Native Insurgency in the Western Roman Empire: Comparing Dyson's Model with Classical Accounts of Revolts

From the 2nd century BCE onwards, the Romans became the greatest imperial state of classical antiquity. Although the nature of their military expansionism continues to receive scholarly debate, one thing is certain. Like their modern counterparts, the various European colonial empires, the Romans too faced frequent revolts from the native populace of lands they had conquered. Many ancient writers like Caesar, Tacitus, and Cassius Dio wrote about these rebellions which occurred within the territories of the Western Roman Empire.[1] For this reason, the purpose of this paper shall be twofold. First, it will examine Caesar's account of Vercingetorix's uprising (c. 52 BCE) and Tacitus' and Dio's accounts of Boudicca's rebellion (c. 60-1 CE), to determine the common causes they ascribe for provincial revolts within the Western Empire. For comparative analysis, these will be placed against the components of

[1] For ancient sources of the late-3rd to early-2nd century BCE North Italian revolts of the Boii, see Polybius, 2.21-31, 3.40, and 3.67 and Livy, 21.25, 23.24, 31.2, 35.34-36, and 36.38-40. For the mid-2nd century BCE Spanish revolt of Viriathus, see Appian, *Iberike* 58-75. For revolts in Gaul, see Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.1-8.49 and Cassius Dio, 40.33-43 for Vercingetorix's rebellion and Tacitus, *Annales* 3.40-46 for that of Florus and Sacrovir. For the early-1st century CE Batonian revolt of Pannonia-Dalmatia, see Cassius Dio, 55.29-34 and 56.11-16 and Velleius Paterculus, 2.110-115. For Arminius' rebellion in Germany, see Cassius Dio, 56.18-23, Velleius Paterculus, 2.117-120, and Tacitus, *Annales* 1.55-71, 2.5-26, 2.44-46, and 2.88. For the revolt of Tacfarinas in North Africa, see Tacitus, *Annales* 2.52, 3.20-21, 3.73-74, and 4.23-25. For Boudicca's rebellion in Britain, see Tacitus, *Annales* 14.29-39, Cassius Dio, 62.1-12, and Tacitus, *Agricola* 13-16. For the Batavian revolt, see Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.12-37, 4.54-79, and 5.14-26.

Stephen L. Dyson's model of post-conquest nativistic revolt, as best described in his 1971 article.[2] Then, the aforementioned sources will be scrutinised to establish trustworthiness on the subject of native revolts. This paper seeks to demonstrate that, despite any inherent issues of reliability, these sources still contain nuggets of truth. Placed beside accounts of more modern revolts, they can provide crucial insight into how native uprisings in the Roman Empire may have unfolded.

Regarding the aforementioned model of native revolt then, it might be helpful to start by explaining its three main components. Dyson's main argument is that post-conquest indigenous revolts stemmed primarily from the extreme tensions placed on the native society, tensions that were rooted in "the process of rapid acculturation."[3] Such acculturation was actually welcomed in its initial stages. By way of trade contacts, it enriched native rulers and granted them access to the imperialist power's prestigious luxury goods.[4] Through the patron-client relationships which developed between the imperialist power and native rulers, it allowed the latter to rely upon the support of states like Rome to fend off and dominate neighbouring tribes and local rivals.[5] With time, however, the imperialist power's presence could grow onerous, especially as the acculturation took on greater administrative and financial

[2] Stephon L. Dyson, "Native Revolts in the Roman Empire," *Historia:* 20, no. 2/3 (1971): 267-73.
[3] Stephon L. Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns in the Roman Empire," *ANRW* 2, no. 3 (1974): 139.
[4] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 241 refers to the examples of Luerius and his son Bituitus, two native leaders who got rich from the Mediterranean trade and consolidated a strong "empire" in 2nd century BCE Gaul. They hailed from the same Arverni tribe as Vercingetorix.
[5] Ibid., 258. Dyson provides the examples of Cogidubnus and Prasutagus (chief of the Iceni), two native rulers who agreed to become clients of the Emperor Claudius and benefited greatly.

