Aspects of Ancient Institutions and Geography

Studies in Honor of Richard J.A. Talbert

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PART 3
Geography and Cartographic History

Second Chance for Valor: Restoration of Order After Mutinies and Indiscipline

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Students of the Roman military may be excused for drawing incorrect impressions about the stability of Roman legions during the Late Republic and Early Empire. Writing on military historiography, John Keegan observed, "Certainly no military institution of which we have detailed, objective knowledge has ever been given the monumental, marmoreal, almost monolithic uniformity of character which classical writers conventionally ascribe to the Legions."[1] Keegan may have been waxing rhetorical, but his characterization is not far off the mark, and still applies as much to modern military historians as it does to "classical writers." The modern image of the Roman military remains remarkably idealistic.[2] Many readers still think of the Roman military not only as a success, but also as a military machine, rolling inexorably over the Mediterranean world with its efficient training and brutal discipline.

Despite its reputation for rigid efficiency and coercive discipline, there were outbreaks of indiscipline and unrest in the Roman military. This fact of military life was only natural. Every institution that relies on ordered, collective action for success is occasionally subject to disturbances by its participants, even the military. In the military these disturbances took the form of indiscipline and unrest. What makes military unrest more dangerous to stability is that soldiers receive training in working together effectively under stress and in the efficient use of weapons. The potential for organized violence and the military's importance as an institution are why military unrest was such a threat to the stability of any state.

The Roman military was undeniably successful, but we also know that military unrest occurred and was more common than has been thought in the past. Every Roman commander who spent much time actively campaigning

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1   Keegan (1976) 68.
2   The traditional view is found in most books on the Roman army written before 2007 and many general works that are still produced; see Pekáry (1987) and Brice (2003) 3–16.

contended with outbreaks of military unrest.[3] Incidents ranged in size from individual acts like desertion to collective unrest such as mutinies. Authors have long blamed soldiers' idleness or political instability for unrest in the military (e.g., Vell. Pat. 2.20.4, 61.2, 81.1, and 125.1, Tac. *Ann.* 1.16–17, 2.55.5, App. *BCiv* 5.17, Cass. Dio 49.13.1, 57.5.1).[4] Some of it was undoubtedly due to political instability, but outbreaks of military unrest in all varieties were usually a result of weak discipline, poor command, or conditions of service. Regardless of its causes, military unrest was a genuine and consistent problem.

Although it was a potential threat to stability and occasionally led to changes in leadership, military unrest did not cause or contribute to the wholesale collapse of the Empire during most of Roman history because commanders were able to restore military order at the end of most incidents. The successful restoration of military order ensured that soldiers could not undermine the state because they remained subject to the military or removed from it. The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on this observation through a discussion of typical responses to collective military unrest (e.g., mutinies) during the Late Republic and Early Empire, demonstrating that the most successful responses shared common features. These successful approaches to resolution seem to have been learned through experience rather than becoming a formalized policy. Since commanders learned their military skills through experience, it should not be surprising that similar responses to military unrest spread among more experienced officers without having become formalized in law or policy.

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3 Pat Southern's (2006) recent social and institutional history of the Roman army is typical of the traditional view in that it gives the impression that there was little indiscipline and it was unimportant except for what it tells us about Roman punishments. Sabin, van Wees, and Whitby (2007) take a transitional view by acknowledging in volume two that there was Roman military unrest, but only mention the most serious incidents, and mostly after AD 235. Other recent work has provided some corrective for the traditional view, see Chrissanthos (2001) and (2014); Lendon (2006); Keaveney (2007); Phang (2008); Brice (2003, 2011, 2014); Connal (2012); Coulston (2013). Not all of these correctives are of equal value as Lendon, Phang, Coulston, and Chrissanthos focused on discipline generally rather than indiscipline and achieved mixed results.

4 Alston (2007) 189; Keaveney (2007) 81–89; and Phang (2008) 102–103, 221–24, 264, 267–69, and 272. Idleness by soldiers was a military crime (*Dig.* 49.16), but idleness as an actual cause of military unrest is similar to blaming "spontaneity" in other forms of collective action; McPhail (1991) 155; Brice (2003) 19. When ancient authors report that military unrest broke out due to idleness, we should usually understand it as 'code' for poor leadership.

Definitions & Phases

Before proceeding I must devote some space to defining military unrest and its specific forms as well as how it can be analyzed. Examinations of military unrest in Roman armies have usually referred to such disturbances as mutiny, as if it was the only word for unrest.[5] Privileging the modern term "mutiny" or the Latin *seditio* or, even, the Greek *ataxia* has hamstrung the ways in which historians discuss outbreaks of unrest. Not every incident was a mutiny. Ancient authors in all periods used an array of terms in Greek and Latin to describe a variety of military unrest and so must modern historians examining those events.[6] Military-sociologists and historians have developed a varied and useful vocabulary for treating unrest by soldiers.[7] This vocabulary provides a level of distinction and standardization that allows differentiation of scale and significance that is currently lacking from many discussions of unrest in ancient armies.

