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Pax Romana and *Pax Sinica*: Some Historical Aspects

1 What is the *Pax Romana*?

The term *Pax Romana* is used conventionally as a synonym for the Roman Empire. However, from time to time the meaning of the term seems uncertain, unless clearly defined technically or academically.¹ If the definition and usage of *Pax Romana* are distinguished in this paper at least, then a comparable term, *Pax Sinica*, will also be focused on in the appropriate context. Following from this, the almost-developed *Pax Sinica* in ancient China, especially in the early Former Han Empire (前漢), will be put forward as a particular empire-discourse or justification-ideology for imperial hegemony, which may have been typical of the great civilizations of the classical period.²

Although *Pax Romana* might be not an official term for the Roman Empire, the Roman people must have felt that their times, at least after the Battle of Actium (31 BCE), were peaceful ones. From a reading of some *loci classici*,³ it may be inferred that the periods since Augustus, the first emperor, were generally passed in a state of peace, without war. In this way, *Pax Romana* is descriptive of a certain historical situation—from the time under Augustus to the periods of the Nerva-Antonine dynasty (1st–2nd centuries CE). In some literary contexts,⁴ the term is used to refer to the peaceful times that existed under the Five Good Emperors. This condition can truly be described as ‘peace’ under the Empire and emperors of the Romans.

More generally, *Pax Romana* is a term used to refer to other comparable supremacies or dominant nations. The terms *Pax Britannica*, *Pax Americana*,⁵ and

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1 For some conceptual ambiguities regarding the term, see Parchami (2009) 4–8.

2 In this paper, the term ‘classical period’ follows the usage of Nylan (2007) 48 n. 1: from the 3rd century BCE to the 4th century CE.

3 The *Carmen saeculare* of Horace, *inter alia*, is well known.

4 Edward Gibbon’s praise for *pax Romana* is a famous example (Parchami (2009) 16).

5 For the relation to these two hegemonic terms with *Pax Romana*, see Parchami (2009).

Pax Mongolica are all derived in some way from *Pax Romana*, and they often refer to the hegemony of a strong power that dominates certain periods or regions in international relations or in politico-diplomatic matters rather than the original meaning of ‘peace’. Likewise, recently *Pax Sinica*,⁶ which has (re)entered the scene, appears to be used to explain or evaluate how the present global world order, in which the so-called ‘G2’ have been taking the lead, is working. Which period or which era is most correctly denoted by the term *Pax Sinica*? It could refer, more conservatively, to the Qing 清 Dynasty of the 17th–18th centuries or the Tang 唐 Dynasty of the early 8th century, both of which may be seen as similar to the ages of the Five Good Emperors of Rome mentioned above. It is usually said that in those eras, China as the Great Empire enjoyed one of its greatest periods of prosperity and a reign of peace, and at the same time dominated the civilization-sphere of East Asia.⁷ Among several candidates in the history of China, these two periods are perhaps the most likely to which one might apply the description *Pax Sinica*. In this study, however, by tracing back to more remote ages, we shall examine the applicability of the term to the reign of Emperor Wu (Wudi 武帝; r. 141–87 BCE) of the Former Han. Although his reign was not entirely peaceful, nonetheless it is comparable to the reign of Augustus, i. e. to *Pax Augusta*; for the ‘peace’ of Emperor Wu laid the foundation of the Chinese empires to follow, just as the reign of Augustus did for the Roman Empire. Therefore, this study focuses on a relatively brief period, the early phase of *Pax Sinica* as a counterpart of *Pax Augusta*.

2 Advent of the Empire and the Emperor

“Empires are large political units, expansionist or with a memory of power extended over space, polities that maintain distinction and hierarchy as they incorporate new people”.⁸ According to this definition, nation-states may be the entities opposite to empires, mostly consisting of single nations with single territories. Given such a loose definition, there would appear to have been few

⁶ For a general comparison of Rome and China as the first empires in world history in a broader perspective, see Burbank/Cooper (2010) 23–59.

⁷ The tradition or ideology of Sino-centrism (*Zhonghua* 中華) influenced East Asia widely and over a long period. The connotation of the term *Pax Sinica* sometimes overlaps with it. Both of these concepts seem to be descriptive or ideological; a more neutral definition and a distinction between them are needed.