tones. Indigenous revolts of this variety were usually delayed several years at least following the initial conquest, when a new generation of native warriors would have grown up. For this reason, even if there were initial advantages to contact with the imperialist power, the new generation knew nothing of such benefits, if it even cared for them.[6] They only saw the foreboding long-term implications of foreign dominance of their society. They would have had to adapt to complicated administrative structures and procedures, such as an imperial bureaucracy, taxation, and military conscription. At some point, these could have been beset by corruption, incompetence, and mismanagement, giving rise to greater tensions, as the acculturation process sped up.[7] Not only that, but as the imperialist power consolidated its territorial gains by setting up garrisons and colonies, mistreatment at the hands of foreign soldiers, traders, and settlers could have further aggravated the situation.[8] Hence, rapid and forced acculturation would have played an important first step, by fostering an environment rife with rebellion, a situation best exemplified by Cassius Dio, regarding Arminius' early-1st century CE Germanic revolt.[9]

Afterwards, the next and perhaps most important part of Dyson's model was the role that charismatic leadership played in the organization of such indigenous uprisings.[10]

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[6] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 269.
[7] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 269; Gil Gambash, *Rome and Provincial Resistance* (Routledge, 2015), 185.
[8] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 269.
[9] Cassius Dio, 56.18.2-4. When the acculturation was gradual and voluntary, the situation in Germany was calm. As soon as the governor, Publius Quinctilius Varus, sped up the process of Romanization, however, discontent arose and the province became engulfed in rebellion.
[10] Certain mechanisms of unity could also play a role in helping to organize revolts. Tribal assemblies, service in the Roman auxiliary, the

Classical accounts often emphasized the dominant role played by a single leader, an individual who often gave their name to the revolt.[11] Although this could reflect the limited information ancient writers possessed, the fact that such a phenomenon was so commonly attested among both ancient and modern revolts indicates that its importance cannot be overstated.[12] In ancient accounts, such individuals are usually described as coming from the more Romanized elite class of the native society.[13] Comparisons may be drawn between this phenomenon and British anthropologist Peter Worsley's remarks on the leadership of modern Melanesian Cargo Cults. He describes how their leaders either derived their authority from positions within the indigenous order (as aristocrats, magicians, etc.), the "special knowledge or experience" they had with the "Whites," or newly-gained wealth and power.[14]

The third component of Dyson's model then consisted of the historical circumstances that rebels could exploit to win the element of surprise. Catching the imperialist power unawares could dramatically increase a revolt's effectiveness. Key examples were when its forces got divided, withdrawn to other regions further afield, or distracted by political events (civil

participation of tribal elite in the priesthoods of state-sponsored religious cults could also have played a role. Unfortunately, a discussion of all these mechanisms is beyond the scope of this article.

[11] Ancient examples of such naming conventions include Vercingetorix's Revolt in Gaul, the *Bellum Batonianum* (War of the Batos) in Pannonia-Dalmatia, Tacfarinas' Revolt in North Africa, and the Boudican Revolt in southern Britain.

[12] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 270. More modern examples of such naming conventions include King Philip's War and the Conspiracy of Pontiac, two major rebellions, waged by Native American tribes against the New England colonists in the 17th century and the British Empire in the 18th century, respectively.

[13] Ibid., 268.

[14] Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (Schocken Books, 1968), 272.

wars, domestic political unrest, etc.) elsewhere in the empire.[15] To an extent, this was inevitable for states like Rome, because to maintain and expand their empire, they needed to transfer forces and leave certain areas — previously thought calm — less well-guarded or even ungarrisoned.[16] Still, the imperial preconceptions and underestimation of native sentiment, especially by otherwise highly experienced officials, is exploited by indigenous leaders, time and again, in both ancient and modern rebellions.[17]

Turning back to our focus, the revolts of Vercingetorix and Boudicca, the classical sources clearly mention the socio-economic stresses placed upon the natives by the acculturation process. As earlier mentioned, such stresses often took several years to develop following the initial conquest.[18] Vercingetorix's revolt began in early-52 BCE, almost three years after the events of 55 BCE when Caesar had essentially pacified Gaul and felt comfortable to launch expeditions exploring Germany and Britain.[19] Boudicca's uprising, meanwhile, began among the Iceni almost twenty years after the Roman conquest of southern Britain.[20] While tribes like the Aedui and Iceni may have earlier viewed Roman arms as a way to check the power of the Sequani and Catuvellauni, respectively, over time old agreements may have been forgotten and trust lost, leading to ill-feeling towards Rome.[21]