Military unrest emerged in one of several forms including military conspiracy, mutiny, expression of grievances, and insubordination. Although their impact and their treatment in surviving sources distinguish military conspiracies and mutinies as 'greater' forms of unrest, the latter two were 'lesser' forms of unrest that usually emerged without violence. These terms permit a more nuanced and realistic discussion of unrest in any military context, including in that of the ancient world. Since the discussion in this chapter concerns primarily mutinies, I will define and discuss only that type of unrest.[8] What will

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5 Keaveney (2007); Phang (2008); Chrissanthos (2001) and (2014); Coulston (2013).

6 Latin authors had an array of terms (both nouns and verbs) including: *seditio* (mutiny, revolt, insubordination), *motus* and *defectio* (rebellion), *res novae* (revolution), *desciscare* (to defect, revolt), *discordia* (discord), *turba* (disturbance), *tumultus* (riot), *bellum civile* (civil war), *coniuratio* (conspiracy), *infidelitas* (disloyalty), and *desertor* (defector), *desero* and *relinquo* (to desert). Greek authors also used a variety of terms (and their derivatives) to refer to unrest, including: στάσις (strife, conflict, mutiny), νεωτερίζω and νεοχμόω (to revolt), ἐμφύλιος πόλεμος (civil war), θορυβέω and ταράσσω (to cause an uproar, tumult), συνωμοσία and ἐπιβούλευμα (conspiracy), μεθίστημι (to defect), and ἀταξία (disorder, indiscipline). See Brice (2003) 76.

7 Lammers (1969) and (2003); Kaegi (1981); Rose (1982); Brice (2003) 65–76 and (2014). Cornelis Lammers's work (1969, 2003) on strikes and mutinies is important to understanding how a mutiny can progress, but because his work was limited to modern naval mutinies some of his conclusions do not apply to incidents in ancient armies. For example, the type of mutiny/strike he called (1969) a "promotion of interest protest" would lump together most mutinies and all expressions of grievances in ancient militaries and so is too imprecise to use effectively.

8 For more on the definitions of other forms of military unrest, see Brice (2014).

become clear is that the definition is sufficient to cover all instances and is consistent with modern work in military history and military-sociology.

Of the terms employed to describe resistance within the military, "mutiny" is perhaps the most problematic. Although "mutiny" evokes a bounty of vivid images of insubordination or violence by lower ranks against commanders, no broad consensus exists among ancient historians for its historical definition and specific usage. On the basis that it is a modern term and potentially anachronistic, some authors question application of the word "mutiny" to any type of unrest in ancient armies; however, refusal to employ "mutiny" in this context is not necessary and is not appropriate.[9] There is no efficacious alternative in the English language that can easily be substituted if "mutiny" is abandoned. Without the word "mutiny," the Latin term *seditio* is difficult to translate with any reasonable and consistent sense and "sedition" will not work for *seditio*, because it carries a treasonous connotation.[10] Additionally, if historians of any period find that an event meets all the criteria for a modern term, then the modern term should be employed, especially if it is not something that is chronologically dependent. No one would suggest that the word "government" or "marriage" should be rejected outright just because it is a modern word. Neither these words nor "mutiny" are chronologically dependent in the same way as terms like "radar" or "margin call." Despite disagreements among some scholars, analysis of recent work on unrest reveals that the term "mutiny" can be defined broadly enough to be chronologically open, while remaining sufficiently narrow to be useful in delineating the scale of particular incidents.

A mutiny is defined as collective, violent (actual, potential, or threatened) opposition to established military authority. Events included in this variety of unrest are riots, tumults, disturbances, and similar incidents, as well as the incitement of these outbreaks. In this definition, mutiny is always collective action and is limited nearly always to actions by regular soldiers—although some low-level officers might participate in some cases during the Republic. Mutiny was merely one type of military unrest, but requires attention because of its occasional notoriety and potential for damage and instability. In addition to its potential for violence, because a mutiny damaged military order in the units where it occurred and could undermine discipline among military units that did not even participate, it was a great threat to military stability. Through use of this definition, it becomes easier to identify certain incidents of military unrest and discuss them with more precision.

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9   Carney (1996) 19–21, especially 20; discussed further in Brice (2003) 66.
10   Kaegi (1981) 4.

In addition to defining mutiny and other types of military unrest, we now recognize that like most forms of collective action, mutiny developed in phases.[11] Awareness of these phases allows us to better understand how incidents developed and were resolved by separating the stages of action and allowing us to see and examine each in turn. The first stage is the appearance of *strain*. Strain is the problem or stress that causes unit members to become agitated. The strain can be tied to a variety of issues and may have several components (real or imagined) simultaneously. This phase is the one in which we must look for the true cause of the outbreak. For example, the stress of continuous campaigning was a strain on Caesar's army in 49 (Suet. *Iul.* 69, Luc. *Phar.* 5.217–390, Plut. *Caes.* 37, App. *BCiv.* 2.47–48, Cass. Dio 41.26–35). Strain often affects participants differently so not everyone will react the same way. The second stage is *generalized belief* in which members of the group (potential mutineers) acquire a shared belief in who or what is responsible for the strain. Some of Caesar's legionaries in 47 came to believe that Caesar was the source of the unending warfare and they mutinied, refusing to deal with anyone else (Caes. *BAfr* 19.3, Suet. *Iul.* 70, App. *BCiv.* 2.92–4, Cass. Dio 42.52). It is in this belief phase that we often find the reasons why two units experiencing the same strain do not both mutiny. One group acquired a sufficiently shared belief while the other did not, for reasons we cannot now determine. Phases one and two can exist in groups without leading to mutiny, but the *trigger*, phase three, is what leads these to combust into mutiny. For example, when Octavian discharged half his army in late 31 (Suet. *Aug.* 17.3, Cass. Dio 51.3–4) that was the trigger for the post-Actium mutinies even though the strain on the men was wrapped up in the opportunity to assault Egypt.[12] Analyzing the origin of mutiny in terms of three distinct phases allows us to separate the underlying causes from the trigger and helps explain why some strains result in mutiny.

