal lands via Roman colonization and loss of tribal

custom via Romanization.[387] The result was widespread support for Tacfarinas' cause.

According to Tacitus, "[Tacfarinas] gathered round him a roving band familiar with robbery, for

plunder and for rapine. After a while, he marshaled them like regular soldiers under standards

and in troops, till at last he was regarded as the leader, not of an undisciplined rabble, but of [an

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[383] Goodman 1987, 246-247.
[384] Ibid, 247.
[385] Tac. Ann. 2.52.
[386] Cheesman 1971, 69.
[387] Fentress 1979, 67.

entire] people."[388] He raided deep into Roman territory, terrorizing Roman sympathizers and

drawing more support to his cause.[389] Roman observers must have been reminded of their

previous struggle with the Numidian king Jugurtha, whose famous Jugurthine War against Rome

in 112-105 BC had seen brutally effective use of guerilla tactics against ill-prepared

legionnaires.[390]

Yet when Tacfarinas encountered a proper Roman army in AD 17, he attempted to defeat

them in a conventional encounter. The result was an unmitigated disaster. Numidians fled

wildly from the field, and the responsible Roman general was accorded triumphal honors for his

apparent victory.[391] Contrary to expectations, however, Tacfarinas' resistance was far from

broken. For the next seven years, he pursued a successful pattern of asymmetrical warfare,

plundering villages and destroying isolated Roman units.[392] His demands for land proved a

source of anxiety for Tiberius, who could not tolerate the notion of, "a deserter and brigand

assuming the character of a belligerent."[393] Because Tacfarinas was able to retire to the vast

wilds of Numidia's interior – inhabited by nomads friendly to his cause – he was not lacking for

a base of support. Meanwhile, his tactics were persistently frustrating. As Tactius recounts,

"Unequal to us in solid military strength, but better in a war of surprises, he would attack, would

elude pursuit, and still arrange ambuscades with a multitude of detachments."[394] It was easy to

identify the problem; it much more difficult to find an adequate solution.

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[388] Tac. Ann. 2.52.
[389] Ibid.
[390] Fentress 1979, 61-62.
[391] Tac. Ann. 2.52.
[392] Ibid, 3.20.
[393] Ibid, 3.73.
[394] Ibid, 3.74.

This changed with the ascension of Junius Blaesus, a well regarded Roman commander, to the proconsulship of Africa and ongoing campaign against Tacfarinas.[395] Blausus' innovative actions demonstrated an awareness of good counterinsurgency practice.[396] He began with an offer of amnesty to any rebels who would lay down arms; a highly effective strategy whose use was unusual in the ancient world.[397] From there, Blaesus divided the Numidian outlands into three military zones, dispatching adequate troops to secure each.[398] These detachments were broken into smaller formations, led by experienced centurions with a working knowledge of the area.[399] Instead of retiring to winter quarters and removing themselves from the population, the army utilized systems of forts to box in the guerillas, engaging them wherever possible.[400] Consequently, population centers ceased to be used by Tacfarinas' forces, and "whichever way [an insurgent] turned, a body of Roman soldiers was in his face, or on his flank, or frequently in the rear."[401] Columns of mobile infantry "drove Tacfarinas…from one set of huts to another," gradually disconnecting him from his remaining refuges.[402] His death in AD 24 brought the final disintegration of his coalition and the end of his movement.[403]

After Tacfarinas' long and costly resistance, Rome had no intention of permitting another leader to take his place. Numidian tribes were assigned to specified reservations, often far from their ancestral lands.[404] Moreover, conscious efforts were made to absorb tribal leaders into Roman society with the provision of land, political power, and – eventually – Roman

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[395] Ibid, 3.72.
[396] Roth 2009, 159-160.
[397] Fentress 1979, 68.
[398] Tac. Ann. 3.74.
[399] Ibid.
[400] Webster 1998, 39.
[401] Tac. Ann. 3.74.
[402] Ibid.
[403] Ibid, 3.4.25.
[404] Fentress 1979, 73.

citizenship.[405] With a blending of local and Roman rule, future rebellion became extremely

unlikely.[406] More generally, Rome's behavior during Tacfarinas' revolt reflected an important

military evolution. An insurgency grounded in guerilla tactics and the clever use of the sparsely

guarded frontier had been neutralized through the use of mobility, isolation, local knowledge,

and population protection. It is for good reason that Roth, in discussing Blaesus' practices,

explicitly uses the term "counterinsurgency."[407] Blaesus' success, lauded by his contemporaries,

must have exerted a powerful effect on how Rome viewed future insurgency challenges.[408]

e. Revolt of Boudicca

A brief examination of the rebellion of Queen Boudicca in AD 60/61 Britain (the date is

unclear) reveals themes common to other revolts of the period. This movement, centered on the

British Iceni, began twenty years after Roman integration of the tribe and well over a century

after Rome's first contact with the region.[409] Tacitus attributes the cause of the rebellion to a

series of Roman atrocities like the senseless slaughter and mass enslavement of the previously

peaceful Iceni.[410] Boudicca herself, Queen of the Iceni, was reportedly violated alongside her

two daughters, and their royal house dissolved.[411] It has been argued that these acts seem

uncharacteristic of Roman governance, and that Boudicca herself may be a literary device to

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[405] Ibid, 78.
[406] Ibid.
[407] Roth 2009, 160.
[408] Tac. Ann. 3.75. Blaesus was bestowed the title "imperator" by Tiberius; the last non-emperor to receive the title in Roman history.
[409] Dryson 1971, 258.
[410] Tac. Ann. 14.31.
[411] Ibid.

reflect wider discontent with Roman rule.[412] Regardless, ongoing Romanization (like the erection of an imperial cult temple) and ineffectual administration were enough to stir passions among the Iceni and other tribes.[413] While the Roman governor Suetonius Paullinus was campaigning against a Druidic stronghold near Wales, the British rose up and massacred the Roman civilian population; the severity of their actions was intended to tighten their coalition by making defection to the Romans impossible.[414] Roman garrisons were defeated piecemeal, eliciting easy victories which caused more tribes to flock to Boudicca's cause.[415] All the while, the revolt permeated with nativist and religious sentiment, replete with prophecy and "ravings in a strange tongue."[416]

The Romans were caught flat-footed. This is demonstrated best by the modesty of the garrisons that had been left in the region; the Iceni were considered mostly pacified.[417] In an unexplained line of reasoning, the British rebels (now numbering a supposed 230,000) took to the field against Suetonius' rapidly returning army.[418] As the smaller Roman force formed for battle, Suetonius dismissed the British rabble as "unwarlike, unarmed, [who] will give way the moment they have recognized that sword and that courage of their conquerors."[419] Suetonius' assessment was proven correct, and although accounts of the battle vary, it was almost certainly a one-sided Roman victory.[420] Boudicca either committed suicide or succumbed to sickness (or

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[412] Guy De La Bedoyere, *Defying Rome: The Rebels of Roman Britain* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2003), 60; 69.
[413] Tac. Ann. 14.31.
[414] Dryson 1971, 261.
[415] Tac. Ann. 14.32.
[416] Dryson 1971, 262; Tac. Ann. 14.32.
[417] De La Bedoyere 2003, 57.
[418] Ibid, 67.
[419] Tac. Ann. 14.36.
[420] De La Bedoyere 2003, 69.

