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"They Make a Solitude and Call it Peace": Counterinsurgency - The Roman Model

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The idea that it is possible to study warfare systematically, from a historical perspective, has already appeared in ancient times, but it received pronounced theoretical and practical endorsement at the beginning of the modern era. The aim of military theories, which had begun to develop since the Renaissance period, was to examine what the most efficient form of organization would be to build up, train and deploy an army in order to achieve the ultimate goal of operating a military force – victory. Many military thinkers have claimed that military theory should be created through a study of military history. The argument between the various schools of thought was (and still is) whether military theory can be universally applied. But at the same time there is a general consensus that military history should be studied in order to define the relevant military theory, and that historical research is the basis for military theory since throughout history it was war that provided clear lessons.**[1]**

One of the most outstanding instances of historical research which created a theory is the book by Alfred T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890). It may be said quite simply that Mahan created a naval theory after a profound study of the military history of naval warfare in the modern period, with a definition of a number of essential principles which in his opinion constituted the basis for the creation of sea power.**[2]** His conclusions served those in the United States who preached in favor of building a large and modern fleet of warships, a process that gradually turned the United States into a controlling force over the oceans. Sumida claims that by doing so, Mahan established his position as the leading theoretician of his time.**[3]** In spite of the debate over the relevance of Mahan and the criticism of his historical determinism, the theory of Mahan still possesses vitality, and in the opinion of Paul Kennedy, Mahan's writings will always remain the main point of reference in every discussion on sea power.**[4]** Many of his strategic and geo-strategic assertions are relevant even at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century.**[5]**

This logical assumption, the examination of military history as conducive to the formation of a military theory, guides the United States in coping with the problem of insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the study of history is integrated among the pages of the field manual of the Army and the Marines which deals with counterinsurgency (COIN) (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 Counterinsurgency 2006). The field manual states that only a learning organization is capable of confronting the COIN phenomenon with efficiency.**[6]**

One of the ways to develop this kind of knowledge is to study the wars of the past. Such a stratagem is not strange for the American army. Already during the Vietnam War, at the request of the army, a number of studies were written that dealt with the British experience in Malaya, where from the American viewpoint

Britain succeeded in suppressing a Communist uprising. The clearest evidence for this is that fact that Sir Robert Thompson was appointed as a senior advisor to the American army in Vietnam (1961-1965) in order to carry out the pacification plans that had proven their effectiveness in Malaya.**[7]** The Americans also studied the causes for the failure of the French in Vietnam and Algeria with the aim of understanding their errors, especially in Vietnam, and in an attempt to avoid repeating the same mistakes. At the same time, translations were made of French literature dealing with the lessons learnt from their confrontations in Vietnam and Algeria,**[8]** such as the book by Roger Trinquier, a French officer who had acquired much experience in COIN during his service in Indochina and Algeria.**[9]** Even today, this book is considered as one of the most important theoretical books in the field of COIN. Besides the writings on theories and activities connected with COIN, we can find extensive research literature that deals with the phenomenon of insurgency itself with an emphasis on the military thought of Mao and an analysis of insurgency in Southeast Asia. We can also find many articles published in the professional journals of the American Army, such as *Military Review*.

The aim of this article is to present a historical scenario in which an examination will be made of the methods employed by the Roman Empire in coping with hundreds of uprisings and to assess their relevance to the realities of today. Although, as we shall see later on, no document of that period can be found which resembles the FM 3-24, but from a reading of the sources that have been preserved we can distill a system of principles that the Roman Empire used in confronting revolts.**[10]**

In other words, by examining the confrontation methods adopted by the Romans, this article will attempt to contribute further information towards the research of the counterinsurgency and pacification phenomenon. It should be noted that the inspiration for writing this article came from a rereading of the book by Edward Luttwak which succeeds through an analysis of available sources to define the basic principles that underlie the defense approach of the Roman Empire from the 1st to the 3rd century CE.**[11]**

At the end of the 3rd century BCE, at the time of the final annihilation of Carthage, Rome became the indisputable ruler of the Western Mediterranean. During the century that followed, Rome gradually established its hegemony over the entire Mediterranean Basin, seized control over the Egyptian grain supply, and conquered the area of Transalpine Gaul. Rome ruled over an area of four million square miles which included a population of about seven million inhabitants. All this was done with an army that numbered about half a million regular soldiers and auxiliary forces.

The economic and military power of Rome did not create political calm throughout the Empire. From the beginning of the reign of Augustus (27 BCE – 14 CE) until that of Commodus (180 – 192 CE), the period of the Empire or the Principate, we know of 120 revolts.**[12]** There is no doubt that the number was far greater for lack of source material. Although this was called the period of *Pax Romana*, it was not a period of peace in the military sense.**[13]** Rome fought against the Parthian Empire and conducted battles of various magnitudes with Germanic tribes on its northeastern borders. During the reign of the emperor Claudius (41-54 CE) Britain was conquered and the emperor Trajan (98-117 CE) annexed the territories of Dacia (today Romania and Moldavia), Nabataea, Armenia, and the western parts of the Parthian Empire, which is only a partial listing. This means that the Roman legions had to be trained for regular warfare as well as to confront irregular forces, which sometimes took the form of guerrilla warfare. This was not a problem exclusively for the Romans. Many armies in the course of history and even today are required to prepare themselves to confront a variety of scenarios and different types of warfare.