Once a mutiny begins, the fourth phase, *mobilization*, is how the collective action spreads as participants are "recruited" and organized or directed. Leaders, formal or informal, play a key role in mobilization. Without mobilization a collective action is unlikely to continue much beyond its trigger. For example, in the mutinies of AD 14, many men were swept along repeatedly, in

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11   Lammers (1969); Rose (1982) 565–67; Hathaway (2001) xiv–xv; and Brice (2003) 23–25. In my analysis I split Rose's *origin* phase and Hathaway's *rising action* and *trigger* phases into three components: strain, belief, and trigger. This expansion permits better identification of the actual cause of the incident as opposed to its trigger. It also helps better explain why two units subject to the same conditions respond differently.

12   The mutiny in 49 is discussed in the next section. On the mutiny in 47 see Chrissanthos (2001); Brice (2011) 38. On the mutiny in 31 see Brice (2011) 52–53 and n.66 and 116–21.

waves, and yet enough soldiers remained unattached for the officers to regain the upper hand (Vell. Pat. 2.125, Tac. *Ann.* 1.16–19, Cass. Dio 57.4). Mobilization continues until the military authority is able to reassert order.

The final phase is the *restoration of control.* Restoring control includes removing or addressing the original strain that had caused the mutiny and restoring discipline. The most successful examples of this final phase go beyond punishment of ringleaders and include steps the military authority takes to give the unit a chance to accept social control and reintegrate into the military. For example, after restoring discipline in a unit by removing the ringleaders (not necessarily killing them) a commander might then order the unit on a long march or quick, aggressive campaign in order to restore unit cohesion, discipline, and morale. The final phase of most outbreaks is the most important since successful resolution minimized or eliminated the damage to military stability. Recognizing that mutiny, and other forms of collective military unrest, can be seen occurring in phases provides an effective approach for better understanding and explaining these incidents. By throwing light on the restoration of control at the end, this approach can also make more clear why the Roman military was so effective despite military unrest. Several examples illustrate different attempts to resolve mutinies.

Case Studies

Placentia 49 BC

Late in 49 BC one of Julius Caesar's legions mutinied. His response was swift and consistent with his reaction to other mutinies during his career.[13] His legions were returning to Italy after difficult campaigning in Spain. Legion *IX* mutinied outside Placentia.[14] They blamed their officers, especially Caesar who was still at Massilia, for continuing the war interminably and not paying them previously promised bounties. There is the suggestion in Dio's account that the soldiers sought to extort opportunities out of a commander who needed them in the war (Suet. *Iul.* 69, Plut. *Caes.* 37, App. *BCiv.* 2.47, Cass. Dio 41.26). The first four phases of the mutiny occurred swiftly and seem not to have been especially violent or unusual.

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13   Caesar's legions mutinied during the Gallic Wars in 58 at Vesontio and later in 47 at
       Campania; see Chrissanthos (2001).
14   Appian (*BCiv.* 2.47) has Caesar's speech blame legion *IX* for "starting" the mutiny, but
       there is no support for assuming, as Chrissanthos (2001) 68 does, that it spread. The reso-
       lution only ever applied to one legion.

The final phase opened with Caesar's swift return from Massilia with his three remaining legions. He would have taken several days to arrive, but his return indicates that his legates could not resolve matters. Once there he harangued the troops and threatened to decimate legion IX and discharge the survivors. This threat surprised the men and their officers who immediately pleaded for a lesser sanction (App. *BCiv.* 2.47, Cass. Dio 41.35). His threat was entirely within military law (*Dig.* 49.16) even if it seems extreme. It was effective. Caesar's threat to punish the entire legion was a calculated move to separate the actual ringleaders from the numerous soldiers who had not joined or had been swept up in the mobilization phase. The threat worked and Caesar was able to isolate the 120 ringleaders. Needing men but also seeking to resolve the mutiny, he decimated only the ringleaders. Once he had resolved the mutiny Caesar ordered the legion to continue marching to Brundisium (App. *BCiv.* 2.47–48; Cass. Dio 41.35–36; Front. *Strat.* 4.5.2). Legion IX performed well for the rest of the campaign in Greece.[15]

Caesar's resolution worked because it effectively restored military and social control over the legion. His threat separated the ringleaders from the rest of the legion. Two aspects of collective unrest contributed to Caesar's success. Not everyone who is present at the start of collective action takes part. Additionally, participants make a mental calculation of the probability of punishment—the less likely they will be punished severely, the more incentive there is to mutiny.[16] The soldiers of legion IX seem to have calculated that Caesar needed them too much to discharge or execute them, as Dio (41.34) suggested. Caesar demonstrated he would impose the full penalties and so those men who were not fully committed immediately turned on the ringleaders to save their lives. Isolating the most restive soldiers was an important part of Caesar's resolution strategy.