did not exist), and the body of the revolt died with her.[421] As Guy De La Bedoyere critically

reflects, "Had [Boudicca] sustained a guerilla campaign she could have made life unremitting

misery for the Romans by tying down huge numbers of soldiers and constantly disrupting…any

attempt to Romanize Britain."[422] The rebels' rapid drive toward a decisive encounter was likely

the product of overeager factions within the coalition, while the initial uprising was almost

certainly the result of a more protracted insurgency which happened upon the right actions at the

right time. After the disintegration of Boudicca's movement, no record exists of further regional

disturbances.[423] Whatever Rome's subsequent actions, they proved effective.

f. Batavian Revolt

The last of this section's selected revolts is that of the Batavi, a German tribe on the

lower Rhine, in AD 69-70. Its principle leader was a Batavian auxiliary commander named

Julius Civilis, an individual well acquainted with not only Roman tactics and culture, but also the

minutia of Roman politics.[424] Despite Civilis' demonstrated Romanization, he vested his

movement in as many nativist trappings as possible. His initially small circle met at a Batavian

sacred grove, and he made his followers swear oaths in both the Roman and Batavian manner.[425]

As his movement became stronger and more vocal, he began to dye his hair red, letting it grow

out in the ancient tradition of Batavian warriors.[426] His aim was fundamentally one of

independence; he spoke derisively of the Batavians' treatment as slaves at the hands of the

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[421] Ibid.
[422] Ibid, 45-46.
[423] Ibid, 72.
[424] Dryson 1971, 264.
[425] Ibid, 264-265.
[426] Tac. Hist. 4.61.

Romans, and of the weakness which infested Rome's imperial government.[427] Launching their

revolt during Rome's chaotic civil war of AD 69, the Batavians saw strong initial success.

Victories against scattered garrisons afforded the rebels both resources and prestige, allowing

them to field more conventional forces and win larger encounters.[428] Tacitus describes Civilis'

use of captured Roman standards as potent tools for morale and increased recruitment.[429]

Meanwhile, Civilis strengthen his personal power by using a well-regarded prophetess to veil

him in mysticism and increase his prestige.[430]

Ultimately, Civilis made strong gains so long as Rome was distracted and at war with

itself.[431] His fortunes changed quickly once the issue of imperial succession had been resolved.

Although his awareness of the new danger was reflected by his desperate attempts to entice Gaul

and Germany into more general revolt, his efforts saw limited gain.[432] The rebellious tribes were

unable to mount a united front, and individual leaders were forced to take drastic action (like the

publicized murder of Roman legates) in order to prevent widespread defection to Rome and her

allies.[433] This was also ineffective. The Roman general Petilius Cerialis showed skillful

proficiency in dismembering Civilis' revolt through diplomacy as much as military strength.[434]

Tactius describes Cerialis' promises to turncoat *auxilia* that, "Their past crimes would be

remembered neither by the emperor nor by himself," and how many eagerly took advantage of

Roman clemency.[435] As Rome defeated the armies of Civilis in the field, more tribes flocked to

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[427] Ibid, 4.14.
[428] Ibid, 4.14-18.
[429] Ibid, 4.18.
[430] Dryson 1971, 265.
[431] Ibid, 266.
[432] Tac. Hist. 4.65.
[433] Ibid, 4.70.
[434] Dryson 1971, 267.
[435] Tac. Hist. 4.72-73.

the Roman standard, betraying their leaders in order to spare themselves.[436] In a particularly intriguing episode, Cerialis even tried to bribe Civilis' famous prophetess, again demonstrating his skill in driving wedges between the remaining insurgents.[437] While Tacitus' account breaks off abruptly, it can be presumed that the Batavian revolt had a largely diplomatic resolution.[438] Roman arms had been combined with additional means of population persuasion, leading to a successful neutralization of the rebellion by the end of AD 70.

v. Insurgency triumphant

Rome was not always successful in instances of insurgency and revolt. Sometimes, even the most masterful combination of force and persuasion was unable to sufficiently pacify a region, necessitating less common courses of action. Two examples attest to this phenomenon. The first instance is the famous revolt of the German Arminius in AD 9, an event which fundamentally altered Roman conceptions of empire and led to the effective cession of all territory beyond the Rhine. The second instance is the complex relationship that Rome pursued with the various hill tribes and nomadic groups that ranged within its territory, a relationship which saw Rome – the unquestionably stronger power – paying annual tribute in order to deter attack. Together, these episodes attest to the "extra-violent" methods by which Rome occasionally defused insurgency.

a. Revolt of Arminius and Battle of Teutoburg Forest

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[436] Ibid. 4.79.
[437] Dryson 1971, 267.
[438] Ibid.

For centuries, no event elicited more national anger and embarrassment among Romans than the AD 9 revolt of the German Arminius and his treachery at the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. That incident, which claimed three Roman legions and as many as 30,000 lives, dramatically affected the course of Roman imperialism. Its impact is hard to overstate; as Murphy puts it, "Imagine a combination of 9/11, Pearl Harbor, and Little Bighorn."[439] For the purposes of this study, a more accurate comparison may be the American experience in the Vietnam War and the psychologically traumatic Tet Offensive. After AD 9, Roman policymakers essentially "gave up" on the formal incorporation of German territory beyond the Rhine.[440] While the economic and cultural mechanisms of Romanization continued, there were no more concerted attempts at invasion beyond the campaigns of reprisal ending in AD 16.[441] Consequently, the Rhine became an increasingly formalized Roman border, and a cultural boundary which remains apparent to this day.[442]

Arminius' rebellion began in much the same manner as the six provincial revolts examined in the previous section. Paterculus describes Arminius as a "young man of noble birth, brave in action and alert in mind, possessing an intelligence quite beyond the ordinary barbarian."[443] Coupled with his high Roman rank and proven service in the army, he was clearly a Romanized German well regarded by local Roman leadership.[444] Despite this, Arminius' tribe had a history of revolt, and the entire region was roiling under accelerating Romanization and the first imposition of formal imperial taxation.[445] Religious fervor was particularly strong; as Peter

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[439] Murphy 2007, 126.
[440] Webster 1998, 33.
[441] Roth 2009, 157.
[442] Murphy 2007, 127.
[443] Vell. Pat. 2.118.2.
[444] Dryson 1971, 254-255.
[445] Wells 2003, 93.

Wells observes, "What is often ignored is the strong element of jihad in Arminius' crusade."[446]

Additionally, nativist yearning for "their old life of independence" inevitably contributed to

overall German unrest, creating ready adherents for Arminius' cause.[447] Just like other rebel

leaders before him, Arminius' initial concerns would almost certainly have been internal: he had

overcome a series of pro-Roman German aristocrats and win tribal authority through a mix of

charisma and military strength.[448] By all accounts, this would have been a slow and highly

secretive process.[449] All the while, Arminius took pains to maintain his good relationship with

Roman administrators.

