"Spare humbled foe, and crush to earth the proud": Population-centric and enemy-centric counterinsurgency in the provinces of the Early Roman Empire (9-61 AD)

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Population-centric and enemy-centric counterinsurgency in the provinces of the Early Roman Empire (9-61 AD)

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Introduction:

"In terms of insurgency (…) the past is not another country, (…) [it] represents both the shadow of things that have been, and those that will be", asserted military historian Ian Beckett (Beckett 2005, p.35). This statement does not reflect the balance of academic production on the topics of insurgency and counterinsurgency (COIN) throughout history. Although insurgency and COIN as a practice have arguably existed for centuries, they were only born as concepts in the post-World War II context, as a consequence of anti-colonial movements and bipolar Cold War dynamics. Initially, modern insurgency was inherently identified as fueled by left-wing revolutionary ideology, first by Mao's 'People's War', which was adapted to other contexts by other figures like Truong Chinh, Giap, Guevara, Debray or Marighela (Beckett 2005).

As a consequence, throughout the 1960s, COIN practices began to emerge with colonial officials and military men as pioneers, like the British Robert Thompson in Malaysia and Vietnam, or the French David Galula in Algeria. These colonial experiences helped design the elements of what is described today as the 'winning hearts and minds' strategy, what is otherwise defined a 'population-centric' method, based on protecting and winning over the people, as opposed to an 'enemy-centric' one, based on terrorizing them (Beckett 2005; Zaalberg 2012). These two practices and their consequences were also used in John Nagl's *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife* to explain the COIN success of Great Britain in Malaya and the failure of the United States in Vietnam, an opposition that will be useful for the purposes of this thesis (Nagl 2002). Since then, a myriad of contemporary concepts have emerged to address the problem, including 'global', 'commercial', 'spiritual', 'import-economy' or 'network-centric' insurgencies (Clapham 1998; Kilcullen 2010; Metz 1994; Reno 2012).

In comparison, relatively few academic efforts have been directed towards studying the rationale and functioning behind insurgency and COIN in the ancient world. The field is dominated by the social and political sciences, with historians largely absent. When used with caution and an understanding of its limits, a more historical approach to the concepts of insurgency and COIN can illuminate underappreciated topics, challenge dominant views, and provide a deeper understanding of the past while offering a nuanced sense of continuity for the future (Brice 2016). In the ancient world, few political entities had both the centralized power to classify their opposition as 'insurgency' and enough primary sources to verify this. For these reasons, the study of the Early Roman Empire is relevant for the purposes of this thesis. In this period, the state became increasingly centralized and substantially consolidated, but was also

characterized by a degree of local autonomy and regional diversity, given the enormous reach of its provinces. This combination was a key ingredient in the unrest and uprisings that the Roman Empire experienced.

This study focuses on the responses that the Roman Empire as a political and military entity used to respond to the insurgencies of its provinces, that is to say the means and effectiveness of its COIN methods. The main question it attempts to answer to is:

Given its highly militarized nature and wide territorial reach, what were the counterinsurgency (COIN) methods of the Roman Empire in its provinces during its early period (9 – 61 AD) ?

Contrasting with some authors who underline the prevalence of 'hearts and minds' in Roman COIN, this study's main findings will reveal that although the Roman state did resort to both 'enemy-centric' and 'population-centric' COIN, it gave a strong priority to the former. The Roman state used a combination of 'enemy-centric' when it was *able to*, and of 'population-centric' COIN when it *had to*. Pre-emptive COIN measures comparable to a population-centric approach (such as the introduction of incentives to make the Roman reality attractive to local populations) were frequent, but they mostly occurred in times of peace. Once the insurgency erupted, a strong emphasis was placed on the resort to retaliatory enemy-centric COIN measures, even when the Roman army was in a difficult position. A priority was especially put on the thwarting of the revolts through a decisive, conventional battle, and the resort to indiscriminate violence to eliminate or deter the insurgencies' support base. This Roman comprehensive 'carrot-and-stick' approach to COIN can be well described by Virgil's words, who summarizes the Augustan *Pax Romana* as "to spare humbled foe, and crush to earth the proud" (Verg.*Aen.*6.853). These findings turn on their head the contemporary insight that population-centric COIN is both preferred from the perspective of political will (having to) and capacity (ability).

The analysis will be conducted through the development of a framework, the 'Malaya-Vietnam Spectrum', including three modern COIN criteria applied to three cases through concept testing. Drawing on Tacitus' *Annals* and *Agricola*, Cassius Dio's *Roman History* as well as other ancient sources, the framework will be applied to three relevant case studies of insurgency taking place in the Early Roman Empire: Arminius' insurgency in 9, Tacfarinas' insurgency in 17-24, and Boudica's insurgency in 60-61 (all dates are AD unless specified otherwise). The

goal of the study is not to assess whether these events qualify as 'insurgencies', as other authors have already accepted them as so (Cherry 2020; Sheldon 2020b; Wintjes 2020). An insurgency is defined as an armed rebellion that 1) has an attractive cause 2) an important support base 3) a strong leadership 4) an organizational sanctuary 5) a sound military strategy 6) secures some external support 7) is faced by a capable counterinsurgent 8) and includes substantial asymmetry (Jordán 2020).

1. <u>Literature Review</u>

To ensure an effective analysis and avoid confusion between modern concepts and ancient cases, the literature is divided into three parts. First, the academic material on enemy-centric and population-centric COIN will be reviewed, since they are central topics to the study. Second, the review will focus on how warfare was waged in the Early Roman Empire, to contextualize the actors' military capabilities and their influence on COIN methods. Third, it will dissect what has been written on Roman insurgency and COIN, to show the relevance of this study.

<u>1.A. Population-Centric and Enemy-Centric Counterinsurgency</u>

Two main approaches to COIN have dominated both scholarship and practice. The 'enemy-centric' approach prioritizes military means to defeat insurgent groups, while the 'population-centric' approach focuses on winning the support and cooperation of the local population. Most counterinsurgency strategies incorporate elements of both methods but tend to lean more towards one. Although nuances will be noted in the case examination, this distinction is central to assessing COIN practices in the Early Roman Empire.

The enemy-centric COIN, also known as the 'guerrilla-centric' or 'force-based' approach, closely ties the use of military force targeting insurgents to the success of a COIN campaign (Hazelton 2017). This strategy often employs aggressive offensive operations to apprehend or eliminate insurgents, disrupt their networks, and diminish their power. While it does not completely neglect the population, its main focus is on eliminating the enemy through kinetic means. Several authors have emphasized the resort to brutality as a primary or most effective means to defeat an insurgency (French 2011; Porch 2013). Roger Trinquier, for example, a French officer associated with torture methods during the Algerian War, defends the use of harsh coercive and counterterror methods, defining force as a foundational pillar to COIN

success (Trinquier 1961). Similarly, Luttwak points out that successful counterinsurgents have effectively used collective punishment and retaliatory killings as deterrent factors, asserting that "[a] massacre once in a while remained an effective warning for decades" (Luttwak 2007, p.40). An emphasis has also been put on counterinsurgent governments attempting to assassinate the charismatic leaders of an insurgency to thwart the motivation of the masses and decapitate an insurgency (Bob&Nepstad 2007). Other scholars have examined COIN approaches in relation to regime type and policies, with some arguing that force has proven more effective than reforms in beating insurgencies, and others that democracies struggle with COIN (Birtle 2007; Merom 2003). In sum, the enemy-centric approach advances, in the words of retired US army officer Ralph Peters, that "insurgencies overwhelmingly have been put down thoroughly by killing insurgents" (Peters 2007, p.34).

The American experience in the Vietnam War (1955-1975) is often cited by COIN scholars as a textbook example of the enemy-centric approach (Nagl 2002; Thompson 1966). During the conflict, the United States faced a communist insurgency led by the adaptive and resilient Viet Cong, who drew support from local populations and used the difficult terrain to conduct guerrilla tactics. In response, the United States heavily focused on targeting the insurgents' military capabilities and leadership through large-scale operations, massive aerial bombardment, and efforts to disrupt communication lines (Nagl 2002). Despite significant military and technological superiority, the U.S. struggled against the Viet Cong's extensive knowledge of the terrain and their ability to blend in with civilians. The American enemy-centric COIN approach often caused alienation and resentment among the local population, fueling the insurgency's support and ultimately leading to the U.S. withdrawal.

A variant of the enemy-centric approach that slightly differs from it was developed by Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf in the 1960s. Defined as the 'cost-benefit', or alternatively, the 'carrot-and-stick' approach, it advances a COIN strategy emphasizing the rewarding of cooperating civilians, and the punishment of hostile and even passive ones (Leites&Wolf 1970). This reward-punishment system would in turn prevent the insurgents from obtaining resources. Although centered on the local population, this method is arguably closest to the enemy-centric approach, as it is based on the use of threat and coercive measures, and aims in no way in responding to the majority's grievances.

Based on the material on enemy-centric COIN, three criteria dominating the literature are established, namely:

1) *The focus on conventional military force as a primary tool*

2) *The direct targeting of the insurgent leadership*

3) *The use of indiscriminate coercive measures*.

The other main COIN method central to this study is the 'population-centric' approach (also referred to as the 'hearts-and-minds' approach), which defines COIN success based on the degree of support and cooperation of the local population (Hazelton 2017). By winning the allegiance of civilians, the insurgents will be deprived of their base of support. Thus, this approach emphasizes protecting the population, responding to grievances (essential services, development initiatives, infrastructure) and promoting legitimate governance to address the root causes of the insurgency, sometimes through structural measures or cooptation. This view also accepts a degree of military intervention, but only when triggered by the insurgents or when threatening the local population.

