There was an old and persistent idea at Rome that peace was dangerous. Juvenal, as often, summed it up best:

\[\text{nunc patimur longae pacis mala, saevior armis}
\]
\[\text{luxuria incubuit victumque ulciscitur orbem. (Sat. 6. 292-293).}\]

The idea was part of a cluster of values and concepts, an ideology. I propose to describe this ideology as it appears in Livy.

I

After narrating the foundation of Rome by the valiant Romulus Livy tells us how Rome was founded anew by Numa, this time on the basis of law and religion. The opposition which Livy emphasizes has its origins in the ancient Indo-European paired contrast of the warrior-king and the priest-king. For Livy Romulus and Numa symbolize the opposite spheres of peace and war:

\[\text{Ita duo deinceps reges, alius alia via, ille bello, hic pace, civitatem auxerunt. (1.21.6).}\]

So Numa established peace, and to mark this the Temple of Janus was closed. But peace brought new problems:

\[\text{Clauso eo cum omnium circa finitimorum societate ac foederibus iunxisset animos, positis externorum periculorum curis, ne luxuriarent otio animi quos metus hostium disciplinaque militaris continuaret, omnium primum, rem ad multitudinem imperitam et illis saeculis rudem efficacissimam, deorum metum iniciendum ratus est. (1.19.4)}\]

On close examination it will be seen that this text is organized around a series of binary oppositions, all deriving from the primary opposition of peace vs. war.

1. Numa refounds the city \textit{de integro}: 1.19.1.
3. Trans. A. de Selincourt, \textit{Livy: The Early History of Rome} (ed. 2, Harmondsworth 1971), p.54: “Rome was now at peace; there was no immediate prospect of attack from outside and the tight rein of constant military discipline was relaxed. In these novel circumstances there was an obvious danger of a general relaxation of the nation’s moral fibre, so to prevent its occurrence Numa decided upon a step which he felt would prove more effective than anything else with a mob as rough and ignorant as the Romans were in those days. This was to inspire them with the fear of the gods.”
A
societas ac foedera vs. externa pericula
otium vs. metus hostium
luxuriare vs. continere
curae positae vs. deorum metus iniciendus

B
disciplinaque militaris
vs. externa pericula
vs. metus hostium
vs. deorum metus iniciendus

Together the items in each column form a coherent argument. A = peace and its dangers: once agreements are reached with neighbouring states and the community is secure, fears are put aside, and men’s emotions (animi) consequently become unrestrained and excessive. The key word here is luxuriare, which comes from agriculture and originally referred to uncontrolled, “rank” vegetation.4

B = the antidote for peace: fear, either of men or of gods, instils discipline and checks excess.

Now this cluster of oppositions and equivalences recurs again and again in Livy. It provides the theory which he uses to explain the interaction of internal and external affairs, and indeed it is the basis for Livy’s interpretation of Roman history. Let us examine a few key passages in the earlier books to see how Livy develops this interpretation.

II

(1) In Book II a long section (cc. 23-33) is devoted to the struggles which arose over debt procedure (nexum) and ended in the Secession of the Plebs. Livy describes the conflict in terms of the general category of “internal discord between the ruling class and the masses”, and links it with external danger from the Volscians.5 The whole development is described as a counterpoint between these two factors — internal dissidence and external danger.

The arguments of the debtors are organized around the war vs. peace opposition:

Fremebant se, foris pro libertate et imperio dimicantes, domi a civibus captos et oppressos esse, tutioremque in bello quam in pace et inter hostes quam inter cives libertatem plebis esse. (2.23.2).

Proposals for debt relief are debated, but as soon as word of a Volscian invasion arrives the consul announces suspension of debate: “With the enemy almost at the gates, defence must be the first consideration.”

5. 2.23.1: *Sed et bellum Volscum imminebat et civitas secum ipsa discors intestino inter patres plebemque flagrabit odio...*
Promises are made, the plebs is calmed, an army is raised, and the Volscians are defeated (2.24.6-2.26). Then, however, the plebs find that the promises given earlier will not be kept and become further embittered. When news of a Sabine invasion is announced, the masses refuse to serve in the army. In this crisis the consuls ask the Senate for advice:

\[\text{decernunt ut dilectum quam acerrimum habeant: otio lascivire plebem.}\]

(2.28.5).