In order to exemplify Roman policy and strategy, this article will discuss some of the revolts Rome had to face during the first century of the Christian era, such as that of Tacfarinas, a Numidian deserter from the Roman army who led his tribe and later a coalition of Libyan tribes in revolt against the Empire during the years 15-24 CE. Another revolt was the one that broke out in the eastern part of England (then called

Britannia) under the leadership of Queen Boudica (60-61 CE). Through these uprisings, as well as the mention of similar events such as the two revolts in Judaea and the attempt to pacify the tribes outside the borders of the Empire (mainly those beyond the Danube and the Rhine), this article will analyze the measures taken by the Romans to avoid and suppress revolts.

Like other empires in history, the Romans lacked the human and material resources to rule with equal power over their entire empire. In the face of a long series of revolts throughout the Empire, Rome built a sophisticated system of confrontation that merged military effort with political, social and economic activity. Through an examination of all the means that Rome employed, it is clearly evident that the army was only one means to suppress revolts. From a reading of the sources it is possible to identify four methods of action. The first derives from the widespread deployment of the army over the entire imperial territory. The second was direct military response to every rebellious act and an aggressive policy that followed the suppression of revolt. The third was a cultural method based on the process of a Romanization of the conquered areas. The fourth method can be defined as a political type of action based on creating a system of dependency, in which local rulers were made subordinate to Roman authority.

The revolts that occurred during the early imperial period were not a series of incidents and reactions. From the sources at our disposal it is difficult to find any direct connection between the influence of a revolt in one place in the Empire and the outbreak of another elsewhere within an immediate time frame. For example, a researcher cannot determine whether the revolt that broke out in Britain at the beginning of the sixth decade of the 1st century CE had an influence on any aspect of the revolt that broke out in Judaea a few years later. However, it is clear that the methods employed by Rome to suppress the revolts were similar, and that military means was an important factor in their suppression and in the restoration of peace. Sometimes this process was accompanied by an aggressive pacification that included the exiling of the population or of parts of it, and even of its annihilation. Aggressive pacification was meant, among other things, as a deterrent against further outbreaks of rebellion, and perhaps also to deter those people living in the neighborhood of the region in revolt.

The Sources

This article will make use of literary sources that describe the wars mainly from the Roman side and their tactical and strategic methods in the COIN sphere. Other sources such as tombstone inscriptions, coins, archaeological finds, and papyri, inform us mainly about daily life in the Roman army, the conditions of service, and its routine method of organization. These spheres of investigation are not within the scope of the discussion in this article. The causes or the rebellion against Rome were many and Roman writers have stressed the loss of freedom and traditional ways of life in conjunction with the corruption in Roman administration.**[14]**

The books written by the Roman historian, Cornelius Tacitus (56-117 CE) constitute the main corpus for the study of Roman wars at the beginning of the imperial period. The first book, the *Annales*, chronicles the Julio-Claudius dynasty, from the death of Augustus (14 CE) until the death of Nero (68 CE). The sequel to this was his *Historiae* which described the events that occurred until the death of Domitian (96 CE). Another work written by Tacitus is *De Vitae Iulii Agricolae*. This is in fact the first book he wrote (98 CE), and constitutes a biography of his father-in-law, Gnaius Julius Agricola, who had served as governor of Britannia during the years 78-85 CE. During the period of his service, Agricola tried to conquer Caledonia (Scotland today). Another book he composed was *Germania*, which is a geographical and ethnographical study of the Germanic tribes occupying an area extending from the eastern bank of the Rhine to the Elbe and on the shores of the Baltic Sea. This work is a further addition to the geographical and ethnographical descriptions in the Life of Agricola which describe the tribes in Britain. It should be noted that Tacitus also describes the Jews and their religion as an introduction to his review of the Great

Revolt.[15] Despite the fact that Tacitus has other aims in composing these ethnographical descriptions, one can learn from them about the type of enemy that the Roman army faced.

Earlier descriptions in relation to Roman history that will be brought as examples in this article are found in Salustius, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, and of Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*. In these two works we can see the Roman army confronting regular forces and irregular ones that operate as guerrilla forces. The revolts to be discussed in this article also appear in the descriptions of the Greek historian Cassius Dio who wrote a comprehensive historical work on Rome from the period before the city was founded until the year 229 CE. As it is known, Dio constitutes one of the few external sources that describe the Bar Kochba revolt. But his importance is in the stress upon the Roman context and not the local Judaean one, which allows us to make a further contribution to Roman military history and the methods of confrontation and action of the Roman army against revolts. In this connection one should of course mention the book by Flavius Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, which provides us with a highly reliable description of the methods used by the Roman army to suppress the Great Revolt. Another work which represents a primary source for the struggle between the regular army of Rome and irregular forces (although not necessarily guerrilla forces) is the book by Flavius Arrianus, *Expedition against the Alans*, which describes his war, as governor of Cappadocia, against the tribes of the Alans who tried to penetrate into the territory of the Empire from the Black Sea region (135 CE).

Deployment of the Roman Army During the Early Imperial Period

During the Augustan period a policy was laid down for the establishment of permanent forces based on volunteers for long-time service, 16-25 years.[16] The significance of this reform was that the legions recruited during the period of the Republic for specific military operations now became stationed soldiers deployed through the Empire and close to its borders.[17] We can learn about the location of this or that legion from the inscriptions and monuments scattered around the Empire.[18] But the complete and only list we have of the legions and their locations is provided by Tacitus, and researchers agree that it should be dated to the year 23 CE, during the reign of Tiberius (14-37 CE), from which we gather that there were 25 locations where legions were stationed.[19] It should be remembered that in the year 9 CE, three legions were destroyed in the Battle of the Teutoberg Forest to the east of the Rhine.[20]

Each legion comprised approximately 6,000 soldiers with the addition of about one thousand in the auxiliary forces (*auxillia*). These soldiers were recruited from around the Empire, but they were not Roman citizens and were subject to the authority of the provincial governor not the legionary commander, although they were led by Roman officers. When needed, they joined the legion and then came under the authority of the legionary commander. Their main task was to maintain order and they were the ones who gave the first response in case an uprising occurred. If they could not control the revolt, the legions were brought in as well as auxiliary forces from the nearby provinces, and sometimes even from those far off.[21] According to the deployment of the legions it appears that they were stationed close to the roads from which it was relatively easy for them to operate against enemies outside the Empire as well as against uprisings of people within the Empire.