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[15] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 273; Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns," 172.
[16] Gambash, *Rome and Provincial Resistance*, 182.
[17] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 249 and 272.
[18] Ibid., 268.
[19] K. A. Raaflaub and J. T. Ramsey, "The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns," in *The Landmark Julius Caesar Web Essays*, ed. K. A. Raaflaub and R. B. Strassler (Pantheon Books, 2017), 153-4.
[20] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 258.
[21] Ibid., 268. The Aedui, a Gallic tribe on very good terms with Rome, later decided to defect and join Vercingetorix's uprising. The Sequani,

Examples of such grievances against the Rome can be found among the Gauls just before Vercingetorix's revolt. Caesar states that they held secret assemblies about the execution of Acco, a Senonian rebel chieftain.[22] This made them realise their precarity, as Caesar could remove them from power at will, such as Acco's "a heavier sentence than usual" punishment.[23] Tacitus gives Boudicca a similar grievance against the Romans, narrating the whipping and rape of Prasutagus' wife and daughters.[24] If not by this brutal act against Britain's few surviving royals, the Romans would certainly have succeeded at enraging the local elite by confiscating estates belonging to the Icenian nobility.[25] Added to this was the conflict with the Roman colonists and veterans settled at Camulodunum. By "driving the natives from their homes, ejecting them from their lands" and mocking them as "captives and slaves," they antagonized the Trinovantes, a neighbouring tribe.[26] Gil Gambash points out that the establishment of veteran colonies was not necessarily an issue, referring to Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (near modern Cologne). This colony's presence near the Ubii kept them loyal and firmly committed to the Roman cause when Julius Civilis recruited them during the Batavian Revolt. He argues that

meanwhile, were a Gallic tribe having earlier encroached on Aedui territory. The Catuvellauni were the pre-eminent tribe in southern Britain, whom the Romans vanquished shortly after landing during Emperor Claudius's reign.

[22] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.1-2.

[23] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 6.44; Dyson, "Native Revolts," 245.

[24] Tacitus, *Annales* 14.31. Prasutagus was Boudicca's husband and king of the Iceni tribe. As a local client ruler of Rome, he had named the Emperor Nero co-heir alongside his two daughters, hoping that by this act, his kingdom's autonomy would be secured following his death. Unfortunately, the opposite seemed to have occurred.

[25] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 260; Tacitus, *Annales* 14.31.

[26] Tacitus, *Annales* 14.31.

instead of being formal policy, the settlers may have encroached on native lands due to a land shortage under their own initiative.[27] Regardless, such mistreatment aggravated the situation and significantly expanded the area in revolt. Although Dio fails to report these examples of abuse leading to the Iceni revolt, he does mention the financial hardships the Britons suffered. These were caused by Seneca, the famous Stoic philosopher, when he quickly called in a loan of forty million sesterces in full, as well as Decianus Catus, the procurator of Roman Britain, who took back money Claudius gifted to the British elite.[28] Such mistreatment greatly antagonised the natives, especially in the case of Camulodunum and its colonists. Similar examples are frequent, such as in Rhodesia and the American frontier, where European settlers incited similar resentment through entitled colonial attitudes.[29] Meanwhile, in late-3rd century BCE northern Italy, the Boii looked with similar apprehension at the *lex Flaminia de Agro Gallico* agrarian law which was used to expel the Senones and divide their land.[30]

As for opposition to acculturation, Tacitus remarks how the temple erected in Camulodunum to Claudius was a major annoyance, calling it "the citadel of an eternal tyranny."[31] Gambash argues for a reading that, while it was a "symbol of tyranny," it did not itself cause their oppressive reality but rather was "a red cloth [waved] before . . . the plundered

[27] Gambash, *Rome and Provincial Resistance*, 39-41.
[28] Cassius Dio, 62.2. Not only a Stoic philosopher, Seneca also served Nero as an advisor. Decianus Catus, meanwhile, as procurator, was in charge of Roman Britain's financial affairs at the time when Boudicca's revolt broke out.
[29] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 269.
[30] Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns," 142-3; Polybius, 2.21.
[31] Tacitus, *Annales* 14.31.