Rome had little reason to suspect German resentment or treachery. Most Roman

observers considered the region pacified after the campaigns of Tiberius in AD 4.[450]

Accordingly, Publius Quinctilius Varus, governor of Germany at the time of the revolt, was

principally concerned with provincial development and local policing.[451] Although ancient

sources treat Varus with scorn – Paterculus bitterly describes him as "somewhat slow in mind as

he was in body" – these accounts are almost certainly tinged with revisionism and directed

toward scapegoating.[452] On the contrary, Varus was a competent governor with an extensive

intelligence network who had gained counterinsurgency experience quelling a revolt in Judaea

thirteen years earlier.[453] Told of Arminius' impending betrayal by a German defector, Varus

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[446] Ibid, 118.
[447] Cass. Dio 56.18.2.
[448] Wells 2003, 79; 93.
[449] Vell. Pat. 2.118.3. Paterculus recounts only that Arminius "admitted but a few, later a large number" to his ongoing movement.
[450] Wells 2003, 44.
[451] Cass. Dio 56.19.1-3.
[452] Vell. Pat. 2.117.2; Wells 2003, 49.
[453] Ibid, 101.

dismissed the warning as a rivalry between warring chiefs.[454] When a small disturbance

(contrived by the Germans) compelled Varus to gather his forces and investigate, he took

Arminius among his escort.[455] As the Roman column, strung out and weary, advanced through

the treacherous terrain of Teutoburg Forest, Arminius sprang his elaborate ambuscade. Surprise,

fatigue, and poor conditions neutralized the tactical advantages of the Roman army.[456] In a

chaotic series of encounters which ranged over three days, German tribesmen won skirmish after

skirmish, eventually annihilating the Roman column and stealing their precious standards.[457]

The successful Germans sacked every Roman settlement east of the Rhine, declared victory, and

promptly dissolved into disunity as the expected Roman response did not materialize.[458]

In Rome, the consequences of Teutoburg Forest caused a delay of several years before

serious action could be taken. The loss of three legions was a devastating drain on Roman

manpower and material; even worse, such a catastrophic defeat had the potential to destabilize

the empire and embolden her other enemies.[459] Yet, as identified earlier in this study, Roman

retaliation remained one of the great certainties of the ancient world. The hammer blow finally

fell in AD 14, when Roman legions ranged deep into German territories on a punitive campaign

which was intended more to demonstrate Roman might than regain lost land.[460] Further

campaigns saw a splintering of Arminius' coalition as Germans defected en masse to Rome, and

a battlefield defeat of Arminius which ended his threat to Roman power.[461] Rome's

predominance was restored. In the words of Cassius Dio, "[Rome] advanced as far as the ocean,

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[454] Dryson 1971, 257.
[455] Cass. Dio 56.19.
[456] Wells 2003, 114.
[457] Ibid, 117.
[458] Ibid, 121.
[459] Ibid, 126-127.
[460] Ibid, 136.
[461] Ibid, 144-146.

inflicted an overwhelming defeat upon the barbarians, collected and buried the bones of those who had fallen with Varus, and won back the military standards."[462] Despite this success, Rome made no attempt to formally integrate German lands, and launched no more offensives once Arminius' coalition had been reduced.[463] Territory beyond the Rhine continued to be frequented by Roman merchants, but it was no longer traveled by Roman legionnaires.

Arminius' revolt is unique in that, contrary to nearly all other ancient insurgencies, it succeeded. For a period of years, Germans enjoyed the retreat of Roman power from their daily lives. Even after Rome reasserted herself – wreaking indiscriminate damage and slaughter – the relationship between Rome and the tribes of Germany had undergone a fundamental change. Where previously Rome had exercised her power through direct rule, after AD 9 she was content to court the Germans from a distance. Tacitus reflected this newfound sentiment when he declared, "May the tribes, I pray, ever retain if not love for us, at least hatred for each other; for while the destinies of empire hurry us on, fortune can give no greater boon than discord among our foes."[464] Roman interventionism was replaced by a more cautious program of gifts, subsidies, and studied manipulation of the warring German tribes.[465] While this shift toward soft power was enough to pacify the Rhineland for several hundred years, it lies well outside the boundaries of what constituted standard Roman operating procedure.

b. Mauretanians, Ituraeans, and Isaurians

Just as Rome handled the German revolt of AD 9 by effectively conceding her borders, so she found a similar way to resolve the longtime frustration posed by the empire's semi-

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[462] Cass. Dio 57.18.
[463] Wells 2003, 148.
[464] Tac. Germ. 33.
[465] Roth 2009, 157.

autonomous hill tribes and nomads. These groups peppered the most rugged regions of the empire: they included the Mauretanians of Morocco, the Ituraeans of Lebanon, and the Isaurians of southwestern Anatolia. Strabo best describes the aggravation posed by these tribes in his description of the geography of Lebanon:

> Now all the mountainous parts are held by Ituraeans and Arabians, all of whom are robbers, but the people in the plains are farmers; and when the latter are harassed by the robbers at different times they require different kinds of help. These robbers use strongholds as bases of operation…high up on the mountain, Sinna and Borama and other fortresses like them, and down below, Botrys and Gigartus and the caves by the sea.[466]

Although many of these groups lived within nominally Roman territory, their isolation and stubborn cultural practice shielded them from most of the effects of Romanization.[467] Because their own land was so unproductive, they subsisted on banditry and raids into lowland communities.[468] They also fought stubbornly against Roman incorporation, necessitating a suitable Roman response. According to Isaac, "Mountainous territory inhabited by accomplished guerilla fighters determined to resist a foreign power, can be permanently occupied only by an army which is constantly prepared to interfere, regularly patrols the countryside, visits every village, and protects its own communications."[469] Because Rome was unwilling to levy these substantial resources to secure such poor and unproductive territory, another solution was required.

Very often, this took the form of de facto independence and regular tribute for these "trouble regions." In Mauretania, for instance, it was common practice for each Roman governor to negotiate a new subsidy and peace treaty with the unruly hill tribes.[470] Elsewhere,

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[466] Strabo 16.2.18.
[467] Shaw 1984, 42.
[468] Isaac 1992, 61.
[469] Ibid.
[470] Mattern 2010, 171.

the Isaurians effectively grew to constitute their own quasi-state under the auspices of Roman authority, enjoying free reign in the conduct of their own affairs.[471] Very often, this strategy neutralized the threat posed by these unintegrated peoples. The Isauarians – fierce warriors who clung to their autonomy throughout all of antiquity – nevertheless proved peaceful toward their Roman neighbors.[472] After AD 51 and the formalization of Roman tribute, no source attests to unrest in the region until the third century.[473] These groups, both violent and vehemently nativist, ultimately managed to reach a fairly tranquil coexistence with Roman power.[474] While an usual and remarkably conciliatory way for Rome to defuse potential insurgency, this effort was undoubtedly effective.

vi. Insurgency realized

The last selected episode of revolt is the famous Jewish War of AD 66-72, an insurgency which boasts detailed record among both ancient histories and Talmudic texts.[475] This rebellion demonstrated both a complex, multi-factional resistance effort and a population-centric Roman response focused on driving wedges between various insurgent groups. Its events, concisely recounted here, should resolve remaining doubts about Rome's insurgency challenge and counterinsurgent response.

