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PAX DEORUM?

*The essence of Roman religion was to maintain the pax deorum, the favour of the gods*¹, podstawową kategorią rzymskiej «teologii państwowej» był (sic!) *pax deorum*². The *pax deorum* is to be found in almost every book on Roman religion. It is strange that the conception has not become a subject of research yet, and this fact was a little bit puzzling only for Jerzy Linderski³.

Pax is a notion of special interest to modern historians of ancient Rome. It is a keyword for understanding the history of Rome and her empire. It could be a synonym for a peaceful domination that respects its subjects, or, on the other hand, a byword for imperialism connected with extermination and acculturation. Both points of view resulted from the European experiences of the last 250 years.

Pax (Romana or any other) can be seen as one of the powerful metaphors coined and used by contemporary historians. Such metaphors can be dangerous, because if one will tear them away from the sources the metaphor determines the interpretation.

Pax deorum is less famous than *pax Romana*, but it is thinkable that every student of the Roman history knows what it is – strangely enough it is rare to think what it was. Almost every book on the Roman religion starts with a short discussion on the *pax deorum*, or with a simple mention of it. It is seen as the fundamental value for all Roman rituals, the sole aim of the Romans and their religion⁴, and sometimes for the Romans or a Roman⁵. The notion functions as the first brick or a cornerstone for the modern interpretations of the Roman religion. This is why *pax deorum* is often left without any footnotes, remarks etc. – it acts like a definition of a point.

¹ E. Orlin, *Temples, religion and politics in the Roman republic*, Leiden–New York–Köln 1997, 15–16.

² A. Gillmeister, *Metus gallicus i libri sibyllini: kilka uwag o politycznych i społecznych przyczynach prodigium*, „In Gremium”, 1, 2007, 7.

³ J. Linderski, *Roman religion in Livy*, [in] *Livius: Aspekte seines Werke*, hrsg. W. Schüller, Konstanz 1993, 55–57.

⁴ J. Scheid, *Religion et piété à Rome*, Paris 2001, 25–26, 45; D. Musiał, *Antyczne korzenie chrześcijaństwa*, Toruń 2001, 70.

⁵ See H. Kowalski, *Państwo i religia rzymska wobec „obcych” kultów i rytuałów w okresie republiki*, [in] *Grecy, Rzymianie i ich sąsiedzi*, ed. K. Nawotka, M. Pawlak, Wrocław (Antiquitas 29), 465: *podstawowym celem człowieka było zapewnienie pax deorum – pokoju boskiego*.

The most important and frequent among the footnotes (if there are any) is Georg Wissowa's famous handbook⁶. The latest works cite also other books, mostly these by Natan Rosenstein, Veit Rosenberger, John Scheid⁷. Usually the same pages of above mentioned works are quoted. From among the sources Cicero and Livy are generally cited, as if they were the only ones to write anything about *pax deorum*. Wissowa had cited Cicero and Livy, and sent back for the rest to Barnaba Brissonius' work⁸. Afterwards Wissowa became the first authority used to underpin the *pax deorum* theory. It seems to me that Wissowa created the modern notion (his handbook was first published in 1902).

The ideas of what *pax deorum* was, and what it became, can be seen separately. It is tempting to juxtapose (and analyse) modern definitions with the sources. As it was mentioned above, Wissowa's book was a turning point. Before him *pax deorum* appeared from time to time. In an article published in 1881 H. Jordan explained, that *pax deorum* was a *Verzeihung die Menschen und Göttern gewähren*⁹. In his view, the word *pax* in the earliest Roman inscription was a part of a formula used when asking a god / gods for forgiveness, and to make a god / gods pleased. So asking for *pax* meant using a magic formula that made gods ready to accept one's sacrifice¹⁰. *Pax* was a heavenly gift. Brissonius stressed a connection between *pax* and *venia*¹¹.

Wissowa changed that meaning. According to this famous German scholar *pax deorum* was a state (*Zustand*) that needed to be kept (*Erhaltung*). The notion described the normality within the relations between gods and humans. It was possible to change its conditions or to renew it when it was broken. For these reasons the Romans introduced a set of rituals: especially *lustrum*, but also *auspicia*. More, even gods were careful about keeping the existence of *pax* and sent *prodigia* and other omens to indicate a breach of the *pax*¹².

⁶ G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, München 1912. See also J. Linderski, *Pax deorum (deum)*, [in] *DNP* 9 (1996), 456.