locals."[32] That said, the great financial contributions it exacted from the native elite could not have added to its popularity and may even have forced some to rely on loans from men like Seneca to fulfill their obligations.[33] Further hostility to cultural change is seen in Critognatus' speech during the final stage of Vercingetorix's revolt. He exhorts the defenders that resisting Rome at Alesia preserved their Gallic culture's preservation and the acceptability of any means — including cannibalism — to achieve this goal. Caesar reports that he states that the Romans sought "to bind upon them a perpetual slavery" and that Gaul was "reduced to a province, with utter change of rights and laws."[34] These words echo the disturbed psychological state common in native revitalization movements, stirring massive and sudden efforts to expel the invading entity and safeguard indigenous culture.[35] According to the anthropologist Lanternari, these are universal phenomena and that,

> Movements arising in areas at great distance from the Congo and South Africa bear the marks of experience common to all people who live under foreign rule. This is an indication that the power of these movements to expand throughout a continent . . . comes more from the universality of racial reaction to similar circumstances than from a tradition rooted in local history.[36]

Among the late-3rd century BCE Boii, before they rebelled, a similar sentiment could be seen as they felt Rome sought "their total expulsion and extermination."[37] Thus, Critognatus' speech

[32] Gambash, *Rome and Provincial Resistance*, 42.
[33] Tacitus, *Annales* 14.31; Dyson, "Native Revolts," 259.
[34] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.77.
[35] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 246.
[36] V. Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed*, Trans. By L. Sergio (New American Library, 1965), 49.
[37] Polybius, 2.21; Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns," 142. They must have endured a policy similar to that the Senones would soon endure.

during the Siege of Alesia emphasises the Gallic fear regarding the implications of a persistent Roman rule on their lifestyle.

As for the role played by charismatic leaders, Dyson claimed that these individuals typically came from the semi-acculturated, native, elite class. They held extensive prior contacts with the Romans — many had served in the auxiliary. Arminius, for instance, had attained equestrian rank and, as a cavalryman, campaigned with the Roman historian and soldier, Velleius Paterculus.[38] Julius Civilis held Roman citizenship and had served for twenty-five years in the Roman army, becoming an auxiliary commander in charge of a Batavian contingent.[39] Tacfarinas was a Numidian deserter from the Roman auxiliary.[40] Although the ancient sources are less clear about whether Vercingetorix served in the auxiliary, the Arverni held trade links with the Romans from the mid-2nd century BCE. Additionally, one tradition, possibly extending to Livy, states that Vercingetorix and Caesar were previously friends.[41] Among the revolt's subsidiary leadership, Commius the Atrebatian is described as having "rendered faithful and efficient service" in Britain,[42] where he performed scouting and diplomatic missions. According to Dyson, he was Caesar's most loyal Gallic chieftain, after Diviciacus, the Aeduan druid.[43] Other examples include the Aeduan nobles, Eporedorix and Viridomarus, the former having warned Caesar about a planned Aeduan defection to Vercingetorix's side, while Caesar promoted the latter at

[38] Velleius Paterculus, 2.118.
[39] Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.32; Dyson, "Native Revolts," 264.
[40] Tacitus, *Annales* 2.52.
[41] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 241-242; Cassius Dio, 40.41.
[42] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.76.
[43] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 244.

Diviciacus' recommendation.[44] Later, all three would emerge as leaders of the Gallic relief force sent to relieve Alesia.[45] Boudicca, meanwhile, was the wife of Prasutagus, a Roman client-king. If he was in any way similar to Cogidubnus, who commissioned Latin inscriptions and a Roman-style palace,[46] then Prasutagus and his family too would have been highly Romanized.

The ancient sources attest to the incredible charisma of Boudicca and Vercingetorix. Caesar notes that Vercingetorix gained the supreme command over almost all the Gallic tribes including the Aedui.[47] Using his charisma, he disciplined and even compelled them to adopt a scorched earth policy,[48] as well as erect fortifications around their camp like the Romans did.[49] Prior to Boudicca's revolt, Dio grants her an energetic speech, stirring rebellion among her fellow Britons.[50] Similarly, Tacitus gives her a speech before the final battle at Watling Street, in which Boudicca encourages the Britons to persist in their revolt.[51] Although such speeches, especially Dio's, were likely invented,[52] nevertheless, as examples of her public speaking

[44] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.39.
[45] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.76.
[46] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 258.
[47] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.63. The Aedui were perhaps the most loyal of Caesar's Gallic allies.
[48] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.14-5. Avaricum, the capital of the Bituriges Cubi tribe, was the single exception and its destruction by Caesar only served to vindicate Vercingetorix's policy.
[49] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.30.
[50] Cassius Dio, 62.2-5.
[51] Tacitus, *Annales* 14.35
[52] Cassius Dio, 62.6. It is hard to believe that Boudicca, a Brittonic queen, would have known of the Egyptian queen Nitocris or the Assyrian queen, Semiramis. Perhaps the phrase, "for we have by now gained thus much learning from the Romans," instead indicates that such literary references were used by Dio to show the high degree of Romanization achieved by the Britons.

talent, they symbolise the role her charisma played in rallying the British rebels.