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[471] Sahw 1984, 43.
[472] Noel Lenski, "Assimilation and Revolt in the Territory of Isaurians, from the 1st Century BC to the 6th Century AD," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (1999): 413-465, 416.
[473] Ibid, 420.
[474] Ibid, 437.
[475] Sorek 2008, 147. The writer Josephus' chronicle of the Jewish War offers the most thorough account of any war in Roman history. Despite challenges to his impartiality (he fought in the war, taking up the Jewish cause before ultimately defecting to Rome), his record forms the foundation of modern understanding of the conflict.

a. Jewish War

The province of Judaea offers an unusual case in the means and method by which it was brought into Rome's political orbit. Serious Roman interaction with the region began in 40 BC, when Rome named the Romanized aristocrat Herod as King of Judaea.[476] Over his thirty-six year reign, Herod was able to consolidate his kingdom and accelerate the processes of Hellenization and Romanization which were necessary to maintain friendly relations with the Romans.[477] However, these efforts proved highly unpopular with Judaea's vast Jewish population, who – in contrast to indigenous peoples elsewhere in the empire – already possessed a sophisticated and well-entrenched cultural tradition. With Herod's death in 4 BC, Judaea descended into war between pro-Roman and anti-Roman camps, exacerbated by tensions between native Greeks and Jews.[478] This conflict culminated with the Jewish independence movement of Judas of Galilee in AD 6. According to Susan Sorek, although this effort was defeated and Judaea made a formal province, "The doctrines and notions bred out of this rebellion engendered the idea that terrorism and open revolt would inevitably be the only solution against Roman domination."[479] Because the Jews boasted a well developed national character and religion, they were much more prone to resist the "civilizing" methods of the Romans. Accordingly, even while a new Romanized Jewish aristocracy was given power over the region, nativist tensions simmered just below the surface.[480]

Although Judaea was never entirely peaceful (sources attest to sporadic political violence throughout its history), the newly incorporated province saw little major disturbance for

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[476] Ibid, 8.
[477] Ibid, 10-11.
[478] Ibid, 11.
[479] Ibid, 28.
[480] Goodman 1987, 38; 48-49; 110.

decades.[481] When unrest finally spread in AD 65, it was due to a series of missteps and

miscommunications which inflamed the Jewish community. This included acts of perceived

Roman impropriety, the ham-fisted conduct of Roman administrators in resolving a Jewish-

Greek dispute, and the callous actions of a few Roman soldiers in breaking up a resultant Jewish

protest.[482] These actions, while incompetent, were amplified by the rhetoric of a variety of

Jewish groups intent on fostering rebellion against Rome. There were as many as five major

factions, each with their own distinct agendas.[483] Some were revolutionaries who wanted to

found a new, non-elite government oriented toward land redistribution.[484] Others were

aristocrats intent on remaining in power by taking advantage of the anti-Roman slant of popular

opinion.[485] The most extreme elements were represented by groups like the *Sicarii* (described at

the beginning of this study), terrorists who had been instrumental in facilitating an atmosphere of

rebellion, but who played a much less significant role in the bloody revolt itself.[486] What should

be clear from this brief survey is the complexity of Judaea's anti-Roman movement, and the

extent to which it emerged from intra-Jewish tensions and rivalries. It took the emergence of a

broad, ideological catalyst – perceived Roman sacrilege and brutality – to bind these disparate

groups together.

The first insurgent actions were targeted more toward pro-Roman Jewish sympathizers

than toward actual Roman occupiers. In Jerusalem, the client king Agrippa was besieged in his

palace, while targeted acts like the burning of debtors' records rallied more and more Jews to the

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[481] Isaac 1984, 171.
[482] Sorek 2008, 29; 46-47.
[483] Ibid, 43.
[484] Ibid, 41; 100.
[485] Zeitlin 1967, 253.
[486] Horsley 1979, 450-454.

rebels' cause.[487] Despite Agrippa's dark tidings to his people that, "When the Romans have won…they will make an example of you to other nations by burning down your holy city and destroying your entire race," the revolt continued to grow, and its atrocities continued to mount.[488] On one occasion, a Roman garrison was permitted to surrender and then massacred, and on another, Roman emissaries were slaughtered before a wider audience could hear their offer of amnesty.[489] These incidents were intended to draw moderates into the rebels' camp; if they believed they would suffer at the hands of the consequent Roman reprisal, they no longer had any inhibition against taking up the insurgents' cause.[490] Early successes emboldened the revolt, causing more and more towns to drive out their Roman garrisons.[491] As the insurgents' forces grew, they began to field a regular army, this action intended as much to mitigate the power of individual Jewish leaders as to pose a conventional threat to Rome.[492] The center of the movement became Jerusalem; its religious and cultural significance gave the rebellion much-needed credibility.[493] Coins were minted and (however briefly) an independent state was declared.[494]

Rome's response was initially sluggish but ultimately effective. An initial army had no problem subduing scattered Judaean settlements and reasserting Roman rule through a mix of clemency and reprisal, but it foundered against the imposing walls of Jerusalem.[495] The first attempt to shatter the insurgents' fragile coalition underestimated the Jews' much stronger hatred

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[487] Sorek 2008, 51.
[488] Joseph. BJ 2.16.4.
[489] Sorek 2008, 53; 56.
[490] Ibid, 53.
[491] Ibid, 81.
[492] Ibid, 61.
[493] Ibid, 60.
[494] Ibid, 102.
[495] Ibid, 55.

of Rome, and Roman forces fled under the harassment of coordinated guerilla attacks.[496]

However, Rome's fortunes changed under the leadership of the future emperor Vespasian. He systematically reduced towns friendly to the rebellion, taking care to punish insurgents while sparing the pro-Roman and neutral population.[497] Jewish deserters were enticed to join the Roman side, bringing intelligence in return for imperial pardon.[498] These Roman victories unnerved those in Jerusalem, and renewed partisan strife saw the movement become increasingly radicalized.[499] More conservative factions were inclined to make peace, having become disheartened by younger fanatics; in Josephus' judgment, "The infection which spread thence among the younger sort, who were zealous for it, brought the public to destruction."[500] By the time Jerusalem was besieged in AD 70, much of the populated countryside had been regained. The rebel government persisted bravely but fruitlessly, being cordoned into smaller and smaller sections of the city by Roman siegecraft.[501] Eventually, it was announced that the last stubborn insurgents would receive no quarter, and the subsequent Roman breakthrough saw them slaughtered to a man.[502]

After the fall of Jerusalem, the insurgency became a predominantly rural struggle based in southern Palestine.[503] These guerillas were methodically separated from population centers before being hunted and killed at leisure. The prowess of the Roman army and division of the rebels precluded any hope for Jewish success, and this reality was demonstrated often and

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[496] Ibid, 52.
[497] Ibid, 86.
[498] Goodman 1987, 232.
[499] Sorek 2008, 99.
[500] Joseph. JA 1.1.2.
[501] Sorek 2008, 125-131.
[502] Ibid, 135.
[503] Ibid, 139.

mercilessly. In one especially memorable instance, a Roman general encountered insurgents

operating from the Forest of Jardes. According to Josephus:

> [The general] surrounded the whole place with his horsemen, that such of the Jews as had boldness enough
> to try to break through might have no way possible for escaping, by reason of the situation of these
> horsemen; and for the footmen, he ordered them to cut down the trees that were in the wood wither they
> fled. So the Jews were under a necessity of performing some glorious exploit, and of greatly exposing
> themselves in battle.[504]