⁷ N. Rosenstein, *Imperatores victi: military defeat and aristocratic competition in the middle republic*, Berkeley 1990; V. Rosenberger, *Gezähmte Götter: das Prodigenwesen der römischen Republik*, Stuttgart 1998; Scheid, *op. cit.*

⁸ B. Brissonius, *De formulis et solemnibus populi Romani verbis libri VIII*, Halle–Lipsiae 1731, 81–82. The book was written in the 16th century. Customarily it was the earliest author cited, see Wissowa, *op. cit.*, 8–11; K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte*, München 1976, 9. On the pre-Wissowa research on the Roman religion see G. G. Stroumsa, *Enlightenment perception of Roman religion*, [in] *Ἐπιτομή τῆς οἰκουμένης: Studien zur römischen Religion in Antike und Neuzeit für H. Cancik, H. Cancik – Lindemeier*, ed. Ch. Auffarth, J. Rüpke, Stuttgart 2002, 193–202.

⁹ H. Jordan, *Allateinische Inschrift aus Rom*, „Hermes”, 16, 1881, 236.

¹⁰ Jordan, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*: *Denn pacari Opi Toitesiae wird nichts anderes heißen können: die Göttin muss für eine Sühnleistung von dem Fehlenden „Frieden geben”, er selbst so zu sagen ihr „befriedigt werden”.*

¹¹ Brissonius, *op. cit.*, 81–82.

¹² Wissowa, *op. cit.*, 389–392.

Wissowa's view dominated modern vision of the Roman religion. This understanding of *pax* was attractive, because it showed the ultimate aim of all rituals, gave an explanation for the Roman obsession with omens and expiation.

Wissowa's definition was of course improved, but it has not been changed. For Bailey *pax deorum* was equilibrium (a word commonly used when describing *pax deorum*) of the normal relation of god and man, and the most important mean to achieve it was *lustrum*. He also added a note, that *pax* had a connection with *amicitia*, friendship for profits¹³. The same was repeated by Ward Fowler with some additions – *pax* could also describe a territory¹⁴ (following A. Rudorff's remark¹⁵), and, after a century of civil wars, the old *pax* had been renewed by Augustus as *Pax Augusta*¹⁶. According to this historian *pax* was originally under the supervision of *rex*, and then *pontifices*. Very important are verbs used to describe *pax* – *restore, secure, obtain, maintain*¹⁷. Kurt Latte defined *pax deorum* a little bit differently – according to him it was *Gnade der Götter*¹⁸, and a synonym for *venia, grace*¹⁹. For him it was also some kind of a settled state.

Once established and supported by scholars of great authority the notion of *pax deorum* as a state based on proper cult, *lustrum*, looking for omens, flourished. It is – as was already stated – to be found in almost every work on Roman religion. The last 20 years have not changed anything. Nathan Rosenstein defined *pax* as *the condition resulting when benefits were mutually and reciprocally conferred between the Romans and their heavenly protectors*, or as a *state*, that can be *scanned*²⁰. For Jorg Rüpke *pax deorum* was *Friedenzustand zwischen dem römischen Volk und den Göttern*²¹. Veit Rosenberger noticed, that *pax* meant also help or grace (in the 2nd century BC), but unfortunately he has not developed this idea²². Roberto Fiori, after (a very interesting) description of *ordine giuridico – religioso* of the Romans, stated that it should have its name, and the best one was *pax deorum*, because it was a state of harmony and equilibrium²³. He underpinned his theory on the premises, that the Persians had their notion of *aša*, the

¹³ C. Bailey, *The religion of ancient Rome*, Berkeley 1907, 22.

¹⁴ W. Ward Fowler, *The religious experience of the Roman people from the earliest times to the age of Augustus*, London 1922, 87, 169–172, 272–276, 431.

¹⁵ A. Rudorff, *Gromatische Institutionen*, [in] F. Blume, K. Lachmann, T. Mommsen, A. Rudorff, *Erläuterungen zu den Schriften der römischen Feldmesser*, Berlin 1852, 238–239: *pax* = *pagus*.

¹⁶ Ward Fowler, *op. cit.*, 429–433.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 286, 300, 302, 328.

¹⁸ Latte, *op. cit.*, 40–41, 147.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 183, n. 4.

²⁰ Rosenstein, *op. cit.*, 56.

²¹ J. Rüpke, *Domi militiae: die religiöse Konstruktion des Krieges in Rom*, Stuttgart 1990, 125.

²² Rosenberger, *op. cit.*, 21.

²³ R. Fiori, *Homo sacer. Dinamica politico-costituzionale di una sanzione giuridico-religiosa*, Napoli 1996, 173.