However, although the single dominant leader's role was important, revolts also began without him, like the Carnutes' massacring Roman traders at Cenabum sparking Vercingetorix's uprising.[53] When Vercingetorix, not yet the leader, heard of the Cenabum massacre and rallied his followers, he was actually expelled from Gergovia by the Arvernian elders.[54] Although he gained leadership over the Gallic rebels immediately afterwards, Caesar's account shows that the Carnutes clearly undertook the Cenabum massacre on their own initiative.[55] Additionally, following the main leader's demise or surrender, revolts could still persist under subsidiary leadership. After Vercingetorix's surrender, in the winter and spring of 51 BCE, Caesar and his legates were forced to undertake further campaigns against the Bituriges, Carnutes, Bellovaci, Eburones, Treveri, and other Gallic tribes.[56] The last of these was perhaps the siege of Uxellodunum, a town pushed to rebel by Lucterius the Cadurcan and Drappes the Senonian.[57] In Britain, the rebels continued fighting after Boudicca's death and were not pacified until the aggressive and vindictive governor Suetonius Paullinus was replaced.[58] Hence, this

[53] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.3.
[54] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.4. Vercingetorix was successful on second attempt and, after rallying a large group and sending delegations to various Gallic tribes, he assumed command over the rebels.
[55] Raaflaub and Ramsey, "The Chronology of Caesar's," 168.
[56] K.A. Raaflaub, "The Conquest of Uxellodunum," in *The Landmark Julius Caesar Web Essays*, ed. K.A. Raaflaub and R.B. Strassler (Pantheon Books, 2017), 288.
[57] Ibid., 289. Lucterius was Vercingetorix's sub-commander in southern Gaul, while Drappes was a guerrilla commander raiding Roman supply convoys.
[58] Tacitus, *Annales* 14.38-9; Tacitus, *Agricola* 16.

phenomenon highlights the role that deep-rooted hatred towards Roman rule could have played in the initiation and continuation of indigenous revolts.[59]

Dyson's third component, the historical circumstances of uprisings argues that events enabled rebels to make their revolt more effective, since it became easier to catch the Romans off guard.[60] The ancient writers hold a similar view. Caesar remarks that when the chaos caused by Clodius' murder forced him to return to Italy, the Gauls began holding secret meetings.[61] The Gauls may have received intelligence of this political crisis, which erupted on January 19th in Rome, on February 9th, twenty days later. The Gauls were already contemplating a revolt the previous winter, 54/53 BCE.[62] Caesar had seen his units under Sabinus and Cotta destroyed by the Eburones in 54 BCE.[63] In 53 BCE, Germanic Sugambri raiders had almost overrun Caesar's camp and destroyed two cohorts, under Quintus Cicero, whom Caesar had left in camp with the baggage train and a legion to guard it.[64] Hence, with this news, they accelerated their preparations and began the uprising within two weeks, perhaps on February 21st, to take advantage of Caesar's absence.[65] For Boudicca's revolt, meanwhile, though Dio makes no mention of this, Tacitus writes that the Britons

[59] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 268.
[60] Ibid., 273.
[61] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 7.1.
[62] Raaflaub and Ramsey, "The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns," 168.
[63] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 5.26-38; Dyson, "Native Revolts," 249.
[64] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 6.35-41; Raaflaub and Ramsey, "The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns," 166.
[65] Raaflaub and Ramsey, "The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns," 168.

considered the absence of Paullinus' legions, which were preparing to assault Mona, a gift from their gods.[66]