From the list that Tacitus provides we can discern that the army had three main tasks. The first and main task of the legions was to continue to expand the borders of the Empire on command. The will Augustus left to his heirs regarding the stability of the borders and that no further conquests should be attempted, must be seen merely as a recommendation. The citizens of Rome expected that their leaders would continue to glorify Roman power by continued territorial expansion. Moreover, various emperors during the 1st and 2nd centuries pursued a policy of expanding the Empire.[22] For example, since the first landings of Julius Caesar on the shores of Britain, Rome expected the conquest of the island and its annexation to the Empire. This was eventually done by Claudius (41-54 CE). Support for this claim can be

found in Isaac who asserts that the deployment of the legions stationed in the East was not defensive in nature but was offensive, in an attempt to broaden the range of the Roman Empire mainly at the expense of the Parthian Empire.[23]

The second task of the army was to protect the borders of the Empire. This protection was meant to halt the invasion of tribes that lived across the Rhine and Danube and in the desert wastelands as well as defense against attacks by the Parthian Empire. The two legions that were stationed in Egypt and the two that were in the province of Africa (today Libya, Tunis and Algeria) protected the grain supply of the Empire, mainly from the desert tribes. The task of the three legions permanently stationed in the Iberian Peninsula, a region not exposed to external attack, was meant to serve as a rapid response force against the ceaseless unrest of the inhabitants of the three provinces in that area.[24] This was in fact the third task, to ensure internal order and security. Luttwak claims that internal uprisings presented an even more critical problem than external threats.[25] With calm restored in the Iberian Peninsula, two of the legions there were sent to other places, leaving only one in Spain. Although Tacitus describes the range of Roman forces for the year 23 CE, this deployment did not change essentially during the imperial period, yet two main trends can be discerned. The first is the transfer of legions from quiet places to problematic border areas (mainly the Rhine and Danube). The second is the formation of additional legions for offense initiatives such as the invasion of Britain at the beginning of the 40s of the 1st century, or the renewal of war against the Parthian Empire.[26]

Modern research on the Roman Empire is frustrated by the fact that there is no document or literary source of that period which deals with Roman strategy. However, the facts known to us such as the stationing of the legions, the system of roads in the Empire, the fortifications system, and the military responses to events and crises, can portray a picture from which we can deduce, with some degree of vagueness, the strategic theory of Rome during the 1st century CE (and in general). This methodology underlies the book by Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*.[27]

Patterns of Military Activity

Rome enjoyed military superiority which derived from strict discipline, an efficient system of training, and high quality weaponry, and also thanks to their engineering skills expressed in laying out a network of road, building fortifications, and the art of siege warfare. In regular battles, Rome was eventually the victor.[28] Therefore, those who stood against her searched for the weak point of the Roman army, which they found through irregular warfare.[29] Julius Caesar writes in his book De Bello Gallico, that two of the leaders who fought against him, Cassivellaunus the Briton, and Vercingetorix the Gaul, understood that they had to change their tactics if they wanted to defeat the Romans.[30] For example, in a speech given by Vercingetorix to his supporters, he says that the Gauls had to focus on attacks against the supply convoys of the Romans, to strike at isolated units, and even to adopt the ‘scorched earth’ strategy which would make it difficult for the Roman to obtain food while the Gauls, who enjoyed the support of the local population, would have no problems of food and shelter.[31]

It should be remembered that sometimes those like the Gallic and Germanic tribes who decided to oppose Rome did not have a regular army or did not set up an organized system of warfare. If we wish to make a historical analogy, the power of Rome can be compared to the strength of the American army. Since 1848 the United States has not been beaten in any regular war, and to day its conventional military force in air, sea and land is unrivalled. But in trying to fight against irregular forces, the United States encountered and still encounters serious problems without the ability to obtain a decisive victory. The cases of Iraq and Afghanistan prove this claim. The United States overcame the regular armies of Iraq and Afghanistan within a few weeks, but became entangled in tenacious guerrilla warfare.

In order to maintain order and security and the political stability of the Empire, Rome depended mainly on its ability to punish. After the suppression of revolts by military means, Rome had recourse in some instances to genocide, the annihilation of peoples and tribes.**[32]** One of the most infamous cases was the destruction of Carthage and the enslavement of its population. The use of brutality on such a grand scale was meant to frighten the populations within the Empire and also as a means of deterring those living outside it. A display of terrorism for those beyond the borders was meant to prevent people from incursions into the territory of the Empire. For example, in 25 BCE, the army carried out a cruel massacre among the Salassi tribe which had threatened the province of Cisalpine Gaul, and the tribe was completely annihilated. In 16 CE Germanicus Julius Caesar (15 BCE to 19 CE), the nephew of the emperor Tiberius, crossed the Rhine. Tacitus relates that this was an expedition of revenge for the slaughter that the Germans had made under the command of Arminius, of three Roman legions (9 CE).**[33]** But this expedition also had a deterrent effect through displaying the restored might of Rome and thus preventing future incursions into the Empire.**[34]** We can also find brutal suppression during and after revolts in the measures taken by the Romans in reaction to the two Jewish revolts, especially the Bar Kochba revolt. The assessment made in the research literature is that one third of the Jewish population was annihilated during the Great Revolt and immediately afterwards. This is in addition to the widespread destruction of some of the urban centers, especially in Judaea. In the Bar Kochba revolt, according to Cassius Dio, after it ended "…Judaea was made desolate".**[35]**