Greeks – of *μοῖρα* and *τιμή*²⁴. The traditional and settled understanding resumed Jerzy Linderski²⁵.

Such understanding is also present among the historians of the Roman law. They added few remarks. According to their views *pax deorum* was connected with the rule *do ut des*, and with the *amicitia*²⁶. The most important among these works are these by Francesco Sini²⁷, but he also treated *pax deorum* as given.

Resuming, *pax deorum* is seen as a state, an equilibrium between men and their gods (or vice versa). This state could be checked, restored, renewed, tested, scanned, obtained via different media (sacrifices, or observing the *prodigia*). It earned a very great importance, and became to be used to describe different phenomena. If the *pax deorum* ruled the relations between men and gods, it could also rule for example *the stability of dynamic competition among governing aristocrats*²⁸. It was possible to see it as a key to understand the Roman religious liberty²⁹. It is usually stressed, that *pax deorum* was a common value. What is significant, all these conclusions are supported not by the sources, but by the secondary literature, beginning with Georg Wissowa's work (always the same pages).

This understanding of *pax deorum* is very comfortable, because it gives an ultimate aim of the Roman cult, and it allows to introduce an explanation for the very Roman religious customs like *auspicia*, *prodigia*, and *lustrum*. It also suits very well the widely accepted view of scrupulous observation of rituals by the Romans – they acted so to avoid breaking the *pax deorum*, or not to cause the opposite, *ira deorum*.

Another prod was given by the literature on the early Christianity. It was tempting to see Christians introducing their own *pax*, *pax Dei*, as opposite to the old Roman and pagan *pax deorum*³⁰. *Pax* was indeed very important to Jesus and to

²⁴ Fiori, *op. cit.*, 177–178.

²⁵ Linderski, *Pax*, 456.

²⁶ P. Voci, *Diritto sacro romano in età arcaica*, SDHI, 19, 1953, 49: [pax deorum] è la situazione per cui gli dei sono in amicitia con gli uomini, ai qua il concedono i benefici che essi si aspettano da loro (...), cf. 50, 53. See also Fiori, *op. cit.*, 173–174.

²⁷ F. Sini, *Bellum nefandum: Virgilio e il problema del „diritto internazionale antico”*, Sassari 1999; Idem, *Sancitas: cose, Dèi, (uomini). Premesse per una ricerca sulla santità nel diritto romano*, „Diritto@Storia”, 1, 2002; Idem, *Uomini e dei nel sistema giuridico-religioso romano: pax deorum, tempo degli dei, sacrifici*, „Diritto@Storia”, 1, 2002; Idem, *Ut iustum conciperetur bellum: guerra „giusta” e sistema giuridico-religioso romano*, „Diritto@Storia”, 2, 2003.

²⁸ Cf. Rosenberger, *op. cit.*, 22.

²⁹ M. Sordi, *Pax deorum e libertà religiosa nella storia di Roma*, [in] *La pace nel mondo antico*, ed. M. Sordi, Milano 1985, 146–151, criticised by E. Montanari, *Il concetto originario di pax e la pax deorum*, [in] *Concezioni della pace*, ed. P. Catalano, P. Siniscalco, Roma 1988, 39–45.

³⁰ See A. Brent, *The imperial cult and the development of the church order: concepts and images of authority in paganism and the early Christianity before the age of Cyprian*, Leiden 1999, 17–117.

the early Christians³¹. The studies on Christian *pax* only consolidated traditional definition of *pax deorum*.

So it can be asked whether the modern understanding of *pax deorum* serves as a magic formula (or magic metaphor), like many others (e. g. *pax Romana*). May it be caused by petrification of this understanding in our handbooks, especially in the most important ones, which the numerous scholars were weaned on? The sources also force a reader to think about the Roman religion as a set of constant rules, as a way of even not seeking, but maintaining, the equilibrium.

Modern conception of *pax deorum* can be summarized as follows: 1) it was central for the ancient Roman religion; 2) it was an ultimate aim of the Roman rituals; 3) it was a state; 4) it was possible to scan or examine this state; 5) the Romans developed a sophisticated system of checking the *pax deorum* (especially searching for *prodigia*); 6) it could be broken, renewed (e. g. as *Pax Augusta*); 7) it was a harmony, or an equilibrium; 8) it was connected with *amicitia*.