The British experience in Malaya is often cited as a textbook example of the population-centric approach to COIN. In the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), the British faced a communist insurgency led by the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), which operated primarily in rural areas, using guerrilla tactics to undermine British control and gain support among the local population. Instead of simply targeting the insurgents militarily, the British sought to address the underlying grievances bringing support to the insurgency, like poverty and dispossession by implementing land reforms, social welfare and development programs (Nagl 2002). This population-centric approach helped to isolate the insurgents and hindered their capacity to recruit and carry out successful operations, which ultimately led to their defeat.

The population-centric approach was initially advanced at the time of post-World War Two anticolonial insurgencies by military men such as Robert Galula and Robert Thompson. Galula, a French officer drawing from his experience in the Algerian War, asserted that "every military move has to be weighed with regard to its political effects, and vice versa" (Galula 2006, p.5). Similarly, Thompson, a British officer having served in Malaya and Vietnam, highlights the need for counterinsurgents to clearly understand the enemy and be flexible in their tactics, as well as the benefits of protection and cooperation of civilians with the military (Thompson 1966).

John Nagl, in his work *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, revisits Thompson's insights in a modern context, linking them to the American COIN experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan to emphasize the importance of learning from past conflicts (Nagl 2002). Nagl argues that, unlike the British army, considered a learning institution, the US military has historically resisted change, focusing on mass destruction, technology, and following its 'unique moral mission', which contributed to its failure in Vietnam (Nagl 2002). However, in 2006, the US Army published its Field Manual *Counterinsurgency*, heavily influenced by Nagl's work. This manual advocates for a population-centric COIN approach, emphasizing the protection and winning of hearts and minds, and the importance of legitimacy in COIN operations (Petraeus et al. 2006). General David Petraeus, one of its authors and commander in Iraq, assures that "soldiers and marines are expected to be nation builders as well as warriors", that successful COIN is "armed social work" (Petraeus *et al*, p.xlvi, 299), and that overly emphasizing coercive measures creates more enemies than it eliminates (Hazelton 2017). *Counterinsurgency* was updated in 2018, continuing to stress these directives (Petraeus et al. 2018). Other authors have also highlighted the effectiveness of cooptation in population-centric COIN, which involves integrating influential local figures and groups into the governing structure to reduce support for insurgents and promote stability (Ferwerda&Miller 2014).

Based on the material on population-centric COIN, three criteria dominating the literature are established, namely:

1) *The need to have a flexible strategy*

2) *The prioritization of building a legitimate government and offering opportunities to local rulers*

3) *The focus on winning the support and cooperation of locals through the addressment of grievances*.

Despite the popularity of the population-centric approach, several scholars have criticized its use both in theory and in practice. Sarah Sewall, while acknowledging that civilian support is important, argues that a 'hearts and minds' approach is not sufficient against insurgents that "invert the laws of war" by using tactics such as suicide attacks (Sewall 2006, p.104). Some scholars have also advanced that there is a gap between the prescription and the application of the population-centric COIN. Some of them have criticized the emphasis on 'hearts and minds' in Malaya as they argued the British COIN campaign remained highly violent (Bennett 2009;

Dixon 2009). Hazelton suggests that while the population-centric approach is acknowledged, COIN success ultimately relies on the use of coercive force (Hazelton 2017). She posits that COIN outcomes are more a result of violent state-building processes, where competing coopted elites prioritize control over public interests. Hazelton's argument is relevant to this study as it shows that, whatever the time period, while a COIN model may dominate the minds in theory, it is not necessarily the one that dominates in practice.

The 'population-centric' COIN literature, developed in the context of decolonization, raises questions about its applicability to other historical periods. Stereotypes about the Roman Empire's military capabilities and use of force abound. This study aims to unpack its COIN methods, necessitating a review of Roman warfare first.

1.B. Roman Warfare

This study employs modern concepts to analyze ancient settings where they had not yet been conceptualized, making it crucial to recontextualize Roman warfare. Both everyday and academic perspectives generally agree on the high military capability of the Roman state, often seen as the key to its success (Goldsworthy 1996). During the early imperial period (27 BC – 284 AD), Roman warfare underwent significant changes. This part of the literature review explores various aspects of the Roman army during this time, including organization, strategies, tactics, logistics, and culture.

Let us start with the organization and structure of the Roman army. Most scholars of the Roman period have highlighted the importance of Augustus' military reforms following his ascendancy to power in 27 BC, marking the beginning of the Principate (Cartwright 2013; Cornell 1993; Keppie 1998; Webster 1998). While in the Republic, declarations of war were in the hands of the Senate, from Augustus onwards it was retained by the emperor alone. After the tumultuous civil war that brought him to power, Augustus faced the risk of soldiers defecting to rival commanders, prompting him to transition the army to a peacetime footing (Webster, 1998). He established the first fully professional army with centralized command, retaining 28 legions out of 60, and appointing loyal governors to prevent subversion (Cartwright, 2013). Additionally, in 6, he created a military treasury funded by taxes, ensuring legionary retirement benefits (Webster, 1998). While some scholars credit Augustus with creating the first professionalized army (Cartwright, 2013), others argue that he simply formalized practices from the highly militarized Late Republic (Goldsworthy, 1996).

With the Augustan reforms, the status and use of the auxilia (local aids) significantly increased within the Roman army. Since the Republican era, Roman authorities had adopted an inclusive approach to conquest, relying on allies and conquered peoples for the functioning of the state (Cartwright 2013; Haynes 2013; Webster 1998). Scholars have long examined the auxilia as a distinct unit rather than merely part of a monolithic Roman army (von Domaszewski 1895; Speidel 1989). Modern scholars agree that the Roman Empire's eagerness to incorporate diverse peoples was driven by its dependency on their resources. During the Pax Romana, most of the state's income came from taxes levied in the provinces (Haynes 2013).

Between the reign of Augustus and the Severan Dynasty, it is estimated that over 2 million men enrolled in the auxilia. Although not Roman citizens, these recruits were assigned to cavalry or infantry units based on their skills and were commanded by their chiefs or educated auxilia. The auxilia identity is crucial to this study, as the system was integral to the COIN strategy during the Principate. Notably, two insurgency leaders, Arminius and Tacfarinas, were former auxilia. These ambivalent figures were particularly dangerous for Roman stability in the provinces, as they could navigate both Roman and indigenous ranks (Haynes 2013).

Regarding tactics, scholars have highlighted the Roman traditional offensive doctrine, preferring aggressive, full-frontal attacks led by their heavy infantry and cavalry. In this context, Goldsworthy highlights the crucial importance of morale on the battlefield, in which displays of superiority and the appearance of force were more important than physical strength (Goldsworthy 1996). In the Early Empire, war was usually fought on a smaller scale than in the preceding century, but its adversaries' armies, mostly drawn from free adult males, were not full-time soldiers, lacked a well-structured command structure and were thus difficult to control. The Roman army, a permanent force capable of supplying itself for long campaigns, had thus a substantial advantage over neighboring tribes.

In terms of military culture, the Roman army was characterized by a strong sense of discipline, often credited with their numerous victories (Cartwright 2013; Keppie 1998; Webster 1998). This discipline was maintained through a system of rewards for bravery and punishments for cowardice or mutiny. However, contemporary scholars argue that the discipline of Roman soldiers was not as rigid as previously thought. Goldsworthy suggests that while discipline was important, Roman military success relied on a combination of factors including high morale, the appearance of strength, flexibility, and offensive tactics (Goldsworthy 1996).

During the Republican era, the Roman state had grown inexorably as a result of centuries of successful war. During the reign of Augustus, it stretched from the Germanic frontiers in the north to the Mediterranean shores in the south, encompassing territories from Hispania (Spain) to Mesopotamia. As the empire expanded, the Roman state developed the use of warehouses and winter camps, with permanent forces being increasingly stationed along the frontiers of the provinces (Webster 1998).

From the reign of Augustus, the defense of borders became a priority: the military reorganization implemented during his rule was closely related to the concept of *Pax Romana* and the strategy of 'defensive expansion' (Cornell 1993). This concept was defended by ancient authors, with Suetonius assuring that "Augustus never wantonly invaded any country, and felt no temptation to increase the boundaries of the empire or enhance his military glory" (Suet.*Aug.*21). The notion that Augustus was a careful and wise politician whose only concern was defending the empire has since been contested by modern historians highlighting his will to control the movement of goods and peoples (Cornell 1993; Webster 1998; Wells 1972). This distinction is important as the two situations present different implications to assess the COIN methods of the Roman state.

However, it is still true that the frenetic expansion that had dominated the Republic slowed down after Augustus' death in 14. Tiberius inherited his system, which he further consolidated, and the borders stayed roughly the same throughout the Early Empire, with the exception of the conquests of Britain, Dacia and Mesopotamia (Cornell 1993). Luttwak argues that expansion of the Empire ended when the Roman army encountered peoples they were unable to defeat militarily because of their use of guerrilla tactics (Luttwak 1976). This argument is contested by Goldsworthy, who asserts that the army was able to adapt to low-intensity warfare, using methods such as raids and ambushes (Goldsworthy 1996). In doing so, Goldsworthy highlights the flexibility of the Roman army, showing it was able to successfully fight different types of conflicts against different opponents. The argument of an army's flexibility is relevant to this study because it can be paralleled to Nagl's modern point on COIN success, namely that it depends on an army's capacity for learning and adaptation (Nagl 2002).

Despite this deceleration in conquest during the *Pax Romana* and the will of the Roman state to control its conquered territories with an iron hand, several insurgencies developed throughout the provinces in the Early Empire.

1.C. Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the Roman Empire

Some authors have tried to mitigate the lack of research on ancient insurgencies by trying to explain the reasons behind them as well as the nature of COIN methods in ancient Rome (Davies 2020; Dyson 1971; Isaac 2000; Mattern 2019; Sheldon 2020a; Wintjes 2020).