Once he had separated the ringleaders Caesar had to go forward with some punishment or the threat was empty. Mass discharge was an effective threat since it resulted in a loss of status among the veterans and there were opportunities for bounties and spoils to be lost. The alternative, decimation, was brutal. It was effective since it punished the entire group by making soldiers kill their comrades. Simultaneously, however, it provided the unit a chance to purge and expiate its guilt through the deaths, thus contributing to restoring social control through religious as well as social sanctions.[17] Finally, for Caesar

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15   Chrissanthos (2001); Keaveney (2007) 83.
16   On participation percentage see McPhail (1991) 89–107 and 163–74; Brice (2003) 152. On the mental calculation of participants see Lammers (1969).
17   Lintott (1999) 41–43.

it was preferable over discharge because it eliminated fewer able soldiers. Imposing punishment was not the last part of Caesar's strategy, he still had to restore military order in the unit.

Decimation by itself would have been a disruptive way to restore order if not followed up with an opportunity for the soldiers to prove their loyalty and courage. Sending the unit to Brundisium for campaigning in Greece further reinforced the restoration of control and provided the remaining men a chance to acquit themselves in combat. Far from giving in to the mutineers as some have suggested,[18] Caesar restored order and then kept legion *IX* in the field for the next three years, employing them in Greece and North Africa (Caes. *BCiv*. 3.45, 46, 62, 66–67, 89, *BAfr*. 53, 60, 62, 81).

Caesar used much the same strategy of threatening mass discharge when he encountered the mutiny in 47 and eventually achieved similar success. In that case he restored order, but did begin discharging units afterwards (Plut. *Caes*. 51, Cass. Dio 42.54).[19] This threat of mass execution or discharge was a response found repeatedly in the history of Roman military unrest and seems to have been part of the repertoire officers learned through command experience.[20] Little wonder that commanders employed it since it worked more often than not.

Brundisium 44 BC

The importance of effective restoration of social control becomes clear in a second example. In October 44 BC, after sparring in Rome with Octavian, Mark Antony arrived in Brundisium to gather his legions and march to his governorship in Cisalpine Gaul (Cic. *Fam*. 12.23.2, Nic. Dam. 109 and 131, *RG* 15.1, App. *BCiv*. 3.27, 39, Cass. Dio 45.7). He commanded legions formerly stationed in Macedonia including *IV* and *Martia*, and some new recruits.[21] Octavian's agents had preceded him to Brundisium and attacked Antony's reputation, offered bribes, and posted notices to undermine the legions' loyalty (Nic. Dam. 139, App. *BCiv* 3.31, 39–40, and 44). Antony found the soldiers unruly and when he failed to address their expectations for rewards and their demands to fight

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18   Chrissanthos (2001); Keaveney (2007) 83–85.

19   Chrissanthos (2001) 73–74 argues that Caesar did not punish the mutineers in 47. While it is true he did not execute anyone immediately, he expected to need the men and the discharges with reduced benefits were a punishment after all.

20   Scipio had employed it in 206 BC (Polyb. 11.25–30, Livy 28.24–32, App. *Hisp*. 34–37), and Pompey had done the same (Plut. *Pomp*. 11, 13–14); Brice (2003) 92–95.

21   The legions from Macedonia included *IV*, *Martia*, and *II* or *XXXV*. See Keppie (1998) 114; Brice (2003) 86–95.

the assassins of Caesar they created a disturbance. He then called an assembly (*contio*) and offered a bounty to each man, at which members of legions iv and the *Martia* mutinied, led by their centurions.

Having appealed to the soldiers as comrades and offered them a reward, Antony found he was unable to restore order peacefully.[22] He resorted to threats and enforced military law, ordering the execution of some of the mutinous centurions and soldiers with records of indiscipline. After tribunes separated out the mutinous men, possibly including centurions, Antony selected less than a tenth of these by lot and executed them. He does not appear to have focused attention on the ringleaders necessarily, so much as on men with a reputation for insolence. Afterwards, he replaced an indeterminate number of centurions and tribunes among the mutinous legions (Cic. *Phil.*, 3.4 and 30, 5.22, 12.12, and 13.18, App. *BCiv* 3.43, Cass. Dio 45.13.1–3). His threats did not lead to the separation of the ringleaders from the rest of the legions; rather, it had the opposite effect—unifying the opposition within the restive legions. The punishment, including the execution of centurions and troops as well as the replacement of officers, fell hardest on legion *Martia*. Afterward, he called a final assembly at which he cowed the men into accepting the original offer. In addition to convincing the legions to acquiesce to his bounty promise, it is probable that he issued a new *sacramentum* since the initial mutiny was a breach of any prior oath. Thinking he had 'restored' control Antony marched north toward Rome and Cisalpine Gaul (Cic. *Att.* 16.8, *Fam.* 12.23, *Phil.* 3, 4, 5, 11 and 13; App. *BCiv.* 3.43–46; Cass. Dio 45.13.1–3).