An absence of Roman forces would have not gone unnoticed among the natives and many similar examples appear in modern revolts of imperial forces being distracted. In the 18th century Great Lakes region, Pontiac was able to exploit the French-British rivalry to start his uprising. In Mozambique, the Barue rebels used Portugal's distraction with World War I to begin their rebellion.[67] In the Roman context, the Battonian rebels of Pannonia-Dalmatia were able to use Tiberius's distraction with Maroboduus' Marcomannic kingdom to assist their rebellion, while Julius Civilis was able to exploit to great effect the Roman civil wars of 69 CE, for his Batavian revolt.[68] However, indigenous peoples did not need to wait for such opportunities and, as Dyson noted, excessive mistreatment caused them to revolt early, albeit in a futile manner. The Revolt of Florus and Sacrovir, in early-1st century CE Gaul, show this.[69]

Coming now to the reliability of Caesar, Tacitus, and Dio's respective accounts, while it is crucial to examine their time of compilation and their sources, their motives are equally important. Caesar wrote the books of his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* during his campaigns in Gaul. The word *commentarii* could refer to notes, reports, or records of acts and deeds and, as governor and general in Gaul, he was required to send such

[66] Tacitus, *Agricola* 15. Mona is modern Anglesey, an island off of the Welsh coast, which was a Druidic centre.
[67] Dyson, "Native Revolts," 273.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns," 157-8 and 172; Tacitus, *Annales* 3.40-6. Julius Sacrovir and Julius Florus, romanized Gallic nobles, were Aedui and Treveri, respectively. Their revolt's cause seems to have been excessive taxation and debt.

reports to the Roman Senate.[70] Caesar's reports from Gaul prompted the Senate to decree multiple, lengthy thanksgiving celebrations.[71] As a general in the field, his witnesses, therefore, included not just people like his scouts, officers, allied Gallic nobles, and prisoners of war for the events he describes, but also himself.

The main purpose of his Commentaries, intended for a broad public audience and perhaps to be read publicly, was to propagandise his achievements and justify his actions.[72] When Caesar assumed his governorship of Gaul in 58 BCE he had made many enemies through various violent acts of questionable legality, carried out during his consulship in 59 BCE, supporting his fellow triumvirs. But, in Gaul, the threat of legal prosecution only increased as Caesar carried out many actions without Senate authorization. The best example is the Gallic Wars themselves, which, as Raaflaub states, were undertaken "to acquire the military prestige needed to match Pompey's reputation."[73] With his books, likely published individually at the end of each campaigning season, Caesar essentially defended his conduct and highlighted his achievements to prepare for his eventual return to Rome.[74] Thus, while Caesar's text is an important source on Roman warfare during the Late Republic, regarding political events, caution is required as he might have deliberately left out certain details that could show why revolts broke out among the Gauls.

[70] K.A. Raaflaub, "The Roman Commentarius and Caesar's Commentaries," 203-4.
[71] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 2.35, 4.38, and 7.90.
[72] Raaflaub, "The Roman Commentarius and Caesar's Commentaries," 206.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

The lack of any mention concerning the cruel punishment of defeated foes until the Siege of Uxellodunum in Book Eight, which was written not by Caesar but rather his legate, Aulus Hirtius, might hint at this. That said, even Hirtius starts off with how "Caesar's clemency, as he knew, was familiar to all."[75] Much earlier, Caesar mentions his harsh punishment of the Veneti, in which he put their entire senate to death and sold the rest of their population into slavery.[76] Fairbanks notes, however, Caesar's policy in Gaul was generally one of clemency and, to his credit, his officers like Hirtius generally depicted him in the same way.[77] Additionally, the importance Caesar gives to Vercingetorix's charisma matches that provided by early modern sources to leaders like King Phillip, an indigenous leader in North America.[78] As such, his emphasis on single leaders like the famous Arvernian chieftain is valuable.

Tacitus finished his *Agricola* in 98 CE and his *Annales* around the end of Trajan's reign.[79] Even if he could not find officials, soldiers, or local notables who were present in southern Britain during Boudicca's revolt, he could still at least talk to surviving family and acquaintances. Additionally, he was the general Agricola's son-in-law. As such, Tacitus probably had some prior knowledge of the events taking place in Britain. We should, however, be careful while reading his speeches. Ancient

[75] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 8.44. The cruel punishment in this case was Caesar's decision to have the hands cut off of all the men who had borne arms.
[76] Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 3.16.
[77] K. Fairbank, "Caesar's Portrait of "Caesar," in *The Landmark Julius Caesar Web Essays*, 217 and 222.
[78] Dyson, "Native revolts," 270. The English nicknamed Metacomet, the Wampanoag chief who fought a war against the colonists of late-17th century New England, "King Philip."
[79] Jona Lendering, "Tacitus," Livius, last modified April 21, 2020, https://www.livius.org/sources/content/tacitus/.