Pax deorum is to be found at the very beginning of the Roman literary tradition. The word *pax* is a very old one. Its derivate, **paco*, appeared already in the Duenos' inscription³². Etymologically *pax* is connected with roots **pāk* / **pāk* and **pāg* / **pāg* that mean uniting, sticking, combining³³. The ancient etymologies almost *unisono* derived *pax* from *pactum*³⁴, and it is to be noticed (even if such „etymologies” were arbitrary³⁵). It is believed that *pax* originally meant an act, and

³¹ See e. g. E. Dinkler, *Eirene: die urchristliche Friedensgedanke*, Heidelberg 1973; K. Wengst, *Pax Romana. Anspruch und Wirklichkeit: Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungegen des Friedens bei Jesus und im Urchristentum*, München 1986 and A. Janzen, *Der Friede im lukianischen Doppelwerk vor dem Hintergrund der Pax Romana*, Frankfurt 2002 (Christian *pax* as the opposition of the *pax Romana*); A. Gonzalez Lamadrid, *Ipse est pax nostra: studio exegetico-teológico de Ef 2, 14–18*, Madrid 1973.

³² Frölke, **paco*, [in] *TLL* X 1, I, 20.

³³ See M. Viano, *Contributo alla storia semantica della famiglia latina di „pax”*, „Atti della Academia delle Scienze di Torino. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche”, 1953; 88, 168–183; A. Walde, J. B. Hoffman, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg³ 1954, 231; A. Ernout, A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*, vol. II, Paris 1960, 437; C. Milani, *Note sulla terminologia della pace nel mondo antico*, [in] *La pace nel mondo antico*, ed. M. Sordi, Milano 1985, 17–29; M. L. Porzio Gernia, *Considerazioni linguistiche sulla familia del lat. pāx, paciscor ecc.*, [in] I. Lana, *La concezione della pace a Roma: lezioni*, Torino 1987, 205–213; M. Job, „Krieg” und „Frieden” im Altertum: historisch-vergleichende Überlegungen zur Semantik zweier Wortfeldnamen, [in] *Krieg und Friede im Altertum*, ed. G. Binder, B. Effé, Trier 1989, 27–44, P. Kehne, *Pax*, [in] *DNP*, 9, (1996), 454; Keudel, *Pax*, [in] *TLL* X, 1, VI, 863–864.

³⁴ Festus 230 Müller: *pacem a pactione condicionum putat Sinius Capito, que utrique inter se populo sit observanda*; Ulpian., *Dig.* II 14, 1,1: *pactum (...) a pactione dicitur, inde etiam pacis nomen apellatum est*; Mar. Vict., *Rhet.* I 1: *pax (...) a pacto*; Isidor., *Orig.* XVIII 1, 11 Lindsay: *Pacis vocabulum videtur a pacto sumptum*. Cassiodorus is the exception: *pax (...) a parcendo sive a pacendo dicta est (in psalm. CXXI 7)*.

³⁵ H. Wolanin, *Słowotwórstwo w myśli językoznawczej starożytnej Grecji: od Homera do Dionizjusza Traka*, Kraków 1996, 12,162.

secondary – a state³⁶. Ancient grammarians stressed that *pax* is one of the *feminina semper singularia*, and thought the pluralis³⁷ to be an archaism³⁸. *Pax* is derived from an archaic verb **paco*, *-is*, known from the Law of the Twelve Tablets. This verb was replaced by another one – *paciscor* (*pac īsc-or*). **Paco* and its meaning is a very important point. In the Laws of the Twelve Tablets this verb described an act ending a litigation³⁹. *Pax* (as a synonym of *pactum*) can be seen as an effect of the **paco*. This shows us the oldest possible sense of the *pax* – it was an act that ended a period of hostilities and stopped the possibility of the revenge⁴⁰.

But most cases of its use are supplied by Plautus' comedies. His characters often ask gods for *pax*. In *Rudens* Ampelisca (and her friend) seeking Venus' help kneeled at the goddess' altar and prayed: (...) *Venus alma, ambae te obsecramus / Aram amplexantes hac tuam lacrumantes, genibus nixae, / In custod<e>lam nos tuam ut recipias et tutere: / illos scelestos, qui tuam fecerunt fanum parui, / Fac ut ulciscere nosque ut hanc tua pace aram obsidere / patiare (...)* ⁴¹. Another Plautus' heroes asked for *pax* from Aesculapius (*pacem ab Aesculapio / petas, ne forte tibi eveniat magnum malum*)⁴², Venus⁴³, and Apollo⁴⁴. A storm was a sign of a lack of Neptune's *pax* (*ni pax propitia forent praesto*)⁴⁵. A *deum pax* was also mentioned⁴⁶, and *pax cum mortuis* as well⁴⁷. According to the evidence it was normal to ask gods for *pax*. But it was not thought as a state, rather it was an act. A god / goddess gave his / her / their *pax* to a petitioner. There is no trace of fear that *pax* can be broken, there is no trace of restoring it. What is more surprising, *Amphitruo* is going to ask for Iovis' *pax* in a moment of his prosperity – after his sons were born⁴⁸.