With regard to the deployment of the legions, their task was not of the kind which is called today 'current security'. The legions were stationed in the centers of cities or near the borders of the Empire to be able to respond to external aggression. They were hardly ever found in rural areas, and the maintenance of order and security was the responsibility of the auxiliary forces recruited from among the local population, leaving the legions free to guard the borders. The dependence on local forces allowed the Romans to maintain the legions as a concentrated force and avoid its fragmentation into sub-units that were weaker and exposed to sudden attack. Legion concentration created a rapid response force in case the local auxiliary forces were unable to suppress the rebellion, without wasting time in assembling subsidiary units. If this regular force was insufficient, other legions and sub-units (*vexillatio*) from nearby provinces and even those further off were brought in. The building up of this force took a long while because of the distances that the units had to cover. This fact explains why a revolt and its suppression sometimes took a number of years.**[36]**

A study of the sources dealing with the response of the Romans to the revolts of Tacfarinas, Boudica and Bar Kochba indicates that similar methods were used. At the beginning of the revolt we see that the Roman army does not initiate offensive measures for the very reason that it did not have sufficient military forces. Another reason was the guerrilla methods used by the rebels, against which Roman tactics based on the regular forms of battle was ineffective.**[37]** The lack of military preparedness and the use of inappropriate methods of warfare for the military situation were the cause for catastrophe and the defeat of the legions.**[38]** The situation for the rebels changed for the worse in both instances on the arrival of officers who changed the warfare tactics of the Roman army and adapted them to those of the enemy as well as to the field conditions. For example, the arrival in Judaea of Julius Severus, the governor of Britain, who had gained practical experience in mountain warfare acquired in Britain itself, mainly in Wales.**[39]** This enabled him to deploy a military system against the guerrilla forces of Bar Kochba which was suited to the field and warfare conditions in Judaea. Severus brought with him the forces that had accumulated experience in mountain warfare, relied more upon archers and cavalry, as well as troops of German origin (*numeri*) which had operated as light and mobile units.**[40]** Similar trends can be found in the suppression of revolts in North Africa. The Roman army ceased operating in large units and began using smaller and more mobile ones. The army took control over vital passageways and created a

blockade by constructing fortresses. This restricted the movements of the rebels within the enclosed areas in which the mobile units operated, thus restoring the offense initiative and gradually crushing the revolt. **[41]**

The adjustment of the regular system in which the legion operated in warfare against irregular forces can be found in the description of Flavius Arrianus and his war against the Alans tribe (132 CE). At the beginning of his concise book he explains how to construct an ordered movement of forces. Although the legion remains the decisive force in warfare, mobile forces should be stationed around it with long-range fire power, which means a combination of light cavalry and archers.**[42]** The sub-units of the legion also marched to battle ready for war against the irregular forces. Their armaments included a combination of long spears to keep off the forward charge by the Alans, and javelins to strike at the onrushing forces that managed to get through the killing field of the archers. The role of the cavalry continued to be the protection of the wings and also a rapid force for pursuit.**[43]**

Sometimes the rebels made strategic errors that led to a more speedy suppression of the revolt. This was the case with Vercingetorix the Gaul, and also the case with the revolt of Boudica, the Queen of the Iceni tribe.**[44]** When the revolt started, the British forces swept down upon isolated Roman units of the Ninth Legion and destroyed them. Boudica gradually recruited other tribes to her cause and the revolt spread throughout the eastern part of Britain. She took advantage of the fact that most of the Roman army was then on a war expedition in the northern part of Wales and her army succeeded in conquering a number of cities in east, including the capital of the province, Camulodunum (Colchester), and massacred the Roman population living there.**[45]** The governor of Britain, Gaius Suetonius, gathered his forces that were fighting in Wales and began advancing towards the forces of Boudica. Suetonius brought together about ten thousand soldiers, with his main strength based on the fourteenth legion – Legio XIV Gemina – of veteran experience, and units from the twentieth legion – Legio XX Valeria Victrix.**[46]** In effect, the Romans forced Boudica into a regular-type of battle on a level plain with the wing and rear sides of the forces protected by the forests around them. The British were left with no choice but to clash headlong with the legionary forces, and since the Roman soldiers were equipped with better weapons, had stricter discipline, and employed more effective tactics, the Roman army won the battle known as the Battle of Watling Street.**[47]** This means that Suetonius compelled Boudica to fight according to his terms, and usually in regular warfare the legionnaires had the upper hand.**[48]** Yet despite the Roman victory and the suicide of Boudica (according to Tacitus she swallowed poison) the revolt continued in the form of guerrilla warfare and the Roman army began aggressive pacification that included the destruction of villages that had "…shown themselves dubious or disaffected".**[49]** Additional forces arrived to help the legions stationed in Britain, and only in 67 CE was it possible to begin thinning out the Roman forces in the province. However, during the following century three legions remained permanently in Britain, mainly to continue control over the island as well as to cope with the revolts that broke out from time to time.

To sum up this section of the article, it may be said that the method of military action was a vital factor after a revolt had already broken out and it was no longer possible to restore order and security by other means. The test cases that have been examined indicate that the Romans learnt how to fight through the process of warfare or by managing to coerce the rebels into fighting under conditions that were more favorable to the Romans, that is to say regular warfare in which the legions had a decisive advantage.