Eventually, it came down to the 962 *Sicarii* at the mountain fortress of Masada.[505] The resultant

outlay of military force and effort – an overkill discussed at the beginning of this study – should

make more sense in light of the long counterinsurgency operation that preceded it. Rome had

spent the last six years gradually neutralizing the revolt that had swept the region. Accordingly,

the spectacle of the siege of Masada must have been oriented toward deterring future rebellion

from taking place. Based on Judaea's virtual pacification for the next sixty years, this operation

proved successful.[506]

Ultimately, the Jewish War of AD 66-72 – like the other thirteen episodes examined in

this section – suggests a series of patterns met with similar solutions. Roman insurgencies were

typically veiled in ideological causes and led by those familiar with the Roman way of life. They

were not simple wars of resistance, and often carried ambitious political goals. Waged as much

against local institutions as the broader Roman state, these movements depended on

asymmetrical tactics before transitioning to more conventional force. Meanwhile, the Roman

response evolved toward a pattern of location, isolation, and eradication. Especially in later

revolts, diplomacy was used to drive wedges between members of the insurgent coalition.

Population centrism was emphasized, even if its methods were often brutally straightforward.

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[504] Josephus BJ 7.6.5.
[505] Sorek 2008, 143.
[506] Goodman 1987, 260.

This summary of insurgent and counterinsurgent characteristics, while limited by scarcity of sources, suggests a number of parallels with contemporary theory. It is toward an enumeration and proof of these similarities that this study now turns.

IV. ANALYSIS

i. Insurgents against Rome

Having identified both the broad context and specific instances of likely Roman insurgency, it remains necessary to evaluate these episodes in light of contemporary insurgency characteristics. This will be accomplished by considering evidence of ideological cause, coalition-building, politically targeted violence, shift from asymmetrical to symmetrical warfare, and counterstate emergence. By establishing a relationship between these modern insurgency criteria and selected accounts of anti-Roman revolt, this study's first proposition – that Rome faced explicit insurgency challenge – will be decisively established. Additionally, Roman conceptualization of ancient insurgency will also be investigated, revealing how actual Roman practitioners understood the rebellions they were tasked with suppressing. This examination ultimately shows that, while anti-Roman revolts typically display the traits and nuances of modern insurgency, the Romans themselves were far less appreciative of these complexities.

a. Modern Criteria

The "formidable asset" of any successful insurgency – that of a strong ideological motivator – is well attested among selected cases.[507] These rallying causes generally constitute either independence movements, pan-nativist expression, or religious outcry. Independence was

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[507] Galula 1964, 4.

a clear inducement in the defection of Capua during the Second Punic War, the slave movement

of Spartacus, and the revolt of Tacfarinas. Each instigator roiled under perceived Roman

oppression, seeking grasping at any potential avenue of escape. Meanwhile, pan-nativism

saturates the account of every insurgency which took place beyond the confines of Italy. Even

more than a century into the process of Romanization, a yearning for the illusory "good old

days" could capture the spirit of otherwise integrated provincials, as in the revolt of Florus and

Sacrovir or Batavian Revolt. However, nativist appeals proved most potent in regions

undergoing especially rapid cultural transformation, evidenced by the revolts of Vercingetorix

and Arminius. Religious motivation, often indistinguishable from more generalized nativist

sentiment due to the ignorance of ancient writers, stands clearest in the cases of Vercingetorix,

Arminius, Boudicca, and the Jewish War. One case uniquely positioned by ideological criteria is

that of the Social War, whose impetus (besides general anti-Roman sentiment) was a specific

political cause. Ultimately, however, all selected episodes share strong ideological

underpinnings which were able to appeal to wide subsets of the population.

Just as insurgency demands a cause, it also requires the assembly of an increasingly

broad coalition often united by a strong leader. Coalition-building constitutes an agonizing

process in several selected cases, and must also represent an unelaborated aspect in every other.

This challenge is most evidenced by the complexity of the Jewish War's opening months, in

which several distinct factions (uncomfortably) combined to launch their coup against Roman

rule. Other examples like Psuedo-Philip's harsh reprisals during the Fourth Macedonian War

and infighting among participants of the Dalmatian and Pannonian Revolts speak to the

difficulties of keeping insurgents focused and disciplined. Related are the inspirational leaders

often used to maintain unity among various dissident parties. Spartacus, despite having to make

deep concessions to rival leaders, is credited with keeping his slave rebellion intact far longer

than it might have remained under a less competent commander.[508] Similarly, the mythical

status of figures like Vercingetorix and Boudicca suggests that these leaders played a critical role

in both spreading and sustaining their respective revolts. With their death or capture, their

movements quickly disintegrated.

Insurgencies harness early violence toward larger political ends. While record is limited

of ancient rebels' initial use of violence (Roman historians are understandably biased toward

large, setpiece battles), surviving accounts suggest a similar strategic purpose. Several revolts

begin with the slaughter of Roman citizens, instigating moderates in the crimes of extremist

insurgents and coercively securing their support. This is evidenced by the revolt of Florus and

Sacrovir and revolt of Boudicca, two instances in which it is explicitly suggested that seemingly

random atrocities had specific political aims.[509] The most pronounced instances of targeted

violence, however, are demonstrated by the early history of the Jewish War. Assassination and

agitation by the terroristic *Sicarii* helped undermine the position of Judaea's pro-Roman elites,

causing Jewish unrest to spiral in the years preceding actual hostilities. Other acts, like the

massacre of a surrendering Roman garrison or peace-offering emissary, were unambiguously

intended to strengthen rebel authority and support. Altogether, such violence appears to have

been effective in bolstering insurgent influence on populations at large.

Successful insurgencies are those which gradually evolve from irregular to regular tactics

and previously scattered guerillas are consolidated in conventional forces. Since ancient sources

are inclined to report only major incidents in Roman history, it is unsurprising that all selected

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[508] Strauss 2009, 186.
[509] Tac. Ann. 3.40; De La Bedoyere 2003, 69.

revolts evidence direct battlefield confrontation with Rome. In fact, these accounts often

marginalize or exclude insurgency's irregular beginnings; the Social War or revolt of Boudicca,

for instance, seem to produce standing armies out of mid air. Clearest evidence of this

transformation may be a passage of Caesar which attests to the process by which Vercingetorix's

"levy of down-and-outs" became a "large force" which in turn became a powerful military

contributed by many Gallic tribes.[510] In most selected cases, however, this shift to conventional

arms leads to relatively rapid insurgent defeat. Florus and Sacrovir and Boudicca succumbed

almost immediately, while Vercingetorix survived only slightly longer. The revolts of Spartacus,

Arminius and Tacfarinas offer both immediate repudiation and ultimate proof of this rule.

Although Spartacus conceded the inevitability of high-intensity defeat (and only gives battle at

the demand of those under his leadership), his generalship permitted him several months of

impressive battlefield victories. Similarly, Arminius' skillful performance at the Battle of

Teutoburg Forest essentially achieved his ideological goals, although it did not ensure the

survival of the movement itself. Finally, Tacfarinas curtailed conventional loss into an extended

and frequently successful guerilla struggle, being defeated years after the rout of his conventional

forces. It should be noted, however, that even among these examples, no insurgency escaped

eventual decimation by Roman arms.