The mutiny reemerged outside Rome as soon as Antony left the legions in camp and departed for the city to harangue the senate. Legions *Martia* and iv mutinied with some or all of their officers and declared their intention to join Octavian. Both legions changed sides. Antony approached the mutineers to address them and recover their loyalty, but they responded belligerently. When he was unable to bring the legions back under command, Antony returned to Tibur, enrolled more veterans, and moved north toward Mutina with the rest of his force (Cic. *Phil.* 3, 4, 5, 11, 13, *Fam.* 11.7; Vell. Pat. 2.61.2; App. *BCiv.* 3.45–46; Cass. Dio 45.13.3).[23]

Antony's attempt to restore control was entirely within Roman practice, but still failed. He seems to have threatened the mutineers before resorting to violence. He also had the soldiers' records examined to identify troublemakers. He then had a percentage of centurions and soldiers from this group

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22   Such an appeal on the basis of a relationship as comrades (*commilitones*) was well known and usually effective; see Campbell (1984) 32–33; MacMullen (1984) 443–44.

23   Brice (2003) 88–89; Keaveney (2007) 85–86.

executed, mostly from legion *Martia*. Antony did not threaten or employ decimation or require their own unit execute them, but seems to have had his bodyguards carry out the punishment.[24] Afterward, he called another assembly and finding the men less openly restive he paid out a small bounty, promised more, and changed the legionary officers as a precaution. These steps were entirely within his prerogative. Antony was so out of touch with these legions' temperament that he was caught completely unaware when they mutinied outside Rome. His response then was to reissue the *sacramentum* to his remaining legions and march north.

Using the phases to examine the mutiny permits a better understanding of why Antony's efforts in the last phase failed. We must acknowledge that Octavian had undermined his legions (only two, as it turned out); thus Antony was not dealing with a typical mutiny. Despite this fact, some of Antony's efforts should still have paid off. His first failure was not separating the ringleaders from the rest of the unit. He probably threatened violence and everyone knew the penalty for mutiny. The participants must have decided that either the likelihood of penalty was low or their demands were worth the punishment because the violence did not separate the casual participants from the ringleaders. The penalties and Antony's refusal to acknowledge their demands for revenge seem to have changed the mutiny from one in which the men wanted their interests met to one in which they wanted to break with Antony.[25] He used limited punishment, but then remained, through his own frustration or delusion compounded by changing the officers, unaware of the state of affairs in the legions. In this situation it became unlikely that Antony could restore control. He had followed some of the same steps as Caesar, but failed. These two legions would prove to be loyal to Octavian for the rest of the period that followed.[26]

Illyricum or Italy 34–33 BC

Octavian's reputation for ignoring traditional military discipline was something he only gradually realized would have to change.[27] An incident that

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24 The manner in which the soldiers were selected and executed indicates that this was not a 'typical' decimation as described by Polybius (6.37–38). More likely, however, this execution reflects the realities of service and command in which measures were dependent on contemporary circumstances as opposed to the ideal image of discipline as preserved by Polybius (6.37–9) and Josephus (*BJ* 3.102–8).

25 Brice (2003) 87–92.

26 Keaveney (2007) 85–86.

27 Brice (2011).

occurred during his Illyrian wars demonstrated that he did learn his lesson after the mutinies of 36 BC. After those mutinies Octavian had discharged many thousands of veterans, some with promises of bounties and a few of the most mutinous without any benefits.[28] Several years later, after the opening of the wars in Illyricum, a large group of these soldiers who had been discharged without benefits applied to Octavian to reenlist in the army. They sought an opportunity for pay and enrichment (Cass. Dio 49.34–35).

Octavian apparently needed men because he enrolled them as a separate legion despite their mutinous reputation. The enlistment in a separate legion may indicate he expected trouble from them, or that there were many of them and they were previously from the same legion.[29] The reconstituted unit remained restive despite the enlistment, although it is not clear in what ways. In response, Octavian attempted to resolve the problem by discharging the superannuated members and settled them in veteran colonies in Gaul, after which he issued warnings to the rest of the men in the legion. The unit remained openly restive, however, forcing Octavian to turn to more brutal methods of imposing discipline. He separated the most disruptive soldiers for punishment, as Antony had done at Brundisium in 44, but this only made the unit mutiny openly (Cass. Dio 49.34).

Octavian then responded with vigor and a show of force. He summoned the mutinous legion to a *contio* where they were surrounded by the rest of the army and then forcibly disarmed. He then discharged the mutineers from the army as a group, presumably without benefits again. In this way, he exhibited the army's support for his authority and traditional disciplinary standards as well as his own resolve to impose and maintain strict discipline within the ranks.[30] After their peaceful discharge, the mutiny ended. When some of these same men later appealed to reenlist again, Octavian accepted them and they exhibited no further indiscipline (Cass. Dio 49.34–35).

In resolving this mutiny, Octavian demonstrated an awareness of standard practices for resolving outbreaks of unrest. Indeed, he was remarkably generous. His original reenlistment of the men suggests that manpower needs more than generosity drove his decision. The discharge of the superannuated men with awards of land in colonies was also generous, particularly when these men had already been discharged without rewards following Naulochus. As Dio (49.34.4) notes, it was intended to encourage the rest to return to discipline.