³⁶ A. Forcellini, *Totius Latinitatis lexicon*, vol. IV, Pratii 1868, 541; Viano, *op. cit.*, 182–183; Milani, *op. cit.*, 25; Porzio Gernia, *op. cit.*, 206.

³⁷ See Sall., *Iug.* XXXI 21.

³⁸ Charisius, *Inst. gramm.* I 11 Keil; *Charisii excerpta* p. 548 Keil; Diomed., *Ars gramm.* I, p. 327 Keil; Donat., *Ars gramm.* II p. 376 Keil; Serv., *Comm. in Donat.*, p. 432 Keil.

³⁹ XII Tab. I 6 Zabłocky: *Rem ubi pacunt, orato*; I 7: *Ni pacunt, in comitio aut in foro ante meridiem caussam coiciunto*; VIII 2: *ni cum eo pacit, talio esto*.

⁴⁰ On the connection between the *pactum* (*pax*) and the revenge see J. Zabłocki, *Rozważania o procesie rzymskim w „Noctes Atticae” Aulusa Gelliusa*, Warszawa 1999, 69–76.

⁴¹ *Rudens* 694–699 Goetz, Schoell.

⁴² *Curculio* 270 – 271 Goetz, Schoell.

⁴³ *Poenulus* 1181–1186 Goetz, Schoell.

⁴⁴ *Mercator* 678–680 Goetz, Schoell: *Apollo, quaeso te, ut des pacem propitius, salute et sanitatem nostrae familiae, meoque ut parcas gnato pace propitius*.

⁴⁵ *Trinummus* 837 Ritschl.

⁴⁶ *Poenulus* 252–253 Goetz, Schoell: *sed hoc nunc responde / mihi sunt hic omnia / quae ad deum pacem oportet adesse?*

⁴⁷ *Mostellaria* 514 Lorenz. It can be a pun – the public knew that in fact the *mortui* were feasting living men.

⁴⁸ *Amphitruo* 1126–1127 Fleckeisen: *abi domum, iube vasa pura actutum adornari mihi, ut Iovis supremi multis hostiis pacem expetam*. On the Plautus' usage of *pax* see Brissonius, *op. cit.*, 81–82.

Plautus knew also a similar word – *pǎx*⁴⁹. This short loanword from Greek language, a calque of *πάξ*⁵⁰, in the 19th century earned a religious interpretation, but Ch. Lobeck proved⁵¹ that it was an effect of misunderstanding of Hesychios' information on the word⁵². *Pǎx* was so called *interiectio*, and expressed certain emotions (Ritschl's theory, that *pǎx* quickly adopted the meaning of *pāx* was rejected)⁵³. Besides Plautus *pax* of a given god / goddess is mentioned by Ennius: Priamus in search of *pax* sacrificed at an altar of Apollo⁵⁴. This case is important, because Priamus was skirted by his wife's dream, so it could be in accord with the modern understanding of the *pax deorum*. Another instance is an inscription of certain L. Aufidius – he asked Hercules for *pax*: [... *hoce ut*] *libe[t] don[u / ... d]edit L. Aufid(ius) D. / [f. ... de]cumā facta / [Hercol]i mer(eto) iterum / [simul] te orat tu es / [sanctus] deus quei tou / [tam a te] pacem petit / [eum] adiouta*⁵⁵. Hersilia's prayer is also thought to be archaic – *Neria Martis, te obsecro, pacem da*⁵⁶.

This short survey of the evidence earlier than Cicero and Livy shows that *pax deorum* was not in any case a state. It was a gift from a heavenly protector, a grace, an individual act – and nothing more. What is more surprising, these sources should have been in accord with the modern definitions of *pax deorum* more than the later sources. It is often claimed that *pax deorum* was a feature especially of the archaic Roman religion (e. g. Voci, and every scholar dealing with the Roman religion in Livy). The phrases *pacem da, peto pacem, des pacem propitius* find their parallels in Umbrian *futu fos pacer paše tua, id est esto fauens propitius pace tua*⁵⁷. *Pacer* – *propitius* is here a quality of a god, and *paše* – *pace* is his / her blessing, boon, that makes god's *propitiatio* effective (abl. instrumentalis). There is no proof that *pax* was derived from the *libri Sybillini* or if it was exclusively used by the pontiffs⁵⁸.