In many cases, after the suppression of the main body of rebels, the Romans began to apply aggressive pacification aimed at a final elimination of the revolt and the deterrence of the population. It is now necessary to discuss the models of control which can be called positive pacification. These were applied parallel with, and sometimes immediately after, the conquest of a certain area, and occasionally after the

aggressive stage of pacification.

Romanization

As stated earlier, Rome lacked the human and material resources in order to control all the territories in the Empire in an equal manner. In some cases, after the suppression of a revolt, the main way to continue maintaining peace and stability was a process of Romanization. This means turning the inhabitants of the Empire into cultural Romans, and thus obtaining the loyalty of the periphery to the center. This process, which was mostly conducted in the western parts of the Empire, was operated in two ways in conjunction with each other. The first was uniformity in the economic, legal and juridical spheres, an intensified process of urbanization, and the presentation of the emperor's image as an emblem of the entire Empire and its unifying factor. The second was the stationing of the legions in the provinces not as a military force but as cultural agents and a link with Rome. The army was the largest institution in the Roman Empire and therefore filled an important role in subordinating the conquered population to Roman sovereignty. In many places in the Empire, especially near the borderlines of the Rhine and Danube, the soldiers in the army bases interacted with the local population which was expressed in trade relations with it and the services it provided to the soldiers. These bases of the Roman army gradually became urban centers from which emerged those cities that still exist today throughout Europe.**[50]** We find many cases of marital ties with the local population, and the sons of legionnaires who grew up and enlisted in the Roman army provided fresh candidates for service in the legion.**[51]** In this way a merging occurred between the legionnaires, who were Roman citizens, and the local population that through marriage also acquired Roman citizenship. This process of Romanization can be clearly exemplified in Spain.

Roman domination over Spain began at the same time as the Second Punic War. During the course of about two hundred years, Rome gradually took control over the Iberian Peninsula, but their hold was partial with slow advances and also retreats that resulted from the rebellious nature of the Iberian population. Only in 19 BCE was the last revolt suppressed.**[52]** At this stage, a re-organizational process began in Spain which involved the division into provinces, the setting up of urban centers, and the settlement of war veterans. At the same time, four or five legions remained in the area, and after the defeat of Varus and the need to bolster the military forces on the Rhine border, only three legions remained. In addition, the road network was improved with the aim of facilitating army mobility in case of any additional revolts.

The geographical detachment of Spain, the relative internal calm and lack of external threats allowed for a rapid process of Romanization. Augustus founded a few score cities most of which quickly gained the status of a city with internal autonomy (*municipium*). During the reign of the emperor Vespasian (69-79 CE) all these cities gained independent status and their inhabitants received Roman citizenship. This process allowed the Spanish elite to hold positions in the army and the imperial administration. **[53]** Integration into the imperial political sphere was followed by an increasing use of Latin and the adoption of Roman customs both in public and private life.**[54]** In this way the social elite moved from local loyalties to loyalty towards the Empire, which in turn constituted an important factor in calming Spanish rebelliousness. **[55]** A similar trend can also be found among the Germanic tribes where Romanization was imposed over tribal leaders, who in turn became the agents of assimilation for the members of the tribe they led.**[56]**

The Romanization of the Spanish elite created opportunities for the general Spanish population. The relative calm allowed for the exploitation of the rich natural resources of Spain and the development of agriculture and trade. The merging of the Spanish economy with that of the Empire led to the strengthening of additional sectors of Spanish society, and these economic relations prevented the outbreak of revolts since the Spaniards now had a clear interest in their continued integration with the

imperial economy. Spain gradually became the imperial production center for wine, olive oil, metals, pottery and garum.[57] Spanish products enjoyed considerable prestige throughout the Empire and economic prosperity once again served to deter uprisings. The pacification of Spain made it possible to reduce the number of legions stationed there, and from the 60s of the 1st century, about one generation after the list of Tacitus was written (with three legions for Spain), only one legion remained in that country.

The administrative model created in Spain during the Augustan period became in time the general policy model of the Principate.[58] Similar processes can be found in North Africa, Gaul and parts of Britain. Economic and social integration and the political assimilation of the local elite created the norms of loyalty towards the Empire, until the inhabitants of the provinces regarded themselves as Romans in every respect and as faithful subjects of the emperor. This process was reinforced by the granting of Roman citizenship. To this we should add the process mentioned earlier, the system of interrelations between Roman military units stationed in the provinces and the local population. In many cased marital ties and economic interactions prevented revolts.

Client Kingdoms

Besides military conquest and Romanization of the west, there was another system of control that was applied more especially to the eastern parts of the Empire, from the Black Sea to the Red Sea. This was the system of dependent or client kingdoms.[59] This policy, which had already begun its application during the Republican era, was the result of three factors. Firstly, in contrast with other parts of the Empire, Rome faced strong empire in its eastern regions, the Parthian Empire. This empire had made Rome suffer a number of painful defeats and the danger was that if war was renewed, some of the eastern territories would fall into the hands of the Parthians. There was also the fear that revolts in the eastern areas would not only weaken Roman presence but that the rebels would call upon the Parthians to assist them. The second factor was the threat against the eastern territories by desert tribes. The third factor was the population groups that refused to accept Roman rule. This meant that the conquests in the East compelled Rome to send a large number of forces to that region, and according to Tacitus four legions were stationed in the province of Syria alone. Augustus therefore had to find a practical system of control that would help Rome to govern in the East. This policy, which continued to be applied by his heirs, was the creation of a system of client kingdoms[60] based on supporting the position of local rulers who swore loyalty to Rome and were not incorporated into *Provincia Syria*.