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28   Brice (2003) 103–12; Keaveney (2007) 88–90.
29   The identity of the originally discharged unit as well as that of the reconstituted legion remains a mystery, but it is possible that this was Caesar's old legion *X*.
30   Brice (2011).

Although Octavian did not threaten or engage in a decimation of the legion as he might have, he did remove some of the ringleaders for punishment, confirming that he followed a standard practice of separating the ringleaders and eliminating them. This mutiny is one of the few instances when sources report that a Roman commander engaged an entire army against mutineers.[31] This broad leniency and his acceptance of the legion's request for restoration after the final collapse of the mutiny points to Octavian's need for men, but also an underlying desire throughout his response to make an unequivocal example to the rest of the army of the acceptable norms of behavior.[32] His new practices must have worked since after 30 BC he experienced no further mutinies for the remainder of his life and the commanders serving him also successfully resolved the military unrest that they encountered.

Lower Rhine AD 14

One last set of mutinies demonstrates how another Roman commander tried resolving mutiny, in the process confirming what was required to successfully resolve military unrest. After Augustus' death in AD 14, there were two sets of mutinies, in Pannonia and the Lower Rhine. Resolution of each was successful, but because of the way events on the Lower Rhine progressed it provides a good example of successful as opposed to unsuccessful responses.

Soon after receiving the news of Augustus' death, the four legions camped together in Lower Germany mutinied after several days of relaxed duties.[33] The soldiers were unhappy about their service conditions, especially having their service extended well beyond the sixteen or twenty years for which they had joined and the failure to distribute the cash retirement bonus they had been promised. There were also complaints about pay and centurions (Vell. Pat. 2.124, Suet. *Tib*. 25, Tac. *Ann*. 1.31, Cass. Dio 57.4–5).[34] The mutiny escalated quickly among all four legions as a group and climaxed as the soldiers

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31   The scale, not the tactic of employing a disciplined unit against an indisciplined one, is
      unusual. Tacitus' account (*Ann*. 1.45 and 48–9) of Germanicus' response to the continuing
      mutiny in Lower Germany communicates the extraordinary nature of such a response to
      mutiny.

32   Brice (2011).

33   The four legions were organized in two groups, legions *I Germanica* and *XX* had as their
      winter base (*castra hiberna*) Ara Ubiorum, while legions *V Alaudae* and *XXI Rapax* used
      Castra Vetera as their winter base.

34   Uncertainty over the death of the emperor may have contributed to general tension, but
      does not seem to have actually stimulated the unrest, nor does a desire of internal war
      seem to have been more than empty rhetoric, Brice (2003) 168–70, 185–202; *contra* Alston
      (2007) 189. See also Woodman (2008); and Salvo (2010).

vented their ferocity on the centurions, some of whom were beaten to death and ejected from camp.[35] Once they presented their demands to the local legate they settled down in camp to await the response of Germanicus.

Germanicus was then in Belgica, but he responded without delay as soon as he received a dispatch. On arrival he heard the soldiers' demands and called an assembly (*contio*) during which he demanded the men return to order and made a typical speech about duty, oaths, and the needs of the Empire (Tac. *Ann.* 1.34–35, Cass. Dio 57.5). During his speech, Germanicus apparently tried persuasion instead of threats of executions or discharge.[36] When this failed to achieve results, he and his council released the men and formulated a new plan. Abandoning violence, they forged a letter from Tiberius, with promises that could be confirmed later. The next day Germanicus read the letter in assembly promising to discharge superannuated men, require reserve duty for no more than five years, and pay Augustus' bequests to the soldiers (Tac. *Ann.* 1.36, Cass. Dio 57.5). Germanicus did not concede to guarantee payment of the retirement bounty in cash. Although the soldiers must have seen through this charade they accepted the terms, took their new oaths to Tiberius and went into winter quarters at Castra Vetera (legions *V* and *XXI*) and Ara Ubiorum (legions *I* and *XX*). Since the men took oaths the mutiny was officially resolved.

Germanicus believed he had been successful without employing any of the traditional tools or steps for restoring order, but as it turned out he had failed to fully restore control over the mutinous legions. He left the legions to settle in and went to inspect the Upper Rhine legions, which had remained disciplined (Tac. *Ann.* 1.37). After Germanicus returned to Ara Ubiorum weeks later he learned the legions at Ara Ubiorum were tense while those further away at Castra Vetera remained restive. The tensions boiled over in October. When a delegation from Rome arrived in Ara Ubiorum to bring Germanicus honors, the soldiers of legion *I* mutinied (Tac. *Ann.* 1.39).[37] The soldiers feared that the commissioners were there to cancel the promises Germanicus had made

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35   On the centurions see Ward (2012).

36   During the speech he may have been heckled on his loyalty to Tiberius, but this exchange, if it actually happened, was not an issue on which anyone (other than the Roman authors) focused. That has not kept various commentators interested in the literary aspects from commenting. In addition to Brice (2003) 221–22, see also Fulkerson (2008); Woodman (2008); and Salvo (2010) 141–43.