A final characteristic of insurgency is the process by which a rebel counterstate emerges,

supported by the movement's newfound political legitimacy. This development – only possible

in the most advanced stages of insurgency – is nevertheless evidenced by several selected cases.

The belligerent *socii* of the Social War, buttressed by early success, declared a de facto state and

independent capital in an expression of Italian identity. In another example, Vercingetorix

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[510] Caes. B Gall. 7.4.

exploited initial victories to attain the title of king and establish a (short-lived) Gallic nation.

Most significantly, the long insurgent occupation of Jerusalem over the course of the Jewish War

led to the assumption of formal governmental duties, including the minting of currency. Each of

these actions testifies to the immense amount of political authority these insurgencies were able

to muster over a brief period of time. Coupled with demonstrations of ideological motivation,

evidence of coalition-building, use of politically oriented violence, and pursuit of conventional

force transformation, selected episodes conform well to the criteria of insurgency introduced at

the beginning of this study.

b. Ancient Context

If instances of revolt against Rome constituted insurgencies under the criteria of modern

theorists, it remains to be determined how these disturbances were viewed in the eyes of ancient

practitioners. Notwithstanding obvious scarcity of evidence, there is little indication that

Romans distinguished insurgency from more generalized acts of violence. Insurgents were

latrones, or "bandits," a term applied liberally to any individual who promulgated unrest

contrary to the rule of law.[511] This led to politically motivated insurgents being dismissed in the

same stroke as apolitical highwaymen or brigands, marginalizing both their movement and

reason for revolt. As further proof of the term's degrading connotations, *latro* also became a

term to cast aspersion on political enemies; its use would have been common in an exchange

between two feuding senators.[512] This array of applications meant that there were many

unspecified categories of *latro*, and the word saw broad use.

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[511] Shaw 1984, 3-4.
[512] Ibid, 23.

Accordingly, the terroristic *Sicarii* who made their last stand at Masada are called

bandits, not terrorists or insurgents or ideologues.[513] Although Josephus considers them "bandits

in different form" while charting their politically motivated acts of domestic violence, he takes

the distinction no further.[514] Other notable insurgencies presented in this study receive similar

treatment by ancient sources. The emergence of Viriathus during the Lusitanian War and rise of

Tacfarinas during his Numidian revolt receive similarly dismissive treatment.[515] Of Viriathus'

career, for instance, Livy observes: "From shepherd a hunter, from hunter a bandit, and then

soon the general of a real army."[516] Sources describe the banditry endemic to Judaea for much of

Roman rule, suggesting – but not elucidating – the possibility of many other failed insurgencies

among the Jewish population.[517] In the particular case of Judaea, these bandits are also described

as engaging in "political" murder, adding credence to this possibility.[518] Most generally, records

of *latrones* increase dramatically when provinces begin to shift toward formalized Roman

administration, adding additional weight to the notion of bandits as insurgents.[519]

The complexities of ancient insurgency, obscured by labels of banditry, would have been

little apparent to Roman counterinsurgency practitioners of the day. The reason for this is

simple: Roman pride. High-minded rebels were lumped in the same category as debased robbers

in order to demean their character and marginalize their cause.[520] To do otherwise would have

been incompatible with the requirements of the Roman values system. Respect could only be

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[513] Isaac 1984, 177.
[514] Mark Andrew Brighton, *The Sicarii in Josephus's* Judean War: *Rhetorical Analysis and Historical Observations* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 149-150.
[515] Shaw 1984, 36.
[516] Livy Per. 52.
[517] Isaac 1984, 173-76; 183.
[518] Ibid, 171.
[519] Ibid, 177.
[520] Woolf 1993, 188.

accorded to legitimate combatants beyond the Rome's sphere of influence; to recognize the

legitimacy of an insurgent would be to concede the failings of the Roman state. According to the

Digest, a compendium of longstanding Roman law compiled by the emperor Justinian in the

sixth century AD, "Enemies are those who have declared war on us or on whom we have

declared war; all the rest are bandits or plunderers."[521] This extreme form of denial restricted

Rome's overall understanding of the complex movements directed against her. While

contemporary observers may rightly characterize these episodes as insurgencies, Roman writers

and practitioners were never so sophisticated in their own analysis.

ii. Rome as Counterinsurgent

Having affirmed one major proposition of this study, it remains necessary to affirm the

other. A wide overview complemented by a set of distinct cases has succeeded in

contextualizing Roman counterinsurgency practice. It has yet to be determined, however, to

what extent this behavior adheres to the expectations of modern theory. This will be

accomplished by identifying signs of institutional limitation, gradual development of anti-

guerilla techniques, intentional targeting of insurgents' coalition, reestablishment of

governmental legitimacy, and an overriding population-centric focus. By drawing links between

the actions of ancient practitioners and expectations of contemporary theorists, this study's

second hypothesis – that Rome evidenced a clear counterinsurgency strategy – will be proven.

Moreover, this section will explore the degree to which this behavior was consciously

implemented. Such inquiry ultimately reveals that, contrary to the obliviousness Rome showed

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[521] Dig. 50.16.118.

toward causes and traits of insurgency, her agents were remarkably savvy in how they perceived the elimination of insurgent threats.

a. Modern Criteria

Status quo powers are subject to a degree of rigidity in their behavior and counterinsurgent response. Restricted by the mantle of governmental legitimacy, certain courses of action are either unrealistic or off limits entirely. In its way, Rome was similarly inhibited from taking steps which – while potentially effective – ran counter to necessary state functions. Two selected episodes attest to successful counterinsurgency strategies that were abandoned due to political pressure. Fabius' tactics during the Second Punic War harried Hannibal's forces and deterred alliance defection, achieving their aims but proving unacceptably slow to politicians in Rome. Similarly, Crassus' plodding war of attrition against Spartacus in the Third Servile War may have reduced insurgent strength, but it did little to quell the anxieties in Rome and was consequently abandoned. Such strategies, effective at fighting insurgents, were ineffective at ensuring the safety of the larger population and hence proved unsustainable. Also significant is the general tenacity Rome showed in countering, neutralizing, and eradicating all challenges to imperial authority. This was not the behavior of an exploitative hegemon; suppression of these revolts often required huge resource expenditures with limited economic and strategic gains. Instead, Rome's actions suggest her role as a territorial empire, ensuring the sanctity of her provinces even at great national cost.

A necessary component of any counterinsurgency effort is the formulation of a militarily effective counter-guerilla strategy. High-intensity supremacy does not guarantee low-intensity proficiency. In the case of Rome, however, the imperial army proved competent in adapting to the requirements of asymmetrical warfare. As this study demonstrates, this shift was accomplished by a growth in paramilitary and policing capabilities, gradually altering the composition of the army with the addition of light supplementary units like the *auxilia* and *numeri*. Although this development eventually undermined Rome's high-intensity capability, it undeniably bolstered the empire's counter-guerilla capabilities. More specific doctrinal evolution is attested by the operation undertaken by Blaesus against Tacfarinas' irregular forces. Blaesus' division of Numidia into military zones and use of mobile light infantry demonstrated a successful tactical transformation which neutralized Tacfarinas' strengths. Assuming Blaesus' innovations did not abruptly vanish with his death, this knowledge almost certainly informed future counterinsurgency practice. The Roman army, while slow to adapt, was still capable of meeting the challenges of asymmetrical warfare.