"The House replied that the mob having got out of hand through sheer lack of employment, the consuls were to levy troops with the utmost strictness of the law."\[6\]

\[\text{lascivire, like luxuria, also takes its root meaning from the world of nature, referring to 'playful, frisky' animals and infants.}\]

The last phase of the struggle was opened by renewed demands for relief. A new war intervened, but this war, says Livy, "was invented" and the order to march caused sedition among the troops.\[8\]

To sum up: the nexum section is organized around the peace vs. war opposition, and it develops several related ideas. (a) Peace encourages discord and class conflict; that is the true meaning of luxuria and lascivire, the real dangers of otium. (b) Discord is checked by military authority, by the imperatives of common defence against a foreign threat. (c) An invented threat may be used if a real one is not available.

(2) Book III centres around the struggle for redistribution of public lands. There is first a war with the Aequians to be settled, but Roman victories lead to peace which in turn "immediately called forth political disturbances": secundaeque belli res extemplo urbanos motus excitaverunt (3.9.1). Civil war threatens until the opposite tendency is called into play: "A dangerous clash was imminent and only avoided by — would you believe it? a report from the Hernici that the Volscians and Aequians, in spite of their recent losses, were on the warpath again."\[9\]

Livy's insinuation is then made explicit by the tribunes, who boldly brand the emergency a trumped-up story (fabula composita): "it was a piece of play-acting staged by the Senate, who had hired the Hernici to play a part in it... War had been declared, indeed, against the innocent Antiates; but the real enemy which the Senate meant to fight was the common people of Rome... The people, they asserted, had better realize that the Senate's one object was to quash the

8. 2.31. 1-2; cf. Ogilvie (above, n. 2), p.309, takes per causam as “on the pretext of” and cites Cicero de Domo 10.
9. 3.10. 7-8, trans. de Selincourt (above, n. 3), p.194.
proposed legislation, and that the object was already achieved – unless they themselves acted promptly. The matter was still open; they had not yet changed civilian dress for the soldier’s: let them, therefore, take immediate steps to avoid expulsion from the city which belonged to them, and the slavery which would follow.”

In this passage the peace-war opposition is developed in noteworthy fashion. Wars abroad and class conflicts at home are related, and freedom is the privilege of civilians who remain in the city while those who enter military service are said to have “accepted the yoke of servitude”. Along with the peace-war opposition goes the parallel domestic-foreign opposition: at home the citizen can defend his freedom, abroad he must obey orders. Hence the exhortation of the tribunes: the people should act *dum domi, dum togati sint, caveant ne possessione urbis pellantur, ne iugum accipiant.* (3.10.13).

(3) The conservative answer to this argument is given in the speech of Quinctius in Book 3, Livy’s first extended rhetorical composition and a key to his thinking.11

It is introduced by a summary of the situation, organized around the foreign-domestic opposition: *nec seditionem domi nec foris bellum acceperunt: sed imminebat utrumque* (3.66.1). Enemy troops have invaded Latium, emboldened not by confidence in their own valour but rather by the knowledge that domestic discord has weakened Rome.12

This is the point on which Quinctius bases his argument. Class conflict is a poison which weakens the state (3.67.6). The result is that the enemy can destroy and loot with impunity; all classes suffer (3.68.3). Far better the good old days, when the masses obeyed senatorial generals rather than demagogic politicians, when they fought against foreign enemies rather than Roman senators (3.38.6). Now the people refuse to fight, preferring to stay at home, enjoy peace, and argue like women; but this peace will be costly: *ex otio illo brevi multiplex bellum* (3.68.8).

The core of the argument is emphasis on the strength and success war brings.

At hercules, *cum stipendia nobis consulibus, non tribunis ducibus, et in castris, non in foro faciebatis, et in acie vestrum clamorem hostes, non in contione patres Romani horrebant, praeda parta agro ex hoste capto pleni fortunarum gloriaeque simul publicae simul privatae triumphantes domum ad penates redibatis; nunc oneratum vestris fortunis hostem abire sinitis.* (3.68.6).

10. 3.10.10-13, trans. de Selincourt (above, n. 3), p.195.
12. Again stated in terms of the foreign-domestic opposition: *quicquid irarum simul- tatiumque cum externis fuerit in ipsos verti, oceaecatos lupos intestina rabie opprimendi occasionem esse* (3.66.4), where externis is balanced by intestina.
Thus in three passages — and many more could be cited — peace is connected with divisive conflicts and weakness, war with unity, strength, and empire. Along with this goes a profoundly pessimistic view of human nature and the nature of society. Livy sees no hope of social peace on the basis of justice or even compromise: “pretending to want fair shares for all, every man raises himself by depressing his neighbour; our anxiety to avoid oppression leads us to practise it ourselves; the injustice we repel, we visit in turn upon others, as if there were no choice except either to do it or to suffer it.”