37   The soldiers in camp included legions *I* and *XX* and the recently discharged soldiers who remained as reserves (*apud vexillum*). Given that only legion *I* and the veterans suffered penalties, it seems unlikely that legion xx participated. See Brice (2003) 175–77; Woodman (2008); and Salvo (2010).

during the earlier mutiny. By this time there was news that both legions in Castra Vetera had also mutinied. Although the reasons those legions mutinied are not recorded, it was undoubtedly connected with the flawed resolution of the earlier mutiny.

Germanicus' moved to restore order fully this time, starting in Ara Ubiorum. He called assembly the next morning, at which he berated the troops for their behavior and sent the delegates away with an armed escort. Concluding that the soldiers remained unsteady, Germanicus sent his wife and children, along with those of his *amici* and officers to a safer venue away from the town and camp (Tac. *Ann.* 1.40.3). The dismissal of his family marked a change in Germanicus' response and resulted in a profound transformation within the camp as the mutineers became penitent and prepared to return to order. Tacitus' emotional narrative aside, the departure of the innocents provided an open sign for the troops that their commander had resolved to employ violence within the camp.[38] If some of the troops actually protested (Tac. *Ann.* 1.40–41, Cass. Dio 57.5) or even tried to stop the families from departing, then it was not out of affection for Germanicus' family as much as fear of what would follow.

The parting was followed by another *contio* at which Germanicus vigorously addressed the soldiers. In addition to demanding that they return to order, he offered to review the roll of centurions if they would turn over the troublesome soldiers for punishment. The bulk of soldiers, who remained loyal, seized the men most active in the recent mutiny and brought them to the tribunal where the legate of legion *I*, who Germanicus placed in charge, handled the penalties. Each mutineer was brought before the armed assemblage, which loudly pronounced the verdict by acclamation. In an action reminiscent of decimation, the guilty were thrown to the ground to be killed by their comrades and the innocent were sent to join in the executing (Tac. *Ann.* 1.42). Once the guilty soldiers were eliminated and the units had purged their collective guilt, Germanicus followed up by relocating the veterans to the province of Raetia, which had been without a legionary garrison since AD 9 (Tac. *Ann.* 1.42–44). Following renewed issuance of military oaths Germanicus reviewed the centurions, dismissing those deemed by the legionaries' testimony and their officers' judgment to have been rapacious and cruel (a *centurionatum*).[39] With this measure, the second mutiny in Lower Germany ended, but Germanicus' restoration of order continued.

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38   It is clear from another part of the report (Tac. *Ann.* 1.44.2) that the families were relocated by the time the final *contio* was complete.

39   Brice (2003) 226–28; Salvo (2010); and Ward (2012) 85–86, 137.

The third and final mutiny in Lower Germany was then occurring at Castra Vetera.[40] Germanicus had sent legions *V* and *XXI* with the legate, Aulus Caecina, following resolution of the first mutiny. Since then the legions had become openly mutinous, although sources do not indicate why their restive mood had erupted (Tac. *Ann.* 1.45). Germanicus may have offered legions *V* and *XXI* the same concession he had made to *I* and *XX*—a *centurionatum* in exchange for turning over the ringleaders.[41] Clamorous rejection of this offer was sufficient cause for stronger measures.

Germanicus assembled a large force with which to chastise the mutinous legions and prepared to move against them. Although apparently he had earlier rejected the use of *auxilia* against legionaries, the force he assembled included these units in addition to legions *I* and *XX*.[42] Before marching the sixty miles, he issued a fierce and threatening ultimatum to Caecina that had the desired effect of pressing him into moving against the mutineers. Armed with the knowledge that Germanicus was on his way with a large force to indiscriminately crush the mutinous legions, Caecina rallied the officers and loyal soldiers to ambush the mutineers. In the violent engagement that followed, the mutineers were killed to a man along with numerous loyal soldiers who died in the struggle (Tac. *Ann.* 1.45–48). It may not have been a formal decimation-like punishment, but it still gave the loyal soldiers a chance to purge their units of the guilty. The level of violence was great, but the result was the same—the mutiny terminated. Germanicus arrived in time to see the aftermath. He mopped up the situation in this camp and issued a new oath to the numerous survivors.

The situation remained unsettled. The loyal soldiers inside the camp at Castra Vetera had just participated in a bloody episode that would have raised their level of aggression and agitation. In addition, the soldiers in Germanicus' force had probably raised their expectations and emotional energy as they prepared for battle. As a means of redirecting their aggression and getting the legions away from the violent site, Germanicus launched a sudden, late-season

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40   Because Germanicus had issued a *sacramentum* after judging the initial mutiny complete, this later disturbance constituted a new mutiny.

41   The consistency with which Germanicus treats the legions in Lower and Upper Germany, awarding concessions even where not demanded, supports this conclusion, Brice (2003) 179–80.