These client kingdoms paid taxes to Rome and placed it military forces at the disposal of the Empire when necessary. The interest of kings who were under the protection of Rome was to continue ruling, which led them to repress any rebellious trends in the areas in their domain by means of their military forces. These local rulers were in power only as long as Rome wished in accordance with their imperial interests. Rome also kept contact with the local urban nobility which needed Roman support in order to maintain its position and rights, and thus enable it to exploit the economic advantages derived from affiliation with the Empire. On the other hand, Rome depended on the nobility class to maintain stability and to suppress rebellious trends among the rest of the population.

This system was applied when Rome understood that it was possible to control a certain territory indirectly through the local rulers. Sometimes the emperor wished to reward a specific ruler for the help extended to Rome, such as Herod, and this encouraged others to accept Roman authority.[61] Luttwak claims that during a period of about fifty years, the security system of Rome in the East was based on a number of elements among which were a series of client kingdoms. The rulers of such kingdoms took upon themselves the burden of maintaining security against internal uprisings and external threats, especially of incursions by tribes encamped near the borders of the Empire.[62] Only when it appeared

that the local leadership had lost its control over the inhabitants or were suspected of intentions to revolt, the emperors canceled the status of client kingdom and took direct control. Sometimes this status ended with the death of the local ruler, especially when his heir seemed to be a weak leader.

One can argue that cancellation of the client status indicates the failure of the arrangement, but at the same time each case should be examined separately, and it cannot be claimed outright that the policy of client kingdoms was a failure. It may also be argued retrospectively that the cancellation of client kingdom status was the continuation of a process meant to bring a certain area under the direct control of Rome. This means the client kingdom was a stage in the gradual transition from earlier independence to direct Roman rule. However, this argument demands clarification whether there was any continuity in policy in the transition between the Julio-Claudian dynasty and the following Flavian dynasty, since historical facts show that client kingdoms gradually ceased to be in operation during the period of Flavian rule. Stern claims that this method was a system of control that suited areas with a “difficult population”, as for example Judaea. In such places the client kingdom constituted a solution that prevented direct clashes between Rome and the local population.

Conclusion

This article has dealt with the different ways that Rome employed in coping with revolts in the realms of its Empire. Four methods of control can be determined. The first was the deployment of the legions to all parts of the Empire. The second was the military actions taken to suppress revolts that broke out and brutal means of punishment to prevent future revolts and deter other peoples. The two final methods were the use of political, social and economic means – Romanization and reliance on a system of client kingdoms. The aim of these measures was to prevent the outbreak of revolts, and after the suppression of a revolt to pacify the area so that no further uprisings occur. In many cases, such as in Spain, carrying out this process led to the calming of the region after two hundred years of confrontations. The system of client kingdoms helped Rome to detach itself from direct rule over the local population and to reduce the points of friction between it and the people it had conquered.

There is no ancient source that can explain to us the strategy of Rome in general and the methods of control it used against revolts in particular. From a critical reading of primary sources, some of which have been used for this article, it is possible to sketch some practical system of action. That is to say, one can create a theoretical system from the actions that were performed. Such a theory would indicate that Rome operated, besides its military forces, pacification measures which took two forms: aggressive – i.e., suppression and punishment; and positive – i.e., Romanization. As said before, modern research is capable, with the help of available sources, to identify more than a hundred revolts, and there may certainly have been many more that have not been preserved in memory or were not important enough to write about. In spite of the large number of revolts in the first two centuries of the Principate, one cannot deduce that the various methods of control had failed. On the contrary, Rome remained an empire and even extended its territory beyond the borders determined by Augustus. Internal uprisings did not weaken the Empire, and in many cases, those regions that were particularly rebellious, after undergoing a massive process of Romanization or suffered repressive measures (such as Judaea), became calm. The causes of the collapse of the Empire in the west were many, and are still a matter of controversy. Whatever they might be, a discussion of these factors is not within the scope of this article.

Is it possible to derive relevant lessons from ancient history for the political and military realities of today? There is no doubt that a democratic state operating within a framework of international law and public opinion cannot employ repressive measures such as those carried out by Rome.**[63]** However, a population may be punished by means such as night curfews and traffic restrictions with the aim of preventing the support of the civilian population for guerrilla fighters. From the Roman methods of

military action one can learn that a regular army should use warfare tactics that can counter those used by guerrilla fighters. This means the re-adjustment of a regular army to deploy small mobile units but with strong firepower. It is also desirable to compel guerrilla forces to engage in face-to-face battle where advantage is held by a regular army that can exploit the military errors of the guerrilla fighters.

A framework for political and economic activities provides a broader operational basis. Modern COIN theories clearly determine that carrying out such activities can lead to calming a certain region through separation between the guerrilla forces and the civilian population. These methods of activity include building infrastructure, improving health and educational systems, increasing the efficiency of the economic system, etc. These processes can be regarded as parallel to the measures carried out by Rome in the areas it conquered and after the suppression of a revolt. As an analogy, it may be said that the desire of the United States to establish democracy and liberalism, according to the American model, in the countries where it is active, resembles the process of Romanization. Also, the dependence of the United States on rulers who display pro-American tendencies, even if they are dictatorships, is parallel to the model of client states that Rome created. In many places around the world the United States has supported and even aided the accession of rules who presented an agenda that corresponded to American interests. During the Cold War period these were leaders who displayed a firm and aggressive stance against Communism, and today these are the moderate Islamic leaders who are opposed to the trends of Islamic fundamentalism. Thus, without going into philosophical speculations about the importance of studying history, we may also learn from the distant experience of Rome about warfare against guerrilla forces and against revolts that are occurred today as well in various parts of the world.