⁸ Burbank/Cooper (2010) 8. In contrast, for the difficulty of defining ‘empire’ and of comparing it with the Western concept in the context of ancient China, see Nylan (2007).

empires in world history, and that may be the case. In addition, one might think that an empire should be ruled by an emperor. However, the sovereignty of an empire could be of that of a sole ruler or of a ruling group. If the latter is permitted, although its system of governance was a republic, ancient Rome, at least since the 3rd century BCE, can loosely be called the Roman Empire. The mid-late Roman Republic seems to satisfy the terms of this definition. However, strictly speaking, it is usual to label Rome as an empire only from the late 1st century BCE, at which time Augustus made an end to the age of civil wars and ruled as though a monarch. It is this point on which the famous expression ‘Roman Revolution’ focuses.

In the year 146 BCE, Rome held sway over the Mediterranean world after defeating its rival Carthage. By expanding its territory and incorporating and unifying new peoples, the Roman world became wider and wider. Because of this growth of scale, however, crises emerged in the political system of the Roman Republic, which had kept the number of its ruling class to a minimum. Of course, according to ancient authorities, moral decadence or corruption of *mores* might have been the cause of the crises. However, the problems of those times arose primarily as a result of the scale on which the ‘citystate’ of Rome, situated on the west coast of the Italian peninsula, had grown into a great country. Problems originated within Rome itself, and civil wars also started from within Rome. The 1st century BCE could be described as an age of conflict and discord, and especially of civil wars between factions or dynasts seeking hegemony such as Marius and Sulla, Pompey and Caesar, and Antony and Augustus. These people retained the armies of the empire while the supreme governance, the Senate, was losing its power and authority. Their wars precipitated other wars between citizens. Finally, *Pax Augusta* and the *princeps*⁹ put an end to the drawn out civil disorders and raised the Roman people up again.

It is not easy to accept records in the *Res gestae* as historical facts.¹⁰ Rather, it is possible to read this work as an *apologia pro sua vita* or apologetics of *status novus* when it comes to the statements by which Augustus justifies his own achievements. There is no trace of ‘revolution’ at least in the document, but rather of dissimulation and justification. Augustus asserts emphatically the authority of his own position. He also emphasizes the continuity of the Roman Republic, or else the recovery of it. Therefore, the *status novus* which he (re)established is no different from the previous *status quo*. The public offices, honors, and titles

9 ‘Pax et Princeps’ is the title of the last chapter of Syme (1939).

10 For a skeptical take on this, see Syme (1939) 523–524.

which he held¹¹ were all legitimate in regard to their procedures because they were determined and proclaimed by the authority of the Senate. Though Augustus appears to be the protagonist of the restoration of the ‘Republic’, he was in reality no better than a monarch. He monopolized all of the *auctoritas* and *potestas*, and in that regard he held all the *potentia* as *de facto* sole ruler. By this exclusive possession of political power, the institutions and actual system of the Roman Republic were centralized within his person, actually reconstructed rather than recovered. Nevertheless, the justifications upon which Augustus relied appealed to tradition and focused on the ‘*status quo*’ which he had ‘re-established’.¹²

The *pax* was one of the most important means of his justification—it was a kind of propaganda.¹³ Augustus was said to have brought about peace for the Romans and their empire again. It was quite important to the Roman people that Augustus had ended wars and that peace had been restored. After more than a century, civil disorders disappeared with the building of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* and the closing of the doors in the Temple of Janus.¹⁴ Augustus was a hero and the first citizen of the Roman people, even the son of the (demi-)god whom they themselves had deified. If Augustus had not been there on their behalf, the *libertas* of the Roman people would have been annihilated by military dynasts. He was honored by the people and by the Senate for having protected them and liberated them from enemies within. Consequently, he enjoyed all the honors and titles which could be permitted in and by the *S.P.Q.R.* At the same time he dissimulated well, not wanting to appear as a monarch or tyrant. As a result, he was able to be Caesar after Caesar, Caesar beyond Caesar. The *pax* helped him to be justified as liberator,¹⁵ not a revolutionary.

Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus, the honorific *cognomen* of this ruler, had not before been heard, nor did it disappear afterwards. His successors inherited it and his status too; soon, on the other hand, the Roman people approved them as heirs of the *Imperator Caesar, Pater Patriae*, who had brought about *Pax Romana*. “That peace came with a master.”¹⁶ In a broad sense, the Roman Empire regained peace through concentrating and centralizing its core into the

11 See *R. Gest. div. Aug.* 34–35.

12 The omission of ‘new’ achievements in the *Res gestae* gives such an impression (Witschel (2005) 257).

13 Parchami (2009) 20–24 contends that *pax* was closely connected to the *imperium* of *imperator* Augustus.

14 See *R. Gest. div. Aug.* 12–13.

15 See *R. Gest. div. Aug.* 1.35 and Syme (1939) 506.

16 Lucan, *Bellum civile*. 1.670: *cum domino pax ista venit*.

one person who had overcome the crises that had continued for about a century. The new-old Roman Empire continued after passing through the period of transition between convention and invention.¹⁷

China as an empire is usually considered to have existed since the late 3rd century BCE. The Zhou 周 Dynasty (ca. 1045–256 BCE) dominated the mainland of China or the Central States 中原 for a long period, following the Xia 夏 and Shang 商 Dynasties, which to a certain degree overlapped with the mythical era. This dynasty was a central ruling kingdom, commanding other vassal regions. This ruling system was called a feudal monarchy, a system which had been chosen by the dynasty as the territories of the kingdom had grown. So its ruler did not have as much power as an emperor would have. A period of civil wars eventually followed the fall of the Zhou. Among several rivals, the Qin 秦 Dynasty became preeminent and resolved the chaos of the Warring States Period (481–221 BCE) by unifying the whole of China. The ruler of the first empire in the history of China is usually called Qin Shihuangdi 秦始皇帝 (r. 246–221 BCE), that is the ‘First Emperor’. One could call him the *rex omnium regum*, the one who defeated every rival kingdom. In his decision to use the title of ‘emperor’ (*huangdi* 皇帝), he is comparable to Augustus, who was the first to monopolize the title of *imperator* in the history of Rome.¹⁸ However, the autocracy and the empire of Shihuangdi, which had been founded on a basis of strong Legalism 法家, collapsed soon after he died. On this point, perhaps he is comparable to Julius Caesar,¹⁹ for both of them defeated their rivals thanks to their military abilities, put an end to civil wars, and unified their world by removing confusion and unrest. Nevertheless, there is a big difference between them. The power of Shihuangdi was reinforced by the suppression of any ideas other than Legalism, and he is said to have ruled by violent means. He became, therefore, a byword for tyranny in the culture of East Asia. He was neither father nor first citizen like Augustus, but rather a master-ruler.

After Shihuangdi’s death, the empire was divided and soon fell into civil disorder again. The Han 漢 Dynasty, which the Liu 劉 family had established, unified China again in 202 BCE. The fall of the Qin Empire was accelerated by the ruling ideology and by its governmental policy in general, which had been also the foundation of the empire. Therefore, the first emperor of the new Han

17 “The *Pax Romana* was both the extension, as well as the culmination, of the Augustan Peace” (Parchami (2009) 24).

18 See *R. Gest. div. Aug.* 4 and Cooley (2009) 121–123. Augustus had been hailed as *imperator* twenty-four times in his life.

19 Grousset (1953) titled a chapter about the Shihuangdi ‘A Chinese Caesar’.

empire, Gauzu 高祖 (r. 202–195 BCE),²⁰ chose to repudiate the previous ruler completely and to distance himself from his predecessor. In contrast to this, Augustus had tried to purify the record of Julius Caesar on succeeding him even though the latter had been assassinated as a tyrant, and to preserve the *mos maiorum* and the tradition of the previous Roman Republic. He may have thought that his status could be justified on the basis of precedent. It is interesting that the basis for justifying the Han Empire was somewhat negative, or perhaps passive. Therefore, emperors of the Former Han might have needed to be gentler, more lenient rulers. Thus, the period of preparation in the Former Han Empire may be considered a transitional stage, a gray zone. A harmonious, hands-off attitude was sometimes recommended as an ideal mode of rulership, and for some time Daoism 道家 was prevalent. Interestingly, the name of the capital, Chang'an 長安—it means 'Grand Peace'—which this empire had chosen also hints at some of the ideas of rulers at that time.²¹ So, the reigns of emperors Wen (Wendi 文帝; r. 180–157 BCE) and Jing (Jingdi 景帝; r. 157–141 BCE) seem to have come at the zenith of the Chinese peace.²²