Selfishness can only be checked by fear, especially fear of a foreign enemy: *extemus timor maximum concordiae vinculum* (2.39.7). Hence a great state cannot be without an enemy for long; as Livy has Hannibal say, the rule is that *si foris hostem non habet, domi inventit* (30.44.7).

This brings us to the crux: concord brings strength, and strength brings empire. Hence Appius Claudius’ attack on the tribunes: “If you loved your country — nay, if you had a spark of humanity in you — you ought rather to have welcomed and, so far as you could, to have fostered a proper relationship between patricians and populace... Could the harmony between them but last forever, who would hesitate to affirm that we should quickly become the dominant power amongst our neighbours.”

Since peace leads to discord, not concord, peace is dangerous. That is Livy’s premise, part of the traditional ideology which he and most Roman writers shared.

III

Some aspects of the historical significance of this ideology are worth noting. First, it was part of a long established tradition of political thought. It is first attested in our sources in connection with the debate on the Third Punic War. Whereas Cato the Censor pressed for the final destruction of Carthage, Scipio Nasica argued that the Roman people had become insolent and was challenging the Senate’s power, and he was therefore in favour of keeping the fear of Carthage hanging over the people “as a check upon their arrogance.” The same idea is expressed in Sallust’s works, most notably in his lapidary formulation: “The division of the Roman state into warring factions, with all its attendant vices, had originated some years before as a result of peace... fear of its enemies

13. 3.65.11, trans. de Selincourt (above, n. 3), p.257; cf. Ogilvie (above, n. 2), p.516, who notes the subtle shift from impersonal to personal verb forms, indicating that Livy’s convictions are involved here.

14. 5.3.9-10, trans. de Selincourt (above, n. 3), pp.343-344.

preserved the good morals of the state"; *metus hostilis in bonis artibus civitatem retinebat.* 16

This train of thought was closely connected with basic ideas about individual character. Man would be the plaything of fortune, it was thought, unless he developed strength and self-discipline, *virtus.* 17 Otium was bad for *virtus*: it could cause a man to become soft and self-indulgent. So we have Catullus abruptly ending a love poem with a complaint: *otium, Catulle, tibi molestum est.* 18

Second, the use of a foreign threat to maintain concord was of course fundamentally a method of manipulating the masses to thwart social reform. As such it was part of a sophisticated policy consciously developed by the Roman aristocracy. That policy is echoed in Polybius' account of Roman politics, when he says that danger from without brings the classes together and extraordinary strength is the result. 19 This is more clearly apparent in Polybius' admiring account of how the Roman aristocracy used "fear of the gods... the very thing which keeps the Roman commonwealth together..." If it were possible to form a state wholly of philosophers, such a custom would perhaps be unnecessary. But seeing that every multitude is fickle, and full of lawless desires, unreasoning anger, and violent passion, the only resource is to keep them in check by mysterious terrors and scenic effects of this sort. 20

With this one might profitably compare what Strabo says about social control 150 years later: "For in dealing with a crowd of women, at least, or with any promiscuous mob, a philosopher cannot influence them by reason... there is a need of religious fear also, and this cannot be aroused without myths and marvels." 21

Thus we have come back to the cluster of ideas in Livy's account of Numa: religion, fear, order. Livy and Strabo project back into the past the policy and ideology of the ruling classes in their own time.

19. Polybius 6.18; cf. F. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1957), p. 697, who cites Plato and Aristotle as antecedents; I think this was a genuinely Roman tradition, and the fact that Polybius "seems to be arguing against" it, as Walbank notes, indicates that Polybius was reporting what he had heard at Rome rather than what he had read in Greece.
Finally, one must recognize that the complex of ideas about war and unity found in Livy and other writers arose out of a long historical experience. The Roman state was in fact profoundly influenced by military needs and military priorities; one need only consider the origin of the census and the *classes* system to see this clearly.\textsuperscript{22} Hence the early and unusually complete victory of political over kinship ties, the key to Rome's unique ability to incorporate new peoples in its early history.\textsuperscript{23}

Valerius Maximus devoted the second book of his work to ancient institutions, and when he came to describe the triumph he began with these words: *Disciplina militaris acriter retenta principatum Italiae Romano imperio peperit* (2.8.praef.). He was right.