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[1] For a comprehensive discussion of the argument in Western military thought regarding the possibility of learning lessons from history for present circumstances so as to create military theory, see: Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (Oxford, 2001), 27–96. See also: John F. Votaw, "An Approach to the Study of Military History", in: John E. Jessup and Robert W. Coakley (eds.), *A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History* (Washington D.C., 1988), 41-55.

[2] Alfred T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (Boston, 1890), 29-82.

[3] Jon T. Sumida, "Alfred Thayer Mahan, Geopolitician", in: Colin S. Grey and Geoffrey Sloan (eds.), *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy* (London, 1999), 49-53; Ibid., "Reimagining the History of Twentieth Century Navies", in: Daniel Finamore (ed.), *Maritime History as World History* (Gainesville, 2004), 169-170.

[4] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London, 1976), 6.

[5] Thomas M. Kane, *Chinese Grand Strategy and Maritime Power* (London, 2002), 33.

[6] Department of the Army. FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency, 2006, 1-26 (1-144). See also the theoretical review in: John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago, 2002), 3-11.

[7] Spencer C. Tucker, *Vietnam* (Lexington, 1999), 96; Douglas S. Blaufarb. *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance* (New York, 1977), 47-51. See also: Rowland S. N. Mans, "Victory in

Malaya", in: T. N. Greene (ed.), *The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him* (New York, 1962), 115-143.

[8] V. J. Croizat (tr.), *A Translation from the French: Lessons of the War in Indochina* (Santa Monica, 1967). It is interesting to note that one of the texts for required reading by the American officer ranks which was sent to Vietnam was the book written by Jean Lartéguy, *The Centurions* (1960). The book describes the experiences of French officers who had fought in the Indochina War (1946-1954) and fell captive to the Viet Minh after the French defeat in Dien Bien Phu. During their captivity they studied the characteristics of revolutionary warfare, and they applied the knowledge they accumulated in the war in Algeria.

[9] Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (New York, 1964). The book appeared in France in 1961.

[10] For a general historical discussion on the influence of ancient sources on the shaping of modern military thinking, see: Charles R. Shrader, "The Influence of Vegetius' *De Re Militari*", *Military Affairs* 45 (4) (1981), 167-172; Donald A. Neill, "Ancestral Voices: The Influence of the Ancients on the Military Thought of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", *The Journal of Military History* 62 (3) (1998), 487-520.

[11] Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1976).

[12] The period following the reign of Emperor Commodus and until the fall of Rome (476 CE) is known in historical research as the Late Empire.

[13] Various scholars have given different interpretations to the concept of *Pax Romana*, which includes an essential ideology, the declaration of the end of the civil war with the victory of Octavius over Anthony, a propagandist concept that asserts the cultural superiority of Rome, etc. See: Greg Woolf, "Roman Peace", in: John Rich and Graham Shipley (eds.), *War and Society in the Roman World* (London, 1993), 171-191.

[14] Susan P. Mattern, "Counterinsurgency and the Enemies of Rome", in: Victor D. Hanson (ed.), *Makers of Ancient Strategy: From the Persian Wars to the Fall of Rome* (Princeton, 2010), 165-166.

[15] On the ethnographic descriptions of Tacitus, see: Daniela Dueck, *Geography in Classical Antiquity*, (Cambridge, 2012), 48.

[16] For a review of the Roman army during this period, see: Alistair S. Anderson, "The Imperial Army", in: John Wacher (ed.), *The Roman World (vol. 1)* (London, 1990), 89-106.

[17] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 49. See also: Graham Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army* (Norman, 1998), 24-27; Jonathan P. Roth, *Roman Warfare* (Cambridge, 2009), 146-148.

[18] Thus, for example, these archaeological remains assist researchers in determining which Roman units were stationed in Palestine during the Bar Kochba revolt.

[19] Tacitus, *Annales*, 45.

[20] Michael Grant, *The Army of the Caesars* (London, 1974), 291-294. See also: Nigel Pollard, "The Roman Army", in: David S. Potter (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Empire* (Malden, 2011), 209-211.

[21] For a comprehensive review of the legions and auxiliary forces, see: Webster, *Roman Imperial Army*, 96-156.

[22] Adrian Goldsworthy, *Roman Warfare* (Cassell, 2000), 114-115, 117.

[23] Benjamin Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army on the East* (Oxford, 1993), 372.

[24] Alan K. Bowman (ed.), *The Cambridge Ancient History (vol. 10): The Augustan Empire* (Cambridge, 1996), 453-454.

[25] Luttwak, *Grand* Strategy, 18-19.

[26] Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, 46-49, 85.

[27] See also: Victor D. Hanson, "The Roman Way of War 250 BC-AD 300", in: Geoffrey Parker (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Warfare* (Cambridge, 2005), 57-58.

[28] Goldsworthy, *Roman Warfare*, 122-128; Philip Sabin and Others, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare (Vol. 2): Rome from the Late Republic to the Late Empire* (Cambridge, 2007), 155-157. See also: Archer Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World* (Oxford, 1987), 26-45; Catharine M. Gilliver, *The Roman Art of War* (Stroud, 1999), 89-117.

[29] John Ellis, *From the Barrel of a Gun* (London, 1995), 25.

[30] On Cassivellaunus, see: Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, 5, 19. See also: Ellis, *From the Barrel of a Gun*, 29.