However, the expression *pax* is more applicable to the reign of the seventh emperor, Wu, of the Han Empire. The concept of *pax*, as already noted, has quite a subtle nuance. Most of all, the emperor Wu expanded the territory of his empire during his long reign, an achievement well matched by his imperial title, 'Martial Emperor'.²³ His early policy of conquest and imperial expansion was praised by a scholar-official at that time:

Because now, Your Majesty has annexed All-under-Heaven (*tianxia* 天下), there is no one who disobeys you in the within-seas regions. By looking around everywhere, by hearing all the people, by displaying the wisdoms of all your vassals, you have disclosed wholly the fairness of the All-under-Heaven so that the utmost virtue is being brightened and spread over the regions by you. Since Yelang 夜郎 and Kangju 康居, even though hundreds of miles away, are enjoying your virtue and conversing with you, it is the advent of the Great Peace (*Taiping* 太平).²⁴

²⁰ See the entry "Liu Bang (Gaodi)" in Loewe (2000) 253–259.

²¹ Stearns (2014) 28.

²² 'Rule of Wen and Jing' (文景之治) is the Chinese shorthand for this peaceful period.

²³ Grousset (1953) 54–61 suggests that the *Pax Sinica* was achieved primarily by martial exploits. But in the next chapter, the author proclaims the "triumph of the Literati". For the general and 'modernist' policies in the reign of Wu, see Loewe (1986), esp. 152–179.

²⁴ Ban (1962), 56.2512. For the Chinese text, see Ban (1962) vol. 9, chapt. 56, 2485–2528. Hulsewé (1993a) provides necessary information about *Hanshu*. In addition, Loewe (2011) is a recent and brilliant study of Dong Zhongshu in general and detailed aspects.

Some time after the emperor acceded to the throne, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (f.l. 2nd century BCE),²⁵ one of the foremost Confucian scholars, submitted his own responses to the rescripts of the emperor, documents which record the important phase of the history of the Former Han. The preceding quotation may be compared with the heading of the *Res gestae*:

Below is a copy of the achievements of the deified Augustus, by which he made the world subject to the rule of the Roman people, and of the expenses which he incurred for the state of Rome, as inscribed upon two bronze columns which have been set up at Rome.²⁶

Though more detailed research would be needed to compare the two records, and this study has considered up to now just their general common theme of the peace of the empire, it is considered acceptable to treat them both to some degree as official documents. In the response of Dong Zhongshu, the conditions and manifestations of *Taiping* (the ‘Great Peace’) that are cited include the unification of *tianxia* (the ‘All-under-Heaven’), stability in domestic affairs, the realization of the emperor’s supreme virtue, and the obedience of foreign lands; these are presented as symptoms of, so to speak, *Pax Wudica*. Such patterns can be extracted from the passage quoted from the *Res gestae*, expressed briefly as *Pax Augusta*: he conquered the entire world and gave the state of Rome the commonweal. In short, the most important elements of *Pax Augusta* are the expansion of empire, the cessation of warfare, security within the empire,²⁷ and improvements in welfare. Although a comparison of the two *paces* shows that they cannot be regarded as identical, their conditions appear to share some characteristics of empires, meeting the terms of the definition given above.

However, neither for emperor Wu nor for Augustus did empire and peace remain temporary, nor did they themselves obtain their authority in merely synchronic circumstances. Each man was a *de facto* supreme ruler in his own world,²⁸ and the emperor Wu was in addition a hereditary emperor. Therefore,

25 For brief information about him, see the entry “Dong Zhongshu” in Loewe (2000) 70–73 and Loewe (2011) 1–18, and with more detail in chap. 2.

26 *rerum gestarum divi Augusti, quibus orbem terrarum imperio populi Romani subiecit, et impensarum, quas in rem publicam populumque Romanum fecit, incisarum in duabus aeneis pilis, quae sunt Romae positae, exemplar subiectum* (transl. Cooley (2009)).

27 Compare the expression of Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae Romanae* 2.126.3: *diffusa in orientis occidentisque tractus et quidquid meridiano aut septentrione finitur, pax Augusta omnis terrarum orbis angulos a latrociniorum metu servat immunes*.