⁴⁹ *Miles gloriosus* 808 Goetz, Schoell; *Stichus* 771 Goetz, Schoell; *Trinnummus* 891 Ritschl.

⁵⁰ Prisc., *Gramm.* III 29,28 Hertz: *pax adverbium comicum, quo utitur Terentius, quod similiter graecum est.*

⁵¹ Ch. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus sive de theologiae mysticae Graecorum causis libri tres*, t. I, Regimonti Prussorum 1829, 775–783, cf. *TLG* VI 184.

⁵² Hesychios II 433 Albertus, Schmidt.

⁵³ On this word see in general M. Barchiesi, *De pax particulae vi atque usu*, „Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. Classe di Scienze Morali e Lettere”, 1952–1953, 111, 233–255; Keudel, *op. cit.*, 878; P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, t. II, Paris 1983, 855; F. Ritschl, *Plautinische Excursus*, [in] Idem, *Opuscula philologica*, Bd II, Lipsiae 1868, 254. Another cases of usage are: Ter., *Heaut.* 290–291 Fleckeisen; Petron. 66,7 Marmorale; Apul., *Apol.* 75,7; Auson., *Taechnop.* XIV 164 Prete (taken from Terentius).

⁵⁴ Ennius, *Alexander*, fr. 38–49 Warmington = Cic., *Div.* I 21, 42.

⁵⁵ CIL I² 1290 = IX 3569 = CLE 5.

⁵⁶ Gell., *NA* XIII 23, 13.

⁵⁷ J. Safarewicz, *Wybrane teksty umbryjskie*, Warszawa 1954, 20, 38.

⁵⁸ Brissonius, *op. cit.*, 81–82.

It is now necessary to check if Cicero, Livy, Vergil and other authors understood *pax deorum* in a different way. For Catullus *pax* is still a grace – of Nemesis (*pace tua fari hic liceat, Rhamnusia uirgo*)⁵⁹ to show wishes of his heart – or a grace that could protect him against the wrath of the gods, because for him Roscius was more beautiful than Aurora (*pace mihi liceat, caelestes, dicere vestra mortalis visus pulchior esse deo*)⁶⁰. Cicero was not very interested in the *pax deorum*. He asked for *pax ac venia* in the case of Rabirius⁶¹, and he meant nothing more than help. This meaning and juxtaposing *pax ac venia* are present in another place⁶². Lucretius asked Venus to persuade Mars to send down his *pax* (*petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem*)⁶³. Of course Venus' *pax* is also needed⁶⁴. According to Lucretius *pax deum* is gods' internal peace, *quies*⁶⁵. *Pax* is also a desired feature of a human soul.

Livy is the most abundant source – eleven instances⁶⁶, but his usage of the *pax deorum*, as was stated already by Jerzy Linderski, was in fact infrequent and rare. All those cases deal not with personal pleas, but collective, in the name of the whole nation. The scenario is more or less the same: terrifying omens from the gods (*prodigia*), signs of their wrath (e. g. *pestilentia*), next fear among the Romans and concrete actions to win (*impetro, exposco*) their gods' *pax* (or *pax veniamque*)⁶⁷. Is Livy's understanding really different? The order and the aim are the same as in the earlier cases above. *Pax* is nothing more than grace or help, but now its recipient is collective. There are not any trace of defining *pax deorum* similarly to the modern historians. There are no phrases like „breaking the *pax* with gods”, „maintain the *pax* with gods”, and this absence is significant. What

⁵⁹ Catullus, *Carm.* LXVI 70–73.

⁶⁰ Catullus, *Epigr.* frag. 2 Buecheler = Cic., *ND* I 79.

⁶¹ *Rab. perd.* 5: *Quae cum ita sint, primum, quod in tanta dimicatione capitis, famae fortunaeque omnium fieri necesse est, ab Iove Optimo Maximo ceterisque dis deabusque immortalibus, quorum ope et auxilio multo magis haec res publica quam ratione hominum et consilio gubernatur, pacem ac veniam peto precorque ab eis ut hodiernum diem et ad huius salute conseruandam et ad rem publicam constituendam inluxisse patiantur.* It is possible to see *pax ac venia* as a synonym of the earlier *ope et auxilio*.

⁶² Font. 30: (...) *ille in bellis gerendis ab dis immortalibus pacem ac veniam petunt, istae ipsis dis immortalibus bella gesserunt.*

⁶³ *RN* I 40 Martin.