[31] Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, 7 14. This was not the first time that the Romans encountered this method of warfare. See: Sallustius, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, 55. See also: Philip Matyszak, *The Enemies of Rome* (New York, 2004), 121-122.

[32] See, for example: Sallustius, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, 54. For further discussion, see: Susan P. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley, 1999), 120-121.

[33] Tacitus, *Annales*, 1 49; Ibid., 1 51.

[34] Mattern, "Counterinsurgency and the Enemies of Rome", 167.

[35] Dio 69 14.

[36] For a discussion on the size of the Roman force sent to suppress the Bar Kochba revolt, see: James J. Bloom, *The Jewish Revolts against Rome, A.D. 66-135*, (London, 2010), 210-213. Claims testifying to the

dispatch of twenty legions are exaggerated. However, there is agreement in the research literature that the sending of Severus, the governor of Britain, to Judaea is proof of the critical situation and of the serious military predicament that the Roman army faced.

[37] Dio 12 69; Tacitus, *Annales*, 3, 20.

[38] Sabin, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare (Vol. 2)*, 89-90.

[39] For a comparative discussion between Wales and Judaea, see: Shimon Applebaum, *Prolegomena to the Study of the Second Jewish Revolt (A.D. 132-135)* (Oxford, 1976), 49-52.

[40] Werner Eck, "The Bar Kokhba Revolt: The Roman Point of View", *Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999), 76-89. On the tactics of Roman warfare in suppressing the revolt of Tacfarinas, see: Bowman (ed.), *The Cambridge Ancient History (vol. 10)*, 594-595; Roth, *Roman Warfare*, 159, 161; Applebaum, *Prolegomena*, 44; Sabin, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare (Vol. 2)*, 55.

[41] Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study* (London, 1977), 5-6. For further details on the revolt in North Africa, see: Ellis, *From the Barrel of a Gun*, 33-34.

[42] *The Expedition against the Alans*, 1-2.

[43] J. E. Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (Yale, 2005), 267. For further information about the use of cavalry by Arrianus, see: Goldsworthy, *Roman Warfare*, 128-129, 131; Philip Sidnell, *Warhorses: Cavalry in Ancient Warfare* (London, 2006), 266-268. The most comprehensive study on the use of cavalry according to an analysis of Arrianus' book is by Ann Hyland, *Training the Roman Cavalry: From Arrian's Ars Tactica*, (Gloucestershire, 1993).

[44] For a discussion of other cases in which Roman commanders changed their war tactics to suit guerrilla warfare and took advantage of the mistakes made by guerrilla fighters, see: Tacitus, *Annales* 4 57-59. See also: Ellis, *From the Barrel of a Gun*, 34-35.

[45] Dio 62, 7. See also: Sheppard Frere, *Britannia: A History of Roman Britain* (London, 1967), 105-106. For a comprehensive review of the Boudica revolt, see: Matyszak, *The Enemies of Rome*, 182-190.

[46] Oxford Classical Dictionary, 593.

[47] Tacitus, *Annales*, 14 34-37. The venue of the battle is unknown, and a British tradition ascribes the location in which the battle took place to the area of Kings Cross Station in the heart of London. From a reading of Tacitus it seems that Severus did not return to the area of Londonium, and therefore researchers locate the battle somewhere on the road between London and the city (today the village) of Wroxeter. See also: Graham Webster, *Boudica*, (London, 1993), 97-100.

[48] For a description of the battle with emphasis on the tactical advantage of the Romans on the battlefield, see: Dio 62, 12. See also: Sallustius, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, 57-58; Adrian Goldsworthy, *In the Name of Rome* (London, 2004), 325.

[49] Tacitus, *Annales*, 14 38.

[50] Steven K. Drummond and Lynn H. Nelson, *The Western Frontiers of Imperial Rome* (Armonk, 1994), 128-131.

[51] Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army*, 210.

[52] On the process of conquering Spain, see: S. J. Keay, *Roman Spain* (London, 1988), 25-46.

[53] Leonard A. Curchin, *Roman Spain: Conquest and Assimilation* (London, 1991), 57-69. In this connection, see the article by John Patterson, "Military Organization and Social Change in the Later Roman Republic", in: John Rich and Graham Shipley (eds.), *War and Society in the Roman World*, (London, 1993), 92-109. On the urbanization process in Spain, see: J. S. Richardson, *The Roman Spain* (Oxford, 1996), 134-149.

[54] Curchin, *Roman Spain*, 160-163.

[55] Ibid., -77 81.

[56] Drummond and Lynn H. Nelson, *The Western Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, 181-183

[57] A condiment derived from fish eggs which became a culinary success throughout the Empire. Some describe *garum* as the ketchup of the ancient world. On the economic wealth of Spain as the cause for its integration into the imperial system, see::Richardson, *The Roman Spain*, 162-178; Curchin, *Roman Spain*, 136-153.

[58] Drummond and Nelson, *The Western Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, 190-191.

[59] Oxford Classical Dictionary, 253.

[60] Suetonius, *Augustus*, 48. See also: Hugh Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Bloomington, 1996), 29-35.

[61] The political history of King Herod represents diplomatic opportunism which was expressed by the transference of Herod's loyalty according to the power shifts in Rome, mainly from Antony to Augustus. See also the discussion in Mattern which analyzes the perception of dependency kingdoms as a means of avoiding rebellion, as evidenced in the relationship between Herod and the Romans: Mattern, "Counterinsurgency and the Enemies of Rome", 172-174.

[62] Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, 104-105.

[63] Examples of this kind can be found, for instance, in the suppression of the guerrilla forces by the Germans in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and in the Balkans during the course of the Second World War.

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