First, insurgencies in Roman provinces emerged as a result of harsh occupation policies, 'nativist' sentiment and state-sponsored terror. Some research emphasizes that the transformation of local societies immediately following conquest generated high probabilities of rebellion (Dyson 1971; Isaac 2000). Roman writers have highlighted ideals of liberty, the menace to ancestral traditions, and the corruption of the Roman administration when explaining reasons for insurgencies among newly conquered peoples (Mattern 2019). However, insurgencies could also materialize in provinces long incorporated into the Roman empire: frontiers were zones of permanent or long-term instabilities, with local ruling classes frequently switching loyalty networks (Mattern 2019; Sheldon 2020b).

Rather than explaining the reasons behind the emergence of insurgencies in the Early Roman Empire, other authors have attempted to explain how the Roman state responded to them.

Either as a trigger or retaliation for insurgency in the provinces, many of them highlight the Roman state-sponsored politics of terror, underlining the "resor[t] to drastic measures including the total physical annihilation of the enemy [which] was more of a standard operating procedure than the result of exceptional circumstance" (Wintjes 2020, p.1110; Davies 2020; Lacey 2012; Sheldon 2020a). Terror practices, described by some scholars as the 'nuclear option', included methods such as the wiping out of towns, outright genocide, mutilations or mass displacement, used as deterring factors and coercive tools (Davies 2020; Wintjes 2020). The Roman conception of the world where the *Orbis Terrarum* ('The Whole World') belonged to them, imperial expansion as well as the psychological strategy of terror and intimidation associated with it was understood as predetermined by the gods (Simón 2016).

Other scholars emphasize that Roman behavior cannot simply be understood in statist terms and that the military aspect and the politics of terror around Roman COIN were only the "tip of the iceberg" (Mattern 2019, p.178; Brice 2016; Russell 2016; Turner 2016; Woolf 2011). For them, terror was not the Roman empire's preferred response to insurgency and even when it occurred, there were various complexities in play. Moreover, other works advance that some Roman practices in the provinces can be parallelled to the modern 'hearts and minds' doctrine,

namely a population-centric COIN strategy (Haynes 2013; Russell 2016; Wintjes 2020). While some scholars consider that these policies only applied to elites of the provinces (Wintjes 2020), others emphasize policies of tolerance, incorporation and urban planning that impacted greatly the majority (Haynes 2013; Russell 2016). The cooptation of potentially lethal adversaries was also profoundly important to the Empire through which the Roman state progressively constructed networks of close-knit patron-clients relationships, delegating Roman central power to provincial elites to ensure control on conquered territories (Haynes 2013; Mattern 2019; Turner 2016; Woolf 2011). These connections based on loyalty ensured a form of pre-emptive COIN, an element further similar to the modern 'population-centric' concept.

The concept of auxilia is inscribed in these patron-client relationships contributing to stability in the provinces. Given the relative scarcity of nativist rebellions cited in primary sources compared to the enormous number of men joining the auxilia, the question is obviously what the incentives were for this. One reason, as explained above, was the resort to terror; but this does not explain why not more revolts took place. Another one is cooptation: during the reign of Augustus, an auxilia infantryman earned almost as much as a legionary (Haynes 2013). Lastly, a range of culturally specific dynamics put forward by the Roman Empire minimized the risk of uprising (Haynes 2013). The granting of citizenship after 30 years of service, a reform fully developed under Claudius' rule, was arguably central to Roman 'population-centric' COIN. Enrollment in the army was an important means for upward social mobility for the individual auxilia but also for his family, as his children became Roman citizens at an earlier stage and could thus aim for the prestigious equestrian order (Patterson 1993). While the future of the Roman Empire thrived, auxilia and their provinces became increasingly absorbed into the state, but they stayed "both classic products and vital instruments of the Empire's ongoing capacity to incorporate the diverse into the whole" (Haynes 2013, p.5).

This discussion underscores the multifaceted nature of Roman COIN strategies, challenging the prevailing notion that Roman COIN was solely reliant on terror and violence. While harsh policies and state-sponsored terror were significant factors in instigating insurgencies, Roman responses were multifaceted. Scholarly literature reveals a blend of coercive measures and efforts to win over the population, including patron-client relationships and integrating local elites into governance. Additionally, the use of auxilia, granting citizenship, and urban planning hint at a nuanced approach balancing punishment with incentives for loyalty. These arguments are crucial to this study, as it will try to assess the nature of both population-centric and enemy-centric methods as well as their frequency in Roman COIN approaches.

2. Research design and methodology

To assess the COIN practices of the Roman Empire, a framework called the 'Malaya-Vietnam Spectrum' is developed by drawing on Thompson's and Nagl's illustrations of textbook cases of population-centric and enemy-centric COIN.

Methodology: 'Malaya-Vietnam Spectrum' and Concept Testing

In this study, Thompson's and Nagl's opposition is used to develop the 'Malaya-Vietnam Spectrum', which assesses whether a COIN campaign is more population-centric or enemy-centric (See Spectrum). To evaluate this in the context of the insurgencies and COIN of the Roman Empire, the study uses the six criteria elaborated from the modern COIN literature by which to assess the case material of the Roman Empire presented below. Three criteria apply to the enemy-centric approach, and three to the population-centric approach. Each of them contradict, which allows to assess a single case through two opposing lenses (see Table 1).

To assess the Roman Empire's COIN methods, concept testing is used through the provided criteria. Key case studies of insurgency will be analyzed by focusing on Roman COIN methods. Then, each pair of criteria will be applied to assess the nature of the COIN approach, namely leaning more towards enemy-centric or population-centric. A cross-case analysis is then provided, which looks at the outcomes of each COIN campaign, how they differ from each other, and what is their relevance to identify a predominant Roman approach to COIN.

Table 1: Enemy-Centric and Population-Centric Opposing Criteria

	Enemy-Centric	**Population-Centric**
1.	*Conventional Warfare:* Focus on conventional military force as a primary tool	*Flexibility:* Need to have a flexible strategy
2.	*Direct targeting:* Direct targeting of the insurgent leadership	*Legitimacy:* Prioritization of building a legitimate government and offering opportunities to local rulers
3.	*Coerciveness:* Use of indiscriminate coercive measures	*Local Support:* Focus on winning the support and cooperation of locals through the addressment of grievances

The Malaya-Vietnam Spectrum

Vietnam-style COIN (Enemy-Centric)   Malaya-style COIN (Population-Centric)

Vietnam   Malaya
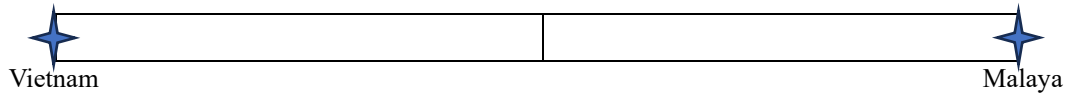
Selection of Case Studies

This study is limited to the provinces of the early Roman Empire, a period in which 120 separate instances of rebellions were documented, which adopted irregular tactics in a situation of asymmetry of power such as ambushes, hit-and-run, terror, desertion, assassination, propaganda or attacks on logistical networks (Mattern 2019; Turner 2016).

For this, three case studies of insurgencies were selected: Arminius' Revolt in 9-17, Tacfarinas' Revolt in 17-24, and Boudica's Revolt in 60-61. Other than their geographical diversity, the reasons behind the choice of these cases are several. This study chose to include cases which retain several factors of distinction.

First, the nature of the insurgent leadership and motivations. Three of these cases include leaders that were former Roman auxiliaries (Arminius and Tacfarinas) and can thus be linked to the degree of efficiency of the state's governance. The other (Boudica) can be characterized as a local chieftain from which the cause of the insurgency resonated among the local population. The motivations of the insurgencies also vary, ranging from socioeconomic grievances, resistance to Roman policies, and desires for independence.

Second, a diversity in the methods of the insurgents and counterinsurgents, including high intensity warfare such as frontal attacks as well as low intensity warfare such as ambushes, hit-and-run operations and protracted warfare.

Third, a varied, centralized and capable Roman leadership. The insurgencies took place within a relatively short time (52 years), and three different emperors ruled during this period (Augustus, Tiberius, and Nero). A choice was made not to include insurgencies that took place during the unstable Year of the Four Emperors (68-69), such as the Great Jewish Revolt (66-74) or the Batavian Revolt (69-70), as the Roman state's power was fragmented, which greatly affected its capability to respond. Other revolts that could well be characterized as insurgencies, like the Pannonian Revolt of 6-9, were chosen not to be included in the study for reasons of space and availability of sources.

Data and sources

This study mainly relies on the primary sources of contemporary or near-contemporary Roman historians who offer contextualized insights on the conflicts of their time. The widely cited Tacitus, who vividly wrote about all the insurgencies analyzed in this study in his *Annals* and *Agricola*, is a central component to the research. His writings are especially interesting as Tacitus' style is characterized by its critical tone, often displaying a bias against the moral excesses of Roman imperial leadership. Cassius Dio, who wrote his *Roman History* in the 3rd century, also offers a detailed and comprehensive account of Arminius' and Boudica's insurgencies. His style is often marked by his bias favoring the senatorial perspective and his tendency to moralize on the decline of Roman virtue. Suetonius' *The Twelve Caesars*, Velleius Paterculus' *The Roman History* and Florus' *Epitome of Roman History* also provide informative material, used to complete Tacitus' and Dio's accounts. Rich narrative descriptions and detailed accounts of the revolts, including important battles, military strategies, political intrigue, and social dynamics, are provided by these primary sources. Although these writers were biased by personal and structural dynamics, their writings provide a wealth of information that can provide a deep understanding of each revolt. In some instances, some interpretations by modern historians are also provided to provide additional information and balance the lack of material.