28 For the traditional and usual definition of ‘empire’ based on the Chinese classics, see Kim (2015) esp. 97.

the latter's emperorship was taken for granted in the imperial hierarchy; there were enough legitimate precedents in the pedigree of the heir to the throne. In contrast, Augustus himself was destined to set a precedent for his empire and the ensuing line of emperors. In regard to this point, there are a number of different ways to justify the diachronic legitimacy in each case. For emperor Wu, it may have been necessary to intensify rather than justify his status by relying on the existing ruling order. In the case of the first emperor of the Roman Empire, on the other hand, it was necessary to purify negative impressions of his adoptive father, to foster a belief that he had been misunderstood as a would-be tyrant, and to justify or dissimulate his own status by relying on the recovery of the Roman Republic.²⁹ Augustus was in the middle in this case, i. e. between convention and invention. Although he was the guardian of the Republic, the *primus inter pares* among citizens, all competence, power, and authority were concentrated in him as supreme ruler. When his heir would succeed him and assume his status, all the powers that Augustus had obtained would be passed on to the incoming emperor. After his settlement of internal disorder, with the apparently legitimate and constitutional (re)arrangements he had made, the peace of governance and empire discreetly swept away any discontent that may have remained. The people preferred the approbation of *principatus* to wars or hunger, and so his status was approved. The *princeps* was *Pater Patriae*, and he as the father of Roman people obtained legitimacy,³⁰ eventually becoming the first and the last 'republican' emperor.

3 The Agenda and Propaganda for *Pax Sinica*: 'outside Confucian, inside Legalist' 外儒内法

Shihuangdi attempted to centralize the power of the empire by adopting the Junxian 郡縣 system, which was opposed to the feudalism of the Zhou. His policy was then supported by Legalist thinkers, especially Li Si 李斯 (ca. 280–208 BCE).³¹ In *The Biography of Li Si* written by Sima Qian, ideas on government and the administrative policies of the Qin Empire appear to have been recast, becoming quite different from the vision and design of Dong Zhongshu.

²⁹ See *R. Gest. div. Aug.* 8.

³⁰ Eder (2005) 31–32.

³¹ See the entry "Li Si" in Loewe (2000) 228–230. There is an English translation of Sima Qian's *Shiji*, ch. 87, "The Biography of the Chief Minister of Qin," in Sima (2007) 23–51. For textual information on *Shiji* of Sima Qian, see Hulsewé (1993b).

In the Warring States Period, the Hundred Schools of Thought 諸子百家 competed and struggled with each other for superiority by forming alliances with kings and monarchs. Shihuangdi accepted the doctrine of the Legalist thinkers Li Si and Shang Yang 商鞅 and expelled all other schools of thought. This policy resulted in tragic instances of persecution, such as the ‘burning of books and the burying of scholars’ 焚書坑儒. Among several records, *The Biography of Li Si* provides the Legalist design for the Qin Empire in outline;³² Li Si considered that the emperor, as the ‘Son of Heaven’ (*tianzi* 天子), embodied the law itself; therefore, he was the model, the teacher, and the master-ruler of all people. In other words, the emperor monopolizes all thought and doctrine and is capable of ruling on merit, being the Omnipotent One, since he is equipped with both *scientia* and *potentia*. The law is constituted in his body, enabling him to teach and enlighten his subjects. Therefore, all power converges on him and legitimacy originates from him. The emperor of Legalism was thus defined.

In fact, the design of Li Si was adopted by the first Emperor, and he ruled over the whole of China with the strong centralized power Legalism had granted for his empire, though not for a long time. This monopoly of thought claimed by the Qin Empire was made possible because the demand for ‘Grand Unification’ (*Da-yitong* 大一統) was already in existence during the Warring States Period.³³ However, *Pax Qinica*, if such an expression is intelligible, could not last long, and indeed it may constitute a contradictory concept. Shihuangdi had, like Julius Caesar, abilities which could be used to put an end to civil wars, and he even equipped his empire with imperial splendor. Although he did not, like Julius Caesar, meet a tragic end, he bequeathed the would-be empire³⁴ in some sense—but Shihuangdi was no Augustus. The fall of the Qin Empire meant also the failure of unification and the ruling system founded on Legalism. Its attempts to establish a new revolutionary empire by suppressing other contemporary thinking and denying the ancient regime were lost.