Another counterinsurgency prescription involves the targeting and fragmentation of an insurgency's base of support. By a series of enticements and diplomatic initiatives, insurgency can be reduced while avoiding the costs of direct force. Remarkably, Rome – a power typically associated with mass crucifixion and indiscriminate slaughter – resorted often to these methods. In a first and highly effective use of wedge-driving, Rome's strategic provision of citizenship during the Social War effectively splintered the *socii* resistance, causing mass defection while isolating the remaining hardliners. From there, relevant cases multiply. The Dalmatian and Pannonian revolts were blunted by Rome's courting of individual tribal leaders, while Blaesus' stratagem against Tacfarinas began with a highly effective offer of amnesty. The Batavian revolt

was resolved almost entirely through the use of persuasion (evidenced especially by Roman attempts to bribe Civilis' prophetess), while Arminius saw battlefield defeat after much of his tribal support had been peeled away. The rebels of the Jewish War took great aims to combat this Roman strategy, yet their movement still succumbed to factionalism as Vespasian's successes mounted. An unusual and prolonged instance of diplomatic warfare can be found in Rome's complicated relationship with the semi-autonomous hill tribes of Mauretania, Ituraea, and Isauria. By appealing to tribal moderates through the use of concessions and subsidies, Rome was able to avoid what otherwise would have been a painful series of insurgencies. Altogether, these nonviolent actions played a persistent and successful role in Rome's counterinsurgent conduct.

Counterinsurgency's central aim entails the reestablishment of governmental legitimacy, by either coercion or consent. This effort is necessarily population-centric; simple levying of military force is insufficient to the task of asserting political authority. Unsurprisingly, chosen episodes attest often to Rome's persuasive use of fear and intimidation for this purpose. Brutal reprisals were part of Rome's standard operating procedure; their very frequency and inevitability must have prevented many insurgencies from gathering momentum in the first place. Instances like the punitive anti-German campaigns following the Battle of Teutoburg Forest, the wholesale massacre of insurgent-controlled districts in Jerusalem, and drastic Roman action against Jewish rebels at the Forest of Jardes and Masada were clearly intended for much wider audiences. Other calculated displays of force, reflected by the distribution of Capuan slaves in the Second Punic War and Scipio Aemlianus' dismemberment of insurgent sympathizers during his siege of Numantine, were similarly directed toward broad reaffirmation

of Roman authority. This violence did its job well; there is good reason why most regions show many years of quiet between disruptions.

Yet Rome's population-centrism did not rely solely on deterrence by retribution. Clemency, forgiveness, and protection also played a role in these population-centric practices. Examples range across the chronology of selected cases. The consul Caepio's forgiveness and settlement of many Lusitanians at the conclusion of the Lusitanian War revealed an appreciation for the steps necessary to restore governmental legitimacy and ensure lasting stability. On the other end of the spectrum, Vespasian's insistence on separating insurgents from the neutral and pro-Roman elements of reoccupied towns (instead of simply executing residents en masse) demonstrated a conscious effort to gain authority by content, not simple coercion. These instances of peaceful persuasion – supplemented by identified examples of institutional limitation, anti-guerilla development, diplomatic wedge-driving, and reaffirmation of governmental legitimacy – fulfill the expectations and criteria of counterinsurgent behavior. Accordingly, ancient Roman practice can be said to adhere to the general principles of modern counterinsurgency theory.

b. Ancient Context

This study has established Rome's place as an ancient imperial power whose behavior reflects the precepts of contemporary counterinsurgency theory. However, this is not the limit of conclusions that can be drawn from available evidence. It can also be asserted that Roman practitioners understood and consciously followed many aspects of this proto-counterinsurgency doctrine. Population-centrism (typically for the purpose of fear and capitulation) constituted a critical element in a variety of Roman practices. Polybius, reflecting on Rome's gratuitously

violent sacking of certain cities, wrote, "It seems to me that they do this for the sake of terror.[522]

Looting and massacre, while certainly motivated by the whims of individual soldiers, also served

a broader political purpose by which governmental legitimacy was brutally reaffirmed. Other

aspects of counterinsurgency, like the difficulty of suppressing decentralized revolt and the

imperative of targeting population centers before isolated insurgent strongholds, were well

appreciated by ancient practitioners.[523] Two types of war were understood: those that were

"real" (between two states) and all others which were not.[524] While Romans were loathe to

participate in the second type of conflict, they never harbored delusions that doing so was not

necessary.

Two excerpted legal passages, both dating from the sixth century AD, attest to Rome's

counterinsurgency awareness. While these documents were compiled after the fall of the

Western Roman Empire, they reflected long-standing Roman realities and conceptions.[525] The

first, drawn from the Digest of Justinian, concerns the role of a provincial governor:

> It is the duty of a good and serious governor to see that the province he governs remains peaceful and quiet. This is not a difficult task if he scrupulously rids the province of evil men, and assiduously hunts them down. Indeed, he must hunt down…*bandits*, kidnappers, and common thieves, and punish each one in accordance with his misdeeds. *And he must use force against their collaborators, without whom the bandit is not able to remain hidden for long.*[526]

Evaluated in the dual contexts of ancient Roman practice and contemporary counterinsurgency

theory (and understanding the interchangeability of "bandit" and "insurgent"), this passage

suggests an appreciation that insurgency is intrinsically linked to support of the population. It is

complemented by another excerpt, this one from the Codex of Justinian:

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[522] Polyb. 10.15-17.
[523] Isaac 1984, 178.
[524] Shaw 1984, 6.
[525] Ibid, 14.
[526] Dig. 1.18.13. Emphasis added.

> When the agents themselves, the owner, or the superintendents of the land, acknowledge that they are unable to control the multitude of [*bandits*] aforesaid…the Governor shall cause military aid to be furnished by the tribune or the other officers…but when, after the production of the alleged culprits, it becomes evident that they are innocent, and have committed no crime, their accuser will be compelled to suffer the punishment inflicted upon calumniators, *for it establishes a bad precedent to seek for [bandits], and by doing so place innocent persons in jeopardy.*[527]

Coupled with another law directly preceding it, this warning applies to the reprisal of individuals falsely believed to be insurgents and insurgent sympathizers.[528] Such a reading relays a remarkably sophisticated counterinsurgency understanding: while effort should be made to reduce insurgency support among the population, overly harsh or misdirected measures may instead lead to increased sympathy due to the "bad precedent" set by the counterinsurgent. This language is hardly as clear as Galula or FM 3-24, but it represents the codification of ideas long known to the Romans and not unlike the prescriptions of contemporary theorists.

Ultimately, while Rome evidenced only marginal understanding of her insurgency challenge, she demonstrated a firm grasp of the means and methods by which to eliminate it. This is reflected by Rome's longstanding use of terror and reprisal for the purpose of asserting (and maintaining) imperial authority. This is also reflected by the appreciation Roman practitioners showed for the relationship between insurgency and wider society. They may not have understood how or why insurgencies started, but they had a good idea of how to keep them restrained. The key was the population: by depriving insurgents of their base of support, Rome could isolate and eradicate the rebels at her leisure.[529] This behavior, exhibited throughout the course of Roman history and amicable to the criteria of modern theorists, can only be described as deliberate counterinsurgency practice.