Limitations

There are a set of limitations to this study. The main one is the application of modern concepts, such as insurgency and COIN, to ancient settings. In the contemporary period, marked by the emergence of the modern state system following the Peace of Westphalia, the prevalence of the nation-state paradigm, and the diversity of war-related concepts, there exists a notable peril of anachronistic interpretations and hasty comparisons when analyzing historical occurrences (Wintjes 2020). However, as advanced by Jordán in the context of the Great Jewish Revolt, the objective is not to "equat[e] Jewish religious radicals of the Roman era with 21st-century jihadists" (Jordán 2020,p. 1058), but rather to identify recurring themes in modern insurgency theory that enable the comprehension of case studies from classical antiquity. While some scholars dismiss the study of ancient insurgencies as anachronistic due to the changing nature of war, others highlight its value in demonstrating the historical continuity of violent conflicts (Brice 2016; Jordán 2020; Sheldon 2020a). This study wishes to be included in this last stance.

A second limitation linked to anachronism is the divergence of interpretation of primary sources. While the Latin term "insurgere" (to rise up, be rebellious) dates back to the Augustan

era, its meaning differs from our contemporary understanding, which is heavily influenced by modern norms (Brice, 2016). Scholars often highlight the blurred distinction between 'insurgency' and 'banditry' in ancient texts, making it challenging to differentiate between them (Mattern, 2019; Sheldon, 2020a; Woolf, 2011). In modern contexts, bandits are often motivated by greed, whereas insurgency is seen as primarily political. However, ancient Roman sources sometimes use the term 'bandit' to discredit rebels, as we will see in Tacfarinas' case, reflecting a trend still observed in contemporary politics (Grunewald, 2004; Woolf, 2011). Yet, armed groups could also be mere bandits seeking material gain, a common occurrence in the decentralized regions of the Roman Empire. Consequently, discerning between brigands as criminals or political insurgents remains challenging, questioning how the ancient world perceived terms which carry normative connotations in modern times. Moreover, ancient accounts, compared to the huge flow of scholarly material created by our contemporary academic world, are only available to us in a relatively scarce amount (Brunt 1965). The scholar of antiquity always wishes for more material to gain better insights on ancient societies; however, it is also the scarcity of sources that makes them so valuable. Thus, in this study, it is acknowledged when the low number of sources available on the subject limits the findings.

A last limitation of this study is generated by the simplicity of its framework. While the enemy-centric and population-centric approaches are indeed useful to assess COIN methods, they are by no means the only ones to do so. The issues at stake are usually more complex than being either one or the other method: COIN campaigns usually include elements of both. Given the length of this study, the objective of its research design is also to find a middle ground between simplicity and efficiency, and with the Malaya-Vietnam Spectrum, to acknowledge the nuances of each COIN campaign in comparison to the others.

3. <u>Argument: Case Studies and the Application of the Criteria</u>

In this section, a summary of each insurgency is provided before applying the set of criteria to relevant passages of their accounts.

3.A. Arminius' Insurgency (9-17 AD)

In 12 BC, Augustus entrusted his stepsons Drusus then Tiberius to cross the Rhine and conquer Germania. Drusus defeated tribes like the Sugambri and the Chatti and allied with others like the Batavians and the Frisians (Dio.*Rom.Hist.*54.32-33). According to Velleius, in the early 1st

Century, "nothing remained to be conquered in Germany except the (…) Marcomanni" (Vell.*Rom.Hist.*108). However, Roman control was weaker than expected, and permanent subjugation had not yet begun (Lacey 2012). The Cherusci, a tribe of today's northwestern Germany, was incorporated in Rome's new province. Their chief, Arminius, a Roman citizen serving in the Roman army's auxilia, became a trusted advisor to Varus, governor of Germania (Vell.*Rom.Hist.*2.118). Varus, known for his harsh taxation policies, treated the Germans "as if they were actually slaves of the Romans [or] subject nations" (Dio.*Rom.Hist.*56.18). By the summer of 9, Arminius secretly promoted rebellion among the Germans. Segestes, a rival to Arminius, revealed the projected uprising, but Varus ignored his warning and was driven into deep Cherusci territory.

Arminius used the pretext of gathering allies to leave the Roman contingent and prepare an ambush in the Teutoburg Forest. Varus' legions, unprepared for battle and facing harsh conditions, were ambushed and decimated by Arminius' forces over four days (Dio.*Rom.Hist* 56.20-21). Varus committed suicide, and most Roman strongholds were overtaken. This event, which is described by Roman historians as the *clades variana* (Varian disaster), deeply impacted Augustus, who sometimes "dash[ed] his head against a door, crying: 'Quintilius Varus, give me back my legions!'" (Suet.*Aug.*23). The *Princeps*, fearing a Germanic invasion, consolidated the frontier along the Rhine (Dio.*Rom.Hist.*56.25), and advised his successor Tiberius not to expand in Germania. However, Roman incursions continued to avenge the humiliation and deter rebellion (Tac.*Ann.*2.10). Between 14 and 16, Germanicus invaded Germania, winning battles at Pontes Longi, Idistaviso, and Angrivarian Wall, but failed to decisively defeat Arminius, highlighting his leadership and guerrilla tactics. The Roman army eventually withdrew, deeming the conquest too costly (McNally & Dennis, 2011). Arminius later defeated the Roman client King of the Marcomanni Maroboduus, but was assassinated in 21 (Tac. Ann. 2.88). Praised by Tacitus as "the liberator of Germany" (Tac.*Ann.*2.88), he effectively repelled Roman invasions in Germania, which continued in the following decades but in a very limited way.

Criterion 1: Conventional Warfare or Flexibility?

After facing Arminius several times, Germanicus is depicted by Tacitus as reflecting on the strategy to adopt. Although the Roman commander recognized that his forces were affected by the harsh climate and their ignorance of the terrain, he was still very confident about the effectiveness of conventional warfare, asserting that "in a set engagement and on a fair field,

the Germans (…) were beaten" (Tac.*Ann*.2.5). As shown by the battles of Pontes Longi, Idistaviso and Angrivarian Wall, Germanicus indeed succeeded at beating militarily Arminius every time they faced each other in a frontal, conventional battle. In these occasions, the disciplined Roman legionaries succeeded in routing the less equipped and trained Germans, regardless of their number (Tac.*Ann*.2.17).

Arminius was conscious of this asymmetry and knew how to exploit irregular warfare: the Germanic forces inflicted the highest damage to the Roman army when ambushing, harassing them or forcing them on difficult terrain like during the Varian disaster (Tac.*Ann*.1.63-68). It was only when the Germans were forced to face Rome in the open that a tactical defeat was inevitable: before the Battle of Pontes Longi in 15, Arminius still advocated for protracted guerrilla warfare, but was obligated to accept when other Germanic chiefs, confident in their numerous troops, pressed for a conventional battle (Tac.*Ann*.1.68). It was from this switch to conventional warfare that the Germans suffered important losses in several battles, including an important tactical setback at Idistaviso in 16 where they "were slaughtered from the fifth hour of daylight to nightfall" (Tac.*Ann*.2.16).

In terms of strategy or tactics, the Roman showed little if no flexibility, which constantly exposed them to Germanic guerrilla operations; arguably, it is this rigidity that made the conflict a protracted one and eventually forced them to withdraw. However, it is also possible that, as August had advised, the Empire was not interested in conquering Germania anymore, and only acted in reprisal for the Varian disaster.

Criterion 2: Direct Targeting or Legitimacy?

Following Maroboduus' overthrow by Arminius in 17, Adgandestrius, a Chatti chief, offered to poison Arminius to Roman benefit. This proposition was rejected by Tiberius who asserted that "it was not by treason nor in the dark but openly and in arms that the Roman people took vengeance on their foes" (Tac.*Ann*.2.88). Tiberius did not refuse to directly target the Cherusci chief for greater legitimacy; rather, his act furthermore emphasizes the highly militarized and disciplined culture of the Roman Empire, where conventional warfare, the primary aspect of enemy-centric COIN, was always the preferred option. However, the abduction of Arminius' wife and son in 15 following Germanicus' incursion can be seen as a form of direct psychological targeting, to force the Cherusci leader into surrender. Indeed, Arminius "was

driven frantic by the seizure of his wife and the subjugation to slavery of her unborn child" (Tac.*Ann*.1.59).

In terms of opportunities for local Germanic leaders, the Empire engaged in alliances with some client states, like with King Maroboduus of the Marcomanni in 6, which can be seen as a more legitimate form of government than Roman rule. However, this was primarily a strategic move to neutralize a potential threat and balance Arminius' power. Moreover, the Roman state refused to assist Maroboduus when he was overthrown by Arminius in 17.

In Germania like in other provinces, opportunities for local rulers were limited to cooptation, through new material benefits in the auxilia, and especially Roman citizenship. This created new structural incentives, which gave access to a new socioeconomic system and increased the legitimacy of the Roman government. Arminius' brother Flavus, an auxilia nobleman who lost an eye in Tiberius' ranks, was rewarded for his service with an "increased pay, the chain, the crown, and other military decorations", leading him to praise Roman glory (Tac.*Ann*.2.9). Arminius, paradoxically, also gained the ability to conduct the insurgency as a result of cooptation, which enabled him to learn of Roman tactics and values and gain Varus' trust, crucial elements of the operation. His figure shows the limits of the auxilia in the functioning of the disciplined Roman army.

Anyhow, after the Varian disaster, Roman authorities were arguably not interested in structural adjustments: after this huge humiliation, they did not need legitimacy, even among local leaders, to start a punitive operation.