⁶⁴ *RN* 29–32 Martin, cf. M. Swoboda, J. Danielewicz, *Modlitwa i hymn w poezji rzymskiej*, Poznań 1981, 77–80.

⁶⁵ *RN* II 1093–1094; III 18 Martin.

⁶⁶ Liv. (ed. Weissenborn, Müller) I 16, 3; I 31 7 (*pax veniaque inpetrata esset* because of *pestilentia*); III 5, 14 (public prayers for *pax deum* because of *portenta*); III 7, 7; III 8, 1 (*pestilentia*); IV 30, 9–11; VI 12,7; VII 2,2; VII 7,12; XXVII 23,4; XXXIX 10,5; XLII 2,3. The first case is very similar to the Umbrian phases: Liv. I 16,3 Weissenborn, Müller: (...) *universi Romulum iubent; pacem precibus exposcunt, uti volens propitius suam semper sospitet progeniem.*

⁶⁷ I 31; XXXIX 10 cf. III 7,7.

is more important, Livy reported that to gain *pax deum* even foreign cults and rituals were thought to be appropriate (IV 30,9–11).

The „Augustan poets” provided next cases. Vergil quoted *pax deorum* when describing sacrificing at altars and asking for *pax* (*pacem exorare, exquirere*)⁶⁸. Another case makes Jupiter’s *pax* a necessary condition to reach and settle in Italia⁶⁹. What is more important Servius commented this last fragment. According to this grammarian *pax* in this case was a synonym for *benevolentia*, *venia*, and *suffragio*⁷⁰. Also Grattius knew *pax* as a part of a prayer to Vulcanus⁷¹ – and a synonym for grace.

Later *pax deorum* appeared rather infrequently and rarely. It was quoted by Valerius Maximus⁷² without any different meaning than grace or help. More interesting is short remark from the *Aetna*. After suppressing the rebel of the Giants *pax est reddita mundo* – *pax* of Jupiter and other gods⁷³. Here *pax* got a cosmic dimension. Another important source is Pliny the Younger’s praise of Trajan – the Caesar is able to secure the *pax* – *quasi pacisceris cum dis*⁷⁴. Similar in meaning is a quotation from Silius Italicus – Hasdrubal *pacificans divos*⁷⁵.

Pax deorum was used infrequently and rather rarely – especially when compared with the modern literature on the subject. Only Plautus and Livy made the phrase more important within their texts. It is strange that sources are almost consistent in the usage. *Pax deorum* was nowhere defined as a state, or central to the religion of the Romans. The modern understanding is based on a false premise: *pax* is thought as our peace, without any autonomy. The second false premise is to see *pax deorum* similarly as *pax* – end of war. These were different things, and it was stated in the evidence⁷⁶. *Venia* and *benevolentia* were the most often cited synonyms for *pax*. There is no mention about breaking the *pax* with gods – if the modern conception of *pax deorum* was correct, such mentions should have occurred. The influence of the Christian *pax* must also be stressed: founded

⁶⁸ *Aen.* III 356 Hirtzel: *Hic Helenus, caesis primum de more iuvenis / exorat pacem divom* (...); IV 56–59: *principio delubra adeunt pacemque per aras / exquirunt; mactant lectas de more bidentis / legiferae Cereri Phoeboque patrique Lyaeo, / Iunoni ante omnis, cui vincla iugalia curae.*

⁶⁹ *Aen.* X 30–31 Hirtzel: *si sine pace tua atque invite numine Troes / Italiam petiere* (...).

⁷⁰ Serv., *ad Aen.* X 31: *si sine pace tua si sine tua benevolentia, ut orantes pacem, veniamque precantes, item exorat pacem divum: ergo pace benevolentia, suffragio.*

⁷¹ *Cynegetica* 436–437 Warmington: *te primum, Vulcane, pacemque precamur, / incolae sancte, tuam* (...).

⁷² *Argon.* IV 476–477: *nam vestra voluntas / quid, iuvenes, sine pace deum?*

⁷³ *Aetna* 68 Warmington. Cf. R. Hildebrandt, *Beiträge zur Erklärung des Gedichtes Aetna*, Leipzig 1900, 4.

⁷⁴ *Paneg.* 67, 5–7.

⁷⁵ *Pun.* XV 421 Bauer.

⁷⁶ Porphy., *in Hor., Epist.* II 1, 137 Holder: *Utrum deorum pacem an uere pacem, id est, finem belli.*

on the Hebrew שלם which was rendered with Greek $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\rho\eta\nu\eta$ ⁷⁷, and eventually, by Latin *pax*.