The Han Dynasty opened up a new age, as we have seen, with the reunification of China after resisting the tyrannical rule of the Qin Dynasty. The general propensity of rulers during the Han Empire was to react against the previous dynasty. Therefore, early in the Former Han period, centralism became relatively loose and there were often struggles, and sometimes even armed conflicts,

³² Following are the summaries of Li Si’s first two submitted memorials to the emperor; see Sima (1982) chapt. 87, 2539–2563 and Sima (2007) esp. 25–26, 28–29.

³³ Mutschler/Mittag (2010) 532.

³⁴ Zhu (2005) 34–36 argues that thus the Qin was a “weak empire”.

among imperial families. At the same time, the revulsion against war and tyrants turned into a wish to return to a peaceful age recalled from the dim past, or, as a solution for these ills, a leaning towards Daoism, which taught the concept of ‘non-doing’ (*wu-wei* 無爲), a form of escapism. Hence, if the early Former Han could be regarded as peaceful, such a state of peace could not be counted as an achievement of the empire itself.³⁵

Initially the Han Empire inherited its territory and institutions from the Qin Dynasty. Later, however, after it had endured more than half a century in a peaceful state as a result of the relaxed policy of the emperors, an emperor who was both young and ambitious ascended the throne, just as Augustus had in the late Roman Republic. Soon, the emperor Wu issued a rescript to his vassals to seek a proper way of governance.³⁶ Whether the emperor soon thereafter adopted the proposal of Dong Zhongshu or not is not a simple question to answer. In any case, Dong Zhongshu is generally credited as the person who instilled Confucian ideas into the mainstream of governmental ideology in Chinese history. Similar to the ideas of Li Si, his Confucian ideas about the empire and the emperor were realized and institutionalized in part during the reign of the emperor Wu and partly later during the Han Dynasty.

In fact, some elements of the ideas of Dong Zhongshu appear to have become customary at that time. For example, the pattern of justifying the emperor as the Son of Heaven, which had been reinforced gradually since the Zhou Dynasty,³⁷ can be regarded as a ready-made imperial ideological concept. Moreover, by referring very frequently to the traditions of Confucian thought, he appealed to the emperor to seek his authority and his model in ancient tradition. This differs somewhat from the progressive ideas of Li Si. The authority of emperorship in the rhetoric of Dong Zhongshu appears to have been secured both in the contemporary conditions of that time and in terms of traditional precedents. However, the discussion between him and his emperor, which in general leaves a Confucian impression, likely requires more careful reading. Perhaps traditions held or regarded as originating in the historical past may have been an agenda or a propaganda tool related in some sense to the ideal Confucian empire, as in

³⁵ See Zhao (2015b) 64–65, 80.

³⁶ The emperor’s three rescripts are in *Hanshu*, 56.2495–2498, 2506–7, and 2513–2514. Each of the following parts are the responses of Dong Zhongshu, the contents of which are summarized in this paper. One can gain a general idea of Dong Zhongshu’s responses to the emperor Wu through the paraphrases of Loewe (2011) 88–100.

³⁷ Zhu (2005) 30.

the democracy of the Athenian empire as avowed in the renowned funeral speech of Pericles.³⁸

It is the emperor Wu who again enhanced the centralized power of the empire. He had by himself, similarly to Augustus, to remove the threat from the opposition within the empire, leaving him to concentrate on rearranging the kingdoms of the imperial families and the provincial system. In weakening local powers and strengthening central authority, Dong Zhongshu's proposal for educational renovation and his emphasis on Confucian education appear to have been an effective and less uncomfortable policy. In the case of Rome, Augustus, after rising to power, did not annihilate or even indiscriminately persecute the intellectuals, clients and/or activists of the opposition, at least in public. Likewise, there is no trace of violent monopolization of knowledge, as in the case of Shihuangdi, in Dong Zhongshu's design of an ideal empire. Nevertheless, some Legalist elements remained in the highly centralized educational system and in the state examinations for recruiting officials. The emperor as the Son of Heaven is still at the core of the concentric circle of empire; he is still a teacher and a master ruler; the people have to obey him as a father and a teacher. However, the emperor can no longer be the absolute source of laws or institutions. Unlike in the emperor of the Qin Dynasty, the ideal ruler as described by Dong Zhongshu has to study and learn the old tradition, to recognize well the 'Mandate of Heaven' (*tianming* 天命), and after that to teach and spread his virtues to the whole world. The emperor Wu was required to accomplish these Confucian duties of the Sage