Criterion 3: Coerciveness or Local Support?

After conquest in Germania, Florus tells us that "there was such peace in Germany that the inhabitants seemed changed, the face of the country transformed, and the very climate milder and softer than it used to be" (Flor.*Epit*.2.10), but this assumption is vague and probably biased. We also learn that Varus was known for his ruthlessness concerning both insurgencies and taxation: he apparently crucified some rebels and resorted to embezzlement during his mandate in Syria, where he "entered the rich province a poor man, but left it a rich man and the province poor" (McNally&Dennis 2011; Vell.*Rom.Hist*.2.117). In Germania, he was described as a corrupt and cruel man attempting to abruptly impose the Roman legal system, which pushed local populations to revolt under Arminius "as soon as they saw the toga and experienced laws more cruel than arms" (Flor.*Epit*.2.10).

While harsh depictions of the governor can be parallelled with the violence of modern enemy-centric COIN, it is also rooted in some Roman historians' will to find a scapegoat for the Varian disaster. Modern historians rather assert that Varus was a skilled administrator who was assigned to Germania for his political shrewdness, with Augustus personally entrusting him in addressing the Germanic tribes' factionalism (McNally&Dennis 2011). Surrounding himself with local powerful figures like Arminius could have been part of this plan, which can be parallelled to a form of pre-emptive population-centric COIN. Varus trusted his Cherusci companion to the extent of categorically refusing Segestes' allegations of treason and letting Arminius leave to gather other troops, causing his downfall. Whether or not Varus' approach was a result of his carelessness, the episode illustrates the Roman inclusive approach to conquest and recalls the whole program of the auxilia and its implications.

The Roman 'carrot-and-stick approach' on war, with which it could efficiently fragment identities and peoples to gain the upper hand militarily, is mentioned on several occasions. Arminius' brother Flavus insists on "the heavy penalties for the vanquished [and] the mercy always waiting for him who submitted himself" (Tac*Ann*.2.10). Similarly, before battles, the Roman state gave a place in their ranks to the tribes accepting to fight the insurgency, like the Chauci, who also received the benefits of the auxilia (Tac.*Ann*.1.60).

However, once hostilities broke out and conquest or punitive operations were underway, a strong emphasis was placed on indiscriminate violence. The terminology of terror is very rich and puts no doubt on Roman intentions in Germania. Germanicus engaged in scorched-earth tactics, "devastat[ing] fields, burn[ing] houses" (Vell.*Rom.Hist*.2.120), slaughtering "all who suffered from the disabilities of age or sex" (Tac.*Ann*.1.56) and "raz[ing] indifferently to the ground (…) places sacred and profane" (Tac.*Ann*.1.51). Before the Battle of the Angrivarian Wall in 16, Germanicus also explicitly advocated for no mercy, asserting that "nothing but the extermination of the race would end the war" (Tac.*Ann*.2.21). As a result, the legions "satiated themselves with the enemies' blood till night" (Tac.*Ann*.2.21). This resort to enemy-centric terror measures gave the Romans an impression of ruthlessness and invincibility that presented an enormous deterring aspect for potentially rebellious neighboring peoples.

Nevertheless, Tacitus' account also shows the limits to these terror methods. After the battle of Idistaviso, the heavy German losses turned previously passive populations into eager fighters: as a result, "commons and nobles, youth and age", attacked yet again Roman lines, leading to another bloody battle (Tac.*Ann*.2.19). This highlights the limits of the enemy-centric approach

and how the force of despair can muster further insurgents rather than deterring them. It is arguably one of the reasons for which Rome was ultimately unable to defeat the Germans, as a province could not be governed solely through violence.

3.B. Tacfarinas' Insurgency (17-24 AD)

After the end of the Third Punic War won by Rome in 146 BC, Carthaginian territory had become the province of Africa Proconsularis. In the late 1ˢᵗ century BC, Rome progressed into Numidia, and Mauretania was established as a client kingdom. Around 17, Tacfarinas, a Numidian Berber from today's North-Eastern Algeria, deserted from the Roman auxiliary force and began gathering forces among the semi-nomadic Musulamii tribe to rebel against Roman occupation (Tac.*Ann*.2.52). Initially described by Tacitus as bands of vagabonds and thieves, the rebels grew into a powerful military body by allying with other neighboring tribes such as the Mauri and the Cinithians (Tac.*Ann*.2.52). Tacfarinas' exact personal motivations are unknown, but the Musulamii probably resisted against Roman policies of occupation that were intensified during Augustus' reign: Tacitus evokes grievances linked to land encroachment (Tac.*Ann*.3.73) and the values of Numidian freedom against Roman slavery (Tac.*Ann*.4.24). Some modern historians mention factors linked to Roman taxation and confiscation (Vanacker 2015), while others argue that the insurgency was triggered by the building of a Roman military road into Musulamii territory (Whittaker 1996). Tacfarinas, leveraging his knowledge of Roman tactics from his time in the auxilia, employed guerrilla warfare, significantly challenging the Romans. Around 21, the Numidian leader sent an embassy to Emperor Tiberius, demanding the return of confiscated lands or threatening inevitable war (Tac.*Ann*.3.73). Tiberius apparently felt highly insulted and intensified efforts in the region: in 24, Tacfarinas was killed in the Battle of Auzia by the forces of proconsul Dolabella with the assistance of the client King Ptolemy of Mauretania (Tac.*Ann*.4.25). Consequently, the entire Tunisian plateau was registered for taxation, became an important Roman centre of wheat cultivation, and semi-nomadic tribes were pushed into the mountains (Vanacker 2015). Tacitus is the sole extensive ancient source for this episode. While some scholars suggest he exaggerated the insurgency's importance to highlight Tiberius' incompetence (Shaw 1982), the substantial Roman military presence and triumphal processions after victories suggest otherwise (Vanacker, 2015).

Criterion 1: Conventional Warfare or Flexibility?

In Tacitus' writings, the terminology of the Roman discipline and organization dominate the accounts: in one of the first conventional clashes against Tacfarinas in 18, the army was organized with "the legion in the centre; the light cohorts and two squadrons of horse on the wings", in which proconsul Camillus' legions easily routed the Numidians (Tac.*Ann*.2.52). Despite the size and relative skill of his army, Tacfarinas, when forced to face the Romans in open battle, was always unable to overcome them. After each defeat, the Numidian leader returned to guerrilla warfare in the desert, "yielding ground when the enemy became pressing, and then returning to harass the rear" (Tac.*Ann*.3.21). For these reasons, the Romans were equally unable to decisively defeat him.

By 21, while proconsuls Camillus and Apronius had received triumphal honors for battles thought decisive, Tacfarinas was still gathering troops (Tac.*Ann*.4.23). Blaesus and Dolabella, the subsequent proconsuls, recognized the need to adapt Roman strategy to defeat the Numidian troops. Blaesus, reflecting on Tacfarinas' hit-and-run and ambushes, divided his army into three columns: one to block supply lines, another to occupy insurgent cities, and the third to fortify the main position (Tac.*Ann*.3.74). As a result, Tacfarinas was surrounded, and guerrilla tactics were rendered inefficient. Then, instead of withdrawing for the winter, Blaesus set up wintering quarters in neighbouring forts and incorporated guerrilla tactics into the army, by sending quick detachments of Moorish raiders to hunt Tacfarinas into the desert. Blaesus was thus able to harass Tacfarinas' troops, succeeding in capturing his brother and further pushing him into the desert. Similarly, proconsul Dolabella, inspired by the efficiency of Blaesus' efforts, extended this flexible strategy to his mandate. With a smaller force than his predecessors, Dolabella's COIN campaign led to the killing of Tacfarinas and the final defeat of the insurgents at the Battle of Auzia in 24.

While these COIN methods still related to an enemy-centric strategy as they fully relied on military means, Blaesus and Dolabella showed a high tactical flexibility. The final victory was a result of an ingenious capacity of adaptation to the territory and methods of the Numidian insurgency.

Criterion 2: Direct Targeting or Legitimacy?

Tacitus explicitly alludes on several occasions to a direct targeting of the insurgency's leadership. Blaesus succeeded in capturing Tacfarinas' brother; initially, the offended Tiberius

also demanded Tacfarinas be captured alive, likely to parade him in Rome during triumphal processions (Tac.*Ann*.3.73-4). Similarly, before the Battle of Auzia, Dolabella executed several Musulamii chiefs contemplating rebellion, and an emphasis was put on tracking down and killing Tacfarinas, as "there would be no rest from war till the arch-rebel was slain" (Tac.*Ann*.4.24-5). As it showed, targeting charismatic leaders would have weakened tribal support and effectively 'decapitated' the insurgency.

The insistence on direct targeting could also have been linked to Tacfarinas' identity. Tiberius allegedly felt highly insulted by the demands of a "deserter and bandit" wanting to be treated as equal, who he deemed inferior to the rebellious slave Spartacus (Tac.*Ann*.3.73). Tiberius' disdain is also interpreted by modern scholars as a clash between sedentary and nomadic communities, which could have made direct targeting less problematic (Coltelloni-Trannoy 1997).

Tacfarinas' identity is also linked to the aspect of legitimacy: the client kingdom of Ptolemy of Mauretania, on which Tacfarinas operated, was the one regarded as legitimate by the Romans. As some of Ptolemy's troops had defected to the insurgents and he was unable to suppress them on his own, he called for Roman support: in this sense, the Roman state had no problems of legitimacy in assisting an allied power, especially against a commoner and a traitor to the Roman cause. At the end of the war, relations were strengthened with Ptolemy, who was rewarded with triumphal honors, namely the ivory sceptre and the purple toga (Tac.*Ann*.4.26). This especially shows once again how local leaders, rather than being given real political opportunities, were being coopted, or rather corrupted, by Roman patrons. Sixteen years later, Caligula assassinated Ptolemy in Rome, allegedly out of jealousy over the Mauretanian King's triumphal purple cloak, and Mauretania was absorbed into the Empire (Suet.*Cal*.35). This act, reflecting Caligula's madness, also highlights the temporary and calculated alliances Roman emperors maintained with client kingdoms.