Pax deorum was a part of prayers, so it has a particular meaning. *Pax* in the archaic Roman law was an act that served to protect oneself against the possibility of revenge. The archaic Roman law was founded on the revenge⁷⁸, and traces of this rule are to be found even much more later⁷⁹. The community of the Roman gods acted similarly to the community of the Romans: when they were harmed, they gained the right to take a revenge (*deorum iniuria deorum cura*)⁸⁰. Here it is possible to find parallels among the way the Roman gods reacted and the practices of the *fetiales* or a procedure of the *deditio noxae*. This is clear especially for Livy's usage. Every prodigy, drought, war misfortune were signs of divine wrath, *ira*. The gods, feeling harmed, sent signs or even punishments – took the revenge or announced their readiness to do so. It was then necessary to earn their *pax* to stop the revenge or the next punishments – just like between humans or human communities. *Pax* in such context was a divine grace. Originally the blood revenge was a normal practice, then there was a set of rituals developed to limit this suicidal phenomenon. The evidence proves also that it was possible to ask for *pax* in advance. This is shown in invocations to a reader of a given book⁸¹. *Pax deorum* could mean its effects as well. It is possible to understand it as a blessing. This last case is especially distinct in the Ara Pacis Augustae. The sacrifices at the altar were submitted not to Pax, but for the *pax*, a blessing. After a century of civil wars the Romans and their land could feel that they were cursed. The curse was caused by fratricidal fights and gods' wrath effected by them. The mechanism here is similar to the Greek tragedies. *Pax*, earned thanks to Augustus, was a cleansing of the sins. It is shown by the floral reliefs underneath the „procession”: the Romans have their feet on the ground that was freed from the curse and regained its power or fertility⁸² (compare also the idyllic landscape under the feet of Trajanus on his column). The blessing was reached by *pax* from the gods, so

⁷⁷ Dinkler, *op. cit.*, 8 *passim*.

⁷⁸ Zabłocki, *op. cit.*, 65–81; M. Jońca, *Blood revenge and murder trial in the early Roman law*, „Eos”, 91, 1, 44–51.

⁷⁹ Y. Thomas, *Se venger au forum. Solidarité familiale et proces criminel a Rome (premier siècle av. – deuxième siècle ap. J. C.)*, [in] *Vengeance, pouvoirs et idéologies dans quelques civilisations de l'Antiquité*, ed. R. Verdier, J.-P. Polly, Paris 1984, 65–88.

⁸⁰ Tac., *Ann.* I 73, see J. Scheid, *The expiation of impieties committed without intention and the formation of Roman theology*, [in] *Transformations of the inner self in ancient religions*, ed. J. Assmann, Leiden–Boston 1999, 333. Scheid's thought – provoking article caused me to connect *pax deorum* with revenge.

⁸¹ E. g. *De rebus bellicis*, praef. 15 Ireland: (...) *pace uestra dixerim* (...).

⁸² P. Madejski, *Ofiary przy Ara Pacis*, [in] *Symposium kazimierskie poświęcone kulturze świata późnego antyku i wczesnego chrześcijaństwa VI: Ofiara – kapłan – ołtarz w świecie późnego antyku*, ed. B. Iwaszkiewicz-Wronikowska, D. Próchniak, Lublin 2008, 25–40.

pax could be assimilated with the effect. This is also proved by the fact, that from the end of the 1st century B. C. *pax* became one of the *feminina semper singularia*.

Interpreting a source needs metaphors. Metaphors can put in order the process of interpretation and fix an interpreter's position. Historical narration is full of such metaphors. Some of them are „empty” or artificial, but they possessed a great influence – [nobody] *understands* [them], *but which everybody uses and most people will also fight for, live for, or even die for, fancying they mean this or the other of things dear to them*⁸³. This is why a historian should pay attention to usage of these notions, and be aware of their inner content (or its lack). *Pax deorum* was not a state, it was not an ultimate aim of the Roman rituals, of *lustrum*, *auspicia* and so on (they served to clean the people, to know the will of the gods, or just their opinion). The Roman religion and our understanding of it loses nothing when the modern conception of the *pax deorum* is rejected⁸⁴.

⁸³ J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: a study*, Ann Arbor 1988, 154 (quoting Ruskin).

⁸⁴ The arguments described here will be developed in my forthcoming *Pax w religii i ideologii wczesnego cesarstwa rzymskiego (Pax in the religion and ideology of the early Roman empire)*.