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[527] CJ 9.39.2. Emphasis added.
[528] Ibid, 9.39.1.
[529] Shaw 1984, 36.

V. CONCLUSION

i. Findings

This study has constituted the proof of two broad propositions: that nearly all of Rome's military challenges can be understood as insurgencies and that Rome's reaction evidences many of the tenets still foundational to contemporary counterinsurgency theory. These hypotheses have been evaluated through a comprehensive investigation of context, practice, and theoretical grounding.

Inquiry began by identifying the broad framework within which both insurgency and counterinsurgency operated. An acclamation with Roman grand strategy bestows familiarity with the economic, security, and values considerations which persistently haunted Roman policymakers. After Rome's shift to a tax-based economy, the protection of her provinces adopted a new financial imperative. Similarly, the empire's deterrence-based security model demanded immediate response to any perceived military challenge. Most significantly, the highly visible and influential role of values in Roman society effectively forbade any contravention of Roman *Victoria* and global predominance. These realities helped foster an environment in which provincial revolt could never be downplayed or ignored. Meanwhile, the Roman army's appreciable conventional superiority did not prepare it for the very different challenges of policing and irregular encounters. Adapting to these roles took time, and in the process, the army would eventually cede much of its high-intensity capability. Permeating all of

this was the unique phenomenon of Romanization. Through a combination of socioeconomic, political, and cultural mechanisms, foreign peoples grew to embrace the Roman way of life. While this was an organic and process, it engendered tension among unintegrated populations, forming a catalyst for future anti-Roman movements.

A broad swath of episodes attests to insurgent threat and counterinsurgent response from the years 216 BC to AD 72. These instances were selected based on their date, available documentation, imperial inclusion, and evidence of population centrality. Discrete categories were introduced to track the nature of Rome's insurgency challenge and suggest the sophistication of her counterinsurgency response: insurgency in infancy, insurgency at home, insurgency abroad, insurgency triumphant, and insurgency realized. The first cases constitute a tenuous insurgency presence and debatable counterinsurgent action; sources are vague and many particulars go unrealized. In the next category, threats in Italy increase insurgency's salience and produce a corresponding boost in Rome's counterinsurgency interest. The subsequent series of provincial crises draws out common patterns and further attests to the existence of overarching behavioral and theoretical elements. However, this is not universal; two other examples during this period defy easy categorization, illustrating Roman concession in order to avoid unprofitable expenditure of effort. Finally, the detailed elaboration of insurgency in the Jewish War demonstrates both the extent of Rome's insurgency threat and the growing sophistication of her counterinsurgency solutions. In sum, these fourteen selected cases evidence similar characteristics across very different circumstances.

Analysis becomes possible after establishing both an underlying context and collection of specific instances for the purpose of examination. This body of precedent was assessed via the

application of this study's first proposition, conceptualization of Roman military challenges as modernly defined insurgencies. Correlation is found via evidence of an ideological cause, coalition-building, politically targeted violence, intentional shifts from asymmetrical to symmetrical warfare, and the (occasional) emergence of a fully developed rebel counterstate. However, these criteria remain beyond the cognizance of ancient Roman practitioners. Due to a blinding national pride which forbade the legitimization of any challenge to the state, Roman conceptions of insurgency never escaped stereotyping as another form of banditry. Rome's insurgencies may have been complicated phenomena, but this complexity was never appreciated by ancient observers.

Having determined the veracity of this study's first proposition, its second hypothesis – revision of Roman response as explicit counterinsurgency practice – was applied to the broad collection of imperial circumstances and wide-ranging insurgency episodes. A match was established, demonstrated by signs of institutional limitation, developing anti-guerilla techniques, intentional targeting of insurgents' coalition, reestablishment of governmental legitimacy, and overarching population-centrism. Moreover, it was determined that such characteristics were well appreciated by Rome over the course of her empire. Available textual evidence testifies to remarkable sophistication on the part of Roman practitioners. Such doctrinal refinement is a surprising discovery, and justifies the attention this study accords Rome as a practicing and often successful counterinsurgent power.

ii. Modern practice, ancient precedent

Ultimately, this study's significance goes beyond its assertion that Rome faced appreciable insurgency and evinced appropriate counterinsurgent response. Although this point is original, it is also unflatteringly abstract. Simply establishing the fact of Roman counterinsurgency practice does little to advance contemporary theory or otherwise aid academic inquiry. Instead, the real importance of this paper lies in the larger story it tells. Over the course of a hundred pages, a highly unlikely counterinsurgent has been remolded, recast, and reassessed in the vein of Galula and FM 3-24. By the study's conclusion, Rome – an ancient empire of sword-wielders and chariot-riders without even a basic knowledge of geography – has joined the ranks of counterinsurgent powers thousands of years more advanced.[530] Despite a technological and ideological divide of millennia, Rome shows itself proficient with a doctrine most states still struggle with today. This fact speaks to the universality of the insurgency challenge, and suggests a remarkable historical continuity in how this threat is overcome.

To be sure, strong distinctions exist between Rome and modern counterinsurgent powers. Entire chapters from Galula and FM 3-24 are inapplicable to the Roman context. Galula's steps for establishing local elections and organizing a political party, for instance, would not be communicable to the Roman experience.[531] As another salient example, the multifaceted information environment characteristic of contemporary insurgency challenges simply did not exist in the ancient world. When FM 3-24 warns of the power of media and strategic corporals,

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[530] Mattern 1990, 24.
[531] Galula 1964, 88-92.

it is speaking to purely modern phenomena.[532] The clearest difference between Roman and

modern times, however, is reflected by one of FM 3-24's most critical passages:

> Army and Marine Corps leaders work proactively to establish and maintain the proper ethical climate of
> their organizations. They serve as visible examples for every subordinate, demonstrating cherished values
> and military virtues in their decisions and actions…Under all conditions, they must remain faithful to basic
> American, Army, and Marine Corps standards of proper behavior and respect for the sanctity of life.[533]

No such ethical climate existed in the Roman world. The values paramount to Roman thought

were the primacy of victory and predominance of the empire. Sanctity of life would have

presented a likewise alien notion. For this reason, modern practice and ancient precedent will

never be directly analogous, and the population-centrism of Roman practice – communicated by

the use of fear and mass reprisal – is neither directly applicable nor desirable to modern times.

Yet despite the gulf between Rome and contemporary powers, they remain part of the

same broad heritage. The insurgencies confronted today in Iraq and Afghanistan share much in

common with the insurgencies confronted 2,000 years ago in Gaul, Germany, and Judaea.

Similarly, the aims of governmental legitimacy and population-centrism evidenced in modern

counterinsurgency initiatives remain fundamentally unaltered from their much earlier Roman

iterations. For this reason, just as Roman practice is illuminated by the precepts of Galula and

FM 3-24, so too should contemporary theory be reassessed in light of these ancient antecedents.

The period typically ascribed to the start of the modern counterinsurgency era, placed at the end

of World War I, may in fact fall twenty centuries too late.

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[532] FM 3-24 2006, 5-28.
[533] Ibid, 7-2.

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