Criterion 3: Coerciveness or Local Support?

Tacfarinas' insurgency indeed emerged as a result of the harsh policies common to post-Augustan Roman occupation, with aggressive taxation, land expropriation and re-administration overseen by the legions (Vanacker 2015). The triumphal honors given to the proconsuls also implied great victories, thus a high level of violence and many losses among the insurgents. In the Battle of Auzia, Tacitus highlights the Roman soldiers' fatigue from

prolonged guerrilla warfare and their will to take "every man his fill of revenge and blood" and bring them "to slaughter or to captivity like cattle" (Tac.*Ann*.4.25).

Excluding the final phase, the Numidian insurgency was arguably the least violent COIN campaign in this study. The most violent episode occurred in 18, when Tacfarinas defeated a Roman cohort near the Pagyda River, leading to the abandonment and death of its commander, Decrius (Tac.*Ann*.3.20). In response, Proconsul Apronius implemented decimation, a rare measure where every tenth soldier in the dishonored cohort was flogged to death (Tac.Ann.3.20). This internal deterrence, linked to Roman military discipline, proved effective as Tacfarinas was soon routed by a small company of 500 veterans. Helvius Rufus, a legionary, was decorated for his bravery (Tac.*Ann*.3.21). This episode shows that terror, deterrence and carrot-and-stick methods could be used even within the Roman army, acting as a form of internal enemy-centric COIN.

In terms of Roman relations with the local population, although Tacfarinas' demand for negotiations are depicted as being violently rejected by Tiberius, the Emperor still issued an amnesty for those surrendering, while remaining ruthless with the others, emphasizing once again the Roman carrot-and-stick method (Tac.*Ann*.3.73).

However, once Tacfarinas was definitively defeated, the Roman authorities enacted pre-emptive population-centric COIN measures as part of their inclusive administration. Epigraphic evidence shows that the Musulamian people adopted Latin, integrated into Roman social organization, and joined the auxilia, reflecting a transformation in local socio-economic and cultural structures (Vanacker 2015). These measures reduced resistance to Roman rule, limiting further revolts and enabling North Africa to thrive as a center of agriculture and trade in the following decades. This shows how, in regions that they found attractive, the Roman state had the will to integrate local populations through pre-emptive population-centric measures in times of peace.

3.C. Boudica's Insurgency (60-61 AD)

Romans had been controlling parts of Britannia since Julius Caesar's invasion in 55 BC, but it was Claudius that enacted more substantial Roman occupation and administration from 43 with the establishment of garrisons, towns, infrastructure and taxation. Some revolts had taken place during that period, but they were rather localized and quickly suppressed by the authorities. Prasutagus, King of the Iceni people (today's Norfolk), had allied with Rome to avoid conquest.

In the late 50s AD, he thought to secure his succession by naming his two daughters and Emperor Nero as joint heirs. However, when Prasutagus died, his "kingdom was pillaged by centurions, his household by slaves; as though they had been prizes of war" (Tac.*Ann*.14.31). His wife Boudica was flogged and his daughters raped.

Meanwhile, tensions were already high throughout Britannia because of Roman brutal occupation. Governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus, an ambitious military man, was "anxious to [crush] a national enemy", and was already busy putting down a rebellion on the island of Anglesey around 60 (Tac.*Ann*.14.29-30). Meanwhile, Boudica, her honor tarnished and her estate lost, began to raise an insurgency among British people. Urging to refuse "an imported despotism to [their] ancestral mode of life", she vowed to fight from "inaccessible (…) swamps and mountains" (Dio.*Rom.Hist*.62.3-5). Tacitus paints a rather positive account of Boudica, portraying her as a "woman of the people" and even linking her gender to her leadership abilities (Tac.*Ann*.14.35).

In 60, Boudica led her insurgency from Camulodunum (Colchester) and successively razed Londinium (London) and Verulanium (St Albans), showing no mercy to Romans and their allies (Tac.*Ann*.14.32). Despite the enormous size of their army, the Britons were ultimately defeated by Paulinus in a decisive battle, and Boudica committed suicide by poison (Tac.*Ann*.14.39) or died of sickness (Dio.*Rom.Hist*.62.12). Excluding another substantial insurgency by the Brigantes during the Year of the Four Emperors, conquest continued in Britannia, which was gradually absorbed into the Empire.

<u>Criterion 1: Conventional Warfare or Flexibility?</u>

On the wider theater of operations, the Roman army produced little strategic or tactical flexibility in the COIN campaign against Boudica. However, on two specific occasions, Paulinus' decision-making and adaptability proved crucial to defeat the numerous Britons. According to Dio, Boudica rode a chariot at the head of an army of 230,000 (Dio.*Rom.Hist*.62.8); modern estimates rather set the balance at approximately 100,000 against 11,000 to 13,000 Romans (Webster 1999). First, the Roman commander decided to abandon Londinium to the insurgents due to the city's insufficient troop presence to serve as a viable base of operations (Tac.*Ann*.14.33). This allowed him to choose a favorable terrain to force the Britons into a conventional, frontal battle. Second, Paulinus separated his forces into three divisions to avoid being surrounded by Boudica's huge army.

In the battle that ensued, Dio opposes Briton military undiscipline to Roman organization, with the "barbarians much shouting" and Paulinus' legionaries proceeding "silently and in order" (Dio.*Rom.Hist*.62.12). While Dio and Tacitus give different perspectives on the difficulty faced by the Romans, both emphasize the battle's conventionality, with every section of the Roman army participating (light and heavy-armed, cavalry, archers, auxiliaries) and the legionaries advancing in the effective wedge formation (Dio.*Rom.Hist*.62.12; Tac.*Ann*.14.37). While Tacitus' account of 80,000 British casualties for 400 Romans is inaccurate, it is clear that Paulinus was able to gain the upper hand with a single, decisive conventional battle (Webster 1999).

Criterion 2: Direct Targeting or Legitimacy?

The flogging of Boudica and the raping of her daughters can be seen as a form of direct targeting by the Romans. By physically humiliating them, they ished to delegitimize them in the eyes of the population and communicate that indigenous succession lines were insignificant to them. Instead, that physical punishment was precisely the trigger for the insurgency to erupt. Other than this, there is no clear evidence showing that Boudica was deliberately targeted during the insurgency. Her suicide by poison or sickness could be interpreted as a Roman targeted assassination consciously overlooked by Roman historians, but this is mere speculation as there is no evidence for it.

In terms of legitimacy, there was no attempt by the Romans to establish a just government for the Iceni during or after the insurgency, as the rebels' violent operations alone justified a punitive COIN campaign. The neighboring client kingdom of the Brigantes led by Cartimandua could be seen as more legitimate than Roman rule, but again, the Romans sought to secure a strategic alliance to balance the power of the region to their benefit. Cartimandua is depicted as an immoral, cruel and corrupt queen waging war against her own people, namely the opposite of Boudica (Gillespie 2018). If she had joined forces with the Iceni queen, Paulinus would probably have been routed from Britain, but Cartimandua was loyal, and probably dependent on the Romans, as she had previously handed over the Silures rebel Caratacus to them in 50 (Gillespie 2018 ; Tac.*Ann*.12.36). Years later, after further turmoil in Brigantes' territory, the client kingdom was finally absorbed in the Roman province, in a dynamic that is now familiar to the reader.

Similarly, the Romans had client peoples in the cities razed by Boudica's insurgency: the Catuvellani of Verulamium, for example, were descendants of the Gauls and had a strong pro-Roman sentiment (Webster 1999). As a result, they received benefits and cooptation, which could have explained the no mercy policy of the insurgents in dealing with civilians. In its globality, this situation reflects the Roman strategies of 'carrot-and-stick' to divide communities and conquer new territories, which could lead to heightened tensions and the resort to enemy-centric COIN measures.

Criterion 3: Coerciveness or Local Support?

In the ancient sources, and especially Tacitus' account, there is a notable scarcity in Iceni territory of pre-emptive population-centric COIN measures that were common in Roman administration. In fact, evidence shows quite the opposite: almost all elements point at the coercive measures, intolerance and violence engendered by the dynamics of dominance. First, Roman soldiers brutalized civilians on a structural basis, treating them as "captives" and "slaves" and were protected by their military hierarchy (Tac.*Ann*.14.31). Second, the procurator Catus reclaimed the financial grants Emperor Claudius had allocated to local leaders (Dio.*Rom.Hist*.62.2), with no section of the British population spared by Roman cupidity (Tac.*Ann*.14.35). Tacitus is very critical of the Roman violent approach to occupation, considering its actors "cowardly and effeminate" and deeming normal that a revolt would erupt in these conditions (Tac.*Agr*.2.16). Moreover, a temple to the deified Claudius, the very emperor who launched the conquest, was built in Camulodunum, and the Iceni were forced to pay through taxation for this "citadel of an eternal tyranny" (Tac.*Ann*.14.31; Webster 1999). Paulinus, just before Boudica's revolt, had also destroyed the druids' sacred groves on the island of Anglesey. Religious intolerance, given the high diversity of the Roman Empire, was rather uncommon: this episode is part of the only two examples of this type in this period, with the burning of the temple of Jerusalem during the Great Jewish Revolt of 66-73 (Webster 1999).