writers often used speeches to express their own views. In Tacitus' case, these are anti-imperialistic and he often seems to incorporate the idea of the "noble savage."[80] This can be seen in references to liberty in Boudicca's speech before the Battle of Watling Street, ending with the words, "the men might live and be slaves."[81] His enmity is especially strong towards female rulers and he uses his narrative to make political commentary about such women, both in Rome and abroad.[82] Thus, Tacitus sees Cartimandua, a Brigantian Queen and Roman client, as a deceptive woman of ill repute,[83] possibly associating her with similarly deceptive and influential women in Rome like Messalina and Agrippina the Younger. In turn, he juxtaposes her with Boudicca, the other famous British queen, who despite being a rebel, is shown as a "wronged widow and mother" who might have otherwise embodied traditional Roman matron's values.[84]

Dio wrote his work between 211-33 CE, a century and a half later than Boudicca's revolt.[85] He, thus, had no first-hand sources or eyewitnesses of the revolt, unlike Caesar or Tacitus, only earlier compilations to use when writing his *Roman History*. As a result, his account of Boudicca's revolt should be considered less trustworthy than that of Tacitus. That said, while Dio is more biased towards the Romans and his views are not

[80] Ibid.
[81] Tacitus, *Annales* 14.35.
[82] Jane Crawford, "Cartimandua, Boudicca, and Rebellion: British Queens and Roman Colonial Views," in *Women and the Colonial Gaze*, ed. Tamara L. Hunt and Micheline R. Lessard (Palgrave, 2002), 22.
[83] Ibid., 21. The Brigantes were a northern Brittonic tribe who lived in what is now northern England and were ruled from at least 51-69 CE by Cartimandua, a client-queen closely allied with the Romans. For more information about Cartimandua, see Tacitus, *Annales* 12.36 and 12.40 and Tacitus, *Historiae* 3.45.
[84] Crawford, "Cartimandua, Boudicca, and Rebellion," 26.
[85] Jona Lendering, "Cassius Dio," Livius, last modified June 1, 2020, https://www.livius.org/sources/content/cassius-dio/.

anti-imperialistic as are Tacitus' — as seen in Paullinus' final speech — Dio also uses speeches to color the commentary.[86] The issue with his Boudicca speeches is the often-fantastical words he places in her mouth, like references to other female monarchs such as Nitocris and Semiramis, completely unknown to the Britons. Additionally, he uses the speeches to mock emperors he viewed unfavourably, like Nero.[87] Despite this, however, both Tacitus' and Dio's accounts describe the Roman administration's mismanagement. Whether it be the physical abuse of tribal royalty or the financial hardships placed upon the Britons through taxation and the confiscation of funds, these grievances receive a prominent place in their narratives to show why the natives revolted.[88] Dyson notes that similar cruelty and incompetence by the Portuguese East African colonial administration, such as brutal conscription practices, was a major cause for the 1917 native Barue uprising in what is now modern Mozambique.[89] As such, the accounts of both Dio and Tacitus possess some truth.

In conclusion then, as seen above, the accounts of ancient writers like Caesar, Tacitus, and Cassius Dio are invaluable sources. Despite certain issues with their motives, their respective works still provide extensive information on the origins of native revolt within the Western Roman Empire. When compared with the three main components of Dyson's model of post-conquest native revolt, these classical sources generally corroborate his findings. In each case, they referred, in some manner, to the tensions created by long-term acculturation and

[86] Cassius Dio, 62.11.
[87] Cassius Dio, 62.6.
[88] Tacitus, *Annales* 14.31; Cassius Dio, 62.2-3.
[89] Dyson, "Native revolts," 269.

the Roman administration's mismanagement of the respective region. They also emphasised the role that the charismatic leadership of individuals like Vercingetorix and Boudicca played in sparking revolts and strengthening them. Finally, they illustrated the particular historical circumstances at the time which encouraged the provincials to rise up in revolt. Ultimately, it is somewhat ironic that ancient rebellions were so similar to those of the modern age. It demonstrates just how little human psychology can change over the centuries.

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