42   In order to achieve numerical superiority he would have needed a force greater than two legions. The size of the force he assembled may be gathered from Tacitus' report (*Ann.* 1.49.6, 51.5) on the assault across the Rhine. That force included twenty-six cohorts and eight cavalry *alae* of *auxilia* (all of which were untainted by the mutiny) in addition to the four formerly mutinous legions and Germanicus' Praetorians and *Germani*.

invasion across the Rhine. During the vigorous campaign men clamored for a chance to demonstrate their loyalty and courage as they assaulted the local tribes (Tac. *Ann.* 1.50–51). In the ensuing combat units that had been damaged by the punishments had a chance to restore their honor and cohesive bonds.[43] With this campaign, Germanicus finally restored military control and order to all the mutinous legions. He continued active campaigning with these same legions for the next several seasons. None of these units mutinied again for the next several decades.

Conclusion

What these case studies demonstrate are commonalities in responses to mutinies. Like Caesar in 49 BC and Octavian in 34 or 33 BC, Germanicus was not able to resolve the mutiny and restore control until he separated the most disaffected men from the rest, punished the ringleaders, and then gave the units a chance to take out their aggression and restore their honor and cohesion in duties or combat. All three parts seem to have been necessary. When Germanicus initially avoided threatening violence and conceded many of the mutineers' demands, his efforts failed. It was not because of political instability that he conceded; he lacked a large enough army to enforce such penalties against four legions, and he may have hoped that reminding men of their oaths would be as successful as it eventually had been for Caesar in 47 BC (Plut. *Caes.* 51, Suet. *Iul.* 70, App. *BCiv.* 2.93).

Antony had also failed. He initially tried haranguing his mutinous men and then resorted to violent punishment, as much out of frustration as anything else. However, like Germanicus' initial response, he had not separated the mutinous men from the rest. Only when those two mutinous legions defected to Octavian did the rest of his legions fall into order and then remained loyal. Germanicus' failures had led to the second set of mutinies along the Rhine. Only then did he adopt practices that Caesar and Octavian had used successfully. His attempts to extend leniency toward the mutineers as well as the extent of the violence he eventually gathered against Castra Vetera were reminiscent of Octavian's actions in 34 BC. Germanicus' success in separating the ringleaders was similar to Caesar's efforts at Placentia.

There was sufficient institutional experience with mutinies that standard practices for combating and resolving them had emerged. An examination of mutinies at the close of the Republic is an opportunity to demonstrate the

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43   Brice (2003) 178–85, 226–30; Salvo (2010); and Zecchini (2010).

standard practices. Roman practice had not usually been to react to mutiny by preparing to engage in combat, as if in a battle. Commanders did not usually attack mutinous units with the rest of the army and threaten the restive units with annihilation, although this too did occur as with Octavian's and Germanicus' strategies. The usual response was to try to separate the ringleaders or the most indisciplined unit from the rest and then punish them. The standard punishment of units for mutiny was some variant on the *fustuarium* or beating to death. According to Cicero, it was still in effect in 44 (Cic. *Phil.* 3.14).[44] In the violent punishment of units there was often an element in which the soldiers sought expiation of their guilt, personally and for their unit, either through turning over violators or by participating in the punishment. Chastisement was followed by a re-imposition of discipline usually through a new *sacramentum* for the cleansed units followed often by a military task like a difficult march, campaign, or even a civil engineering project. This pattern of response was as effective in resolving other forms of military unrest and indiscipline as it was for mutinies. Many commanders who successfully employed such solutions may have learned aspects of them through personal experience. 'Standard practices' evolved out of experience, not Roman law or regulations, and as with so much about Rome, were applied irregularly.

This discussion has concluded by demonstrating successful practices for resolving military unrest. It has also tried to demonstrate that there are better ways of analyzing and understanding military unrest. Our toolbox has generally been small and one-dimensional. We can hardly blame historians for previously treating all military unrest as if it was the same—their toolbox for unrest contained only a hammer, so every incident looked like a nail. However, as I have demonstrated, there are some tools available for analyzing military unrest. The tools include definitions, analytical models, and vocabulary that permit us to analyze and discuss mutinies and other forms of military unrest with more precision and authority. What emerges from these interdisciplinary tools is a better and more nuanced understanding of indiscipline and thus some of the human qualities of the soldiers' experience.

The presence of indiscipline and military unrest were not a sign of weakness in the military, but were a typical, if undesirable, part of maintaining a military. Roman commanders' swift and often successful response to mili-

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44   While there were some cases in which there was no punishment for mutiny, these usually occurred during internal war and instability, when officers were competing to retain the soldiers' loyalty. This aberrant pattern of resolving mutinies Chrissanthos (2001) identified as so common during instability and internal war that he considered it the norm instead of the aberration. See also Connal (2012) and Coulston (2013).

tary unrest usually restored order and ensured stability. This pattern is why indiscipline typically did not undermine the state during the principate. The mutinies of AD 68 and 92 were exceptions of course, but they actually prove the rule. Military unrest in 68 should not have resulted in Nero's suicide since the commanders outside Rome had actually restored order, but he panicked before receiving that news.[45] The new emperors who emerged after these two disturbances achieved stability after dealing with the active military unrest and restoring order in the military. Only with the breakdown in commanders' responses to unrest in the third century did the military contribute directly to the extended period of instability in the third century.[46]

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45   Brice (2003) 263–69, 346–66; Connal (2012).

46   I am grateful to Richard Talbert for his patience, good humour, and consistent advice through the years and for suggesting to me a research topic that continues to surprise and teach me; thank you for the opportunities.

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