After the insurgency broke out, there was a general escalation of coerciveness on both sides. First, according to Dio, the insurgents resorted to terror measures, by sewing noble women's breasts to their mouths before impaling them (Dio.*Rom.Hist*.62.7) . These could be the reasons for Paulinus' resort to highly coercive COIN measures, or it could have been used by Dio to justify their intensity (which also makes one reflect on the very contemporary question of "who started first?" and the historiography of it). Anyhow, during his mandate, Paulinus remained strongly devoted to coercive measures, encouraging his soldiers to commit to the highest level

of violence so "their foes will be terror-stricken" (Dio.62.10). During the final battle, all men, women, and even the cattle were slaughtered indiscriminately (Tac.*Ann*.14.38).

Even after victory, Paulinus led scorched earth tactics towards neutral tribes who were "harried with fire and sword" (Tac.*Ann*.14.38). This included the destruction of stores and crops, creating famine conditions, which led to many more civilians to perish (Webster 1999). Paulinus is depicted by Tacitus as one "revenging his own personal injury", and deems his measures inacceptable (Tac.*Agr*.2.16). Following the prolongation of these enemy-centric COIN measures despite the death of Boudica, rebel cells continued to form among the Britons, which continued to pose problems to Roman occupation.

The Roman hierarchy itself seemed to recognize how Paulinus' indiscriminate violence was disproportionate. In 61, the governor was dismissed and replaced by Petronius Turpilianus, a more merciful individual who had not participated in the war (Tac.*Agr*.2.16). In the following winter, measures were taken to encourage the Britons to adopt a more settled and peaceful lifestyle. To achieve this, they were encouraged to build temples, courts, and houses, and by fostering a competitive spirit. Efforts were also made to provide a Roman education for the sons of chieftains, which spread Latin into British society. As a result, Roman customs, such as wearing the toga or the use of baths, gained popularity (Tac.*Agr*.2.21). With this conscious shift of the authorities from a total enemy-centric COIN to pre-emptive population-centric measures, Rome introduced its new way of life, with urbanization and different socioeconomic incentives that modified structurally the aspirations of the local populations.

However, some modern authors also emphasize the structural continuation of elements of enemy-centric COIN even in times of peace. Roman increasingly established new garrisons to oversee the populations' economic production, and aggressive patrolling was common to thwart any seed of revolt (Wintjes 2020). Britannia, after Boudica's insurgency, experienced a mixture of structural enemy-centric and population-centric COIN, both being pre-emptive, that gradually became part of imperial governance.

4. **Analysis**

As seen in Arminius', Tacfarinas' and Boudica's COIN campaigns, the Romans did not only use terror tactics, as some authors have argued. Thompson's and Nagl's opposition between enemy-centric and population-centric COIN strategies is thus considered to be applicable to

the period of the Early Roman Empire. The biggest limitation of that framework is obviously the time in which it was created, in a post-World War Two context when democracy, legitimacy and accountability were priorities. Romans instead did what was benefitting the Empire in the easier way, regardless of ethics. Based on their own assessment of the situation, precedent campaigns or individual leadership, they used a combination of 'enemy-centric' when they were *able to*, and of 'population-centric' COIN when they *had to*. The general assessment of each criteria will now be discussed, before concluding their implications on the Malaya-Vietnam Spectrum.

Criterion 1: Conventional, but flexible warfare:

Knowing their military superiority, Roman armies gave an important priority to waging battles in conventional military ways, as they were highly likely to win them. Given the military *raison d'être* of the Roman Empire and its relative capacity to sustain distant military operations, its immediate reaction to insurgencies was always a violent one. In these situations, discipline and morale were crucial, confirming Goldsworthy's argument (Goldsworthy 1996); if those broke down and the soldiers felt overwhelmed, it could well lead to military setbacks, as shown by the Varian disaster in Germania or the abandonment of commander Decrius to the insurgents in Numidia. Considering the emphasis on conventional warfare, practically and in the short term, "insurgencies overwhelmingly have [indeed] been put down thoroughly by killing insurgents" through the resort to enemy-centric COIN (Peters 2007, p.34).

In Roman military tactics, however, there is strong evidence of how military flexibility, through the individual leadership of commanders, helped ensure the success of some COIN campaigns. In Numidia, proconsuls Blaesus and Dolabella's ingenious adaptability to guerrilla tactics allowed them to beat Tacfarinas at his own game with relatively limited troops. In Britannia, Paulinus' sacrifice of Londinium to reposition its troops and force Boudica into an open battle proved decisive. Conversely, Varus's downfall was arguably caused by his lack of flexibility. His successor, Germanicus, was aware of Arminius' guerrilla tactics but was likely unwilling to adapt to them. Contrary to Luttwak's, and in accordance with Goldsworthy's argument, in its COIN operations, the Roman army was indeed able to adapt to low-intensity warfare, and it furthermore highly contributed to their victory (Luttwak 1976; Goldsworthy 1996).

The preferred resort to violent punitive operations against insurgencies in the Early Roman Empire also shows the limits of an enemy-centric COIN approach. Conventional military

operations for a long-lasting conquest were costly and not always beneficial, as shown by the withdrawal from Germania. Moreover, the resort to enemy-centric COIN did not necessarily mean the end of an insurgency: in all three cases, the support base for the insurgency continued growing even as Roman brutality intensified, causing resentment and alienation among civilians and leading to further clashes. Therefore, enemy-centric COIN was generally effective tactically, given that the conditions for a frontal battle were favorable; but on the long-term, it could prove inefficient and even counter-productive. A parallel can be drawn with this Roman approach and Nagl's depiction of the United States in Vietnam as an institution believing in mass destruction and having a 'unique moral mission' (Nagl 2002). A key difference is that Roman morals and military culture could nonetheless not be threatened by this limitation as in a mass media and globalized world where a democracy is held accountable.

Criterion 2: Some targeting, but little legitimacy needed

The direct targeting of an insurgency's leadership was common in several forms during the Early Roman Empire. The state, as seen with Tacfarinas' example, could insist on the targeted killing of a leader to 'decapitate' the movement and demotivate its support base, as was also highlighted by Bob and Nepstad through modern examples (Bob&Nepstad 2007). However, Emperors could refrain in using these methods to eliminate local subversive leaders, seen as 'cowardly' (as shown with Tiberius' refusal to poison Arminius), and could resort to other forms of targeting. In the three cases, we notice an emphasis on abducting or hurting the leaders' entourage, to psychologically pressure them to surrender. Arminius' wife and son were kidnapped by Germanicus and sent to Rome, Tacfarinas' brother was captured, and Boudica's daughters were raped.

The approach on each specific COIN campaign and its description in ancient sources was also influenced by how the adversary was perceived by Roman society. In ancient sources, Arminius and Boudica are both praised for their nobility, courage and intelligence, while Tacfarinas is relegated to a bandit and deserter. In the terminology, the Germanic and British insurgencies are also parallelled by Tacitus through the use of *clades* (disaster), namely as episodes threatening Rome's power and values (Tac.*Ann*.14.32 ; Gillespie 2018), while no such importance is given to the Numidian revolt. As a result, Roman COIN measures in Numidia arguably proved less brutal despite a protracted conflict, but at the same time, the army was more anxious to target Tacfarinas personally. These discrepancies could possibly be caused by several reasons, including racial identity, whiteness and sedentarism (Grunewald 2004),

prestige and nobility, or also a difference in the danger to Roman central power, Tacfarinas not being considered a vital threat.

The criterion based on legitimacy was maybe the more difficult to assess to an ancient case given the contextual differences. Pre-emptive cooptation of local leaders, especially through the auxilia and client kingdoms, was crucial for the Roman Empire to maintain control in its provinces, as a way to eliminate a threat while increasing its perceived legitimacy. However, the resort to cooptation seldom meant real legitimacy, and did not usually serve the majority of the population's benefits. The client governments of Maroboduus, Ptolemy and Cartimandua could be seen as a more legitimate aspect of population-centric COIN. However, they were rather temporarily used as strategic buffers to balance the insurgency's power by dividing local populations, before being eventually absorbed into the Roman Empire. In these cases, the "client regent [is] both master and slave, [and] an 'instrument of servitude' forever in debt to the emperor" (Gillespie 2018, p.41).

Essentially, the idea of legitimacy was very different in the Roman context. Providing opportunities to local rulers was not about creating a legitimate government for issues linked to transparency and democracy like in the modern world (as stressed by the US Counterinsurgency Field Manual), but cooptation was rather short-term and strategic, to contain the immediate outbreak of insurgencies shortly after conquest. Conversely, the examples of Arminius and Tacfarinas show that cooptation could actually benefit and encourage the development of an insurgency, showing the limits of strategic cooptation.

Criterion 3: Widespread coerciveness, but essential local support

Coercive actions, and thus enemy-centric COIN were a structural, essential part of Roman rule. Evidence of harsh occupation measures, including taxation, territorial encroachment and the imposition of laws is present in our three cases. Moreover, the terminology of indiscriminate violence is widespread in primary sources, before, during and after the insurgency. The very objective of Germanicus' incursion against Arminius was arguably indiscriminate violence, acting as reprisal following the Varian disaster. Paulinus' resort to terror and starvation tactics in Britannia show that highly coercive measures were also enacted in provinces the Roman Empire intended to keep. The suppression of Tacfarinas' insurgency, although relatively less indiscriminately violent towards civilians, also retains substantial elements of coerciveness. Thus, given the systematic brutality of occupation, Roman soldiers did not consider themselves

"armed social workers", as advanced by the US Counterinsurgency Field Manual. As written by Tacitus himself, "it is by the blood of the provinces that the provinces [were] won" (Tac.*Hist*.4.17). Moreover, highly violent actions also dominated other Roman COIN campaigns of the period, as shown by Tacitus' famous saying of "making a desert and calling it peace" in the context of Calgacus' revolt in 83-84 (Tac.*Agr*.30-32).

However, in the long-term, a province could not be solely ruled through coercion and terror. In regions the Roman state found attractive, securing civilian support was essential. When the hold on a province was considered stable (in the cases of Numidia and Britannia, typically in the decades after the insurgency), the support of local populations was secured by introducing the Roman way of life, with different socioeconomic incentives (infrastructure, urbanization, new markets, material benefits) altering structurally their reference points and aspirations. The 'carrot-and-stick' method was common, with the fostering of an atmosphere of competitiveness around production, the rewarding of cooperating civilians and the punishing of the others, which can be parallelled with Leites and Wolf's 'cost-benefit' approach (Leites&Wolf 1970). In the short term, this would divide local communities to the Roman benefit (and even families, as shown by Arminius' and Flavus' quarrel), and in the long-term, would unite populations under Roman ideals. These integration measures were complex and differed depending on the region, highlighting the flexibility of Roman administration. They can be roughly compared to the 'reforms' aimed at bettering the life of local populations mentioned in modern population-centric COIN literature (Birtle 2007; Hazelton 2017), although they were enacted for the stability of the Empire rather than mutual benefit and democracy. Moreover, it is essential to stress that these structural measures were only pre-emptive, occurring before or after insurgencies to prevent them: while an insurgency was underway, a strong emphasis was placed on enemy-centric methods.

General Assessment: The Malaya-Vietnam Spectrum in Roman Provinces

Here, we present where our three cases of COIN can be placed on the Malaya-Vietnam Spectrum, to give the reader a practical idea of the assessment of each campaign.

Vietnam-style COIN (Enemy-Centric)   Malaya-style COIN (Population-Centric)

Arminius   Boudica Tacfarinas
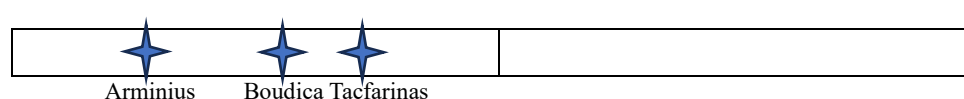
The COIN campaign against Arminius, also because of the trauma caused by the Varian disaster, retained a strong accent on enemy-centric COIN, with little flexibility in methods. Population-centric methods were limited to some cooptation of local leaders and the auxilia, and it is paradoxically in part what caused the important Roman setback. The campaign arguably also failed because the state was not interested in long-term control of the province after the loss of three legions; if it had the resources to secure its hold on it, it would have probably implemented pre-emptive population-centric COIN measures similar to Numidia and Britain. However, it is still the army's lack of flexibility that arguably caused its vulnerability to guerrilla tactics and withdrawal from Germania, causing the failure of the COIN campaign.

The Roman campaigns against Tacfarinas and Boudica retained similar dynamics in their outcome and strategies before, during and after the insurgency. A harsh structural occupation caused the insurgency, which was defeated militarily through able decision-making and adaptability. In the following decades, structural population-centric COIN measures were enacted to prevent further substantial insurgencies, which proved relatively effective. However, in Britain, Roman occupation was especially brutal shortly after conquest, a strong emphasis was placed on indiscriminate terror measures, and some enemy-centric measures continued in a structural manner even after the insurgency. This makes the campaign against Boudica relatively more enemy-centric than in Numidia. Against Tacfarinas, indiscriminate violence was less widespread and an accent was put on military flexibility as well as direct targeting against the insurgency's leadership. In the short-term, the COIN campaign against Boudica was also more brutal and indiscriminate than the one against Arminius. However, in the long-term, the failure of the conquest of Germania and its nearly total absence of population-centric elements of COIN bring it closer to an enemy-centric approach than in Britannia, where control was eventually established through population-centric methods.

These three campaigns retained little interest in the question of legitimacy (at least in the modern sense), namely the question of the lawfulness to enact violent COIN methods. This causes an important discrepancy between the norms and ethics of ancient and modern contexts, constituting the main limitation to the framework, and inviting a reflection about the question of anachronism.

Based on the analysis of the campaigns against Arminius, Tacfarinas, and Boudica, this study contends that enemy-centric COIN was not only the "tip of the iceberg", as advanced by Mattern (Mattern 2019, p.178). Whether employing immediate coercive actions or deterrence,

COIN methods placed a strong emphasis on violence, especially during active insurgencies or when the threat level was high.

COIN strategy in the Early Roman Empire can rather be viewed as a comprehensive 'carrot-and-stick' approach both practically and structurally, where immediate enemy-centric and pre-emptive population-centric elements of COIN were consistently present in society, with a clear emphasis on imperial violence. Similarly to what Leites and Wolf advance in their 'cost-benefit' approach, regardless of war or peace times, the Roman Empire always rewarded cooperating subjects, and punished hostile or even passive ones (Leites&Wolf 1970). This perspective is effectively captured by Virgil in his *Aeneid*, where Anchises, during Aeneas's visit to the Underworld, reveals Rome's future glory and the destined greatness of his descendants, advising his son on the ideals that Romans should promote:

"But thou, o Roman, learn with sovereign sway

To rule the nations. Thy great art shall be

To keep the world in lasting peace, to spare humbled foe, and crush to earth the proud."

Virgil, *Aeneid*, 850-853.

Conclusion

This study, through the lens of the enemy-centric and population-centric approaches, attempted to assess the COIN methods of the Early Roman Empire in its provinces. It has done so by applying three sets of two opposing criteria based on modern COIN literature to three cases spanning over 52 years: Arminius' insurgency in Germania, Tacfarinas' in Numidia, and Boudica's in Britannia. Contrasting with some authors that underline the prevalence of 'hearts and minds' Roman COIN, its main findings reveal that although the Roman state did resort to both 'enemy-centric' and 'population-centric' COIN, it gave a strong priority to the former. The Roman state used a combination of 'enemy-centric' when it was *able to*, and of 'population-centric' COIN when it *had to*, depending on what was easier for the Empire's benefit in a determined situation.

Structural COIN measures comparable to a population-centric approach were indeed frequent. These could include the introduction of political, social and economic incentives to make the Roman way of life attractive to the majority and deter further revolts, as seen in the case of

Numidia and Britannia. The cooptation of local leaders, through the establishment of client states or inclusion into the auxilia, was also common, but generally mostly benefitted elites. Cooptation could also reveal counter-productive for the Empire, as shown by Arminius' ability to revolt brought by skills learned in Roman ranks. However, most importantly, population-centric approaches were only pre-emptive, as they usually occurred in times of peace, preceding or succeeding the insurgencies.

Once an insurgency erupted, however, a strong emphasis was placed on the resort to retaliatory enemy-centric COIN measures, even when the Roman army was in a difficult position. Violence and terror methods were not only the 'tip of the iceberg': they were an essential part of Roman COIN. A priority was especially put on forcing the enemy to fight a decisive, conventional battle. The Empire could count on the flexibility of its army (as shown with proconsuls Blaesus and Dolabella adapting to Tacfarinas' guerrilla methods) and the decision-making of its skilled commanders (as shown by Paulinus' crucial choices to gain the upper hand against Boudica). Despite having sometimes superior armies in numbers, insurgents were usually unable to defeat or force into terms the more skilled and disciplined Roman army. As illustrated by the case of the Varian disaster, it was precisely when this flexibility, skilled decision-making and discipline exposed their gaps that the Roman army could be defeated decisively. The resort to indiscriminate violence to eliminate or deter the insurgencies' support base, present in the three cases but especially demonstrated by Paulinus' terror methods in Britannia, also acted as an important deterrent factor in Roman COIN. Targeted actions, whether physical or psychological and directed towards the leaders or their entourage, were not uncommon. The Roman state did not preoccupy itself with problems linked to the legitimacy of violence, because it usually did not need to, and because violent conquest was part of its *raison d'être*. These findings turn on their head the contemporary insight that population-centric COIN is both preferred from the perspective of political will (having to) and capacity (ability).

COIN strategy in the Early Roman Empire can thus be viewed as a comprehensive 'carrot-and-stick' approach both practically and structurally, where both immediate enemy-centric and pre-emptive population-centric elements of COIN were consistently present in society depending on the situation, with a clear emphasis on imperial violence. Regardless of war or peace times, the Roman Empire always rewarded cooperating subjects, and punished hostile or even passive ones, an approach well summarized by Virgil as "to spare humbled foe, and crush to earth the

proud" (Verg.*Aen.*6.853). The context in which this episode is recounted is all the more interesting for Roman approaches regarding COIN: put in the words of a dead father, Anchises, towards his son Aeneas (the ancestor of Romans in their mythology), this mission is presented as a prophecy. This all the more reveals how this dual method as a framework for conquest could be perceived as heavily entrenched in Roman ethics and unquestionable in its legitimacy.

Most of the existing literature on Roman COIN has either emphasized the use of terror methods (Davies 2020; Wintjes 2020) or attempted to find alternatives by applying modern population-centric concepts (Mattern 2019; Russell 2016). These works often suffer from being either too rigid in their evaluations or overly eager to draw more 'ethical' conclusions based on contemporary views of COIN. The main contribution of this study is its nuanced assessment of the interplay between enemy-centric and population-centric COIN methods in the Early Roman Empire: a consistent blend of both strategies, utilizing violence or cooptation as necessary, but with a clear predominance of enemy-centric methods.

In future research, it would be interesting to apply the same enemy-centric and population-centric opposition to assess the COIN methods of the Roman Empire during the Crisis of the Third Century, when it faced several challenges. This would allow to evaluate if COIN approaches in its provinces changed, at times when Roman military superiority and central power were threatened by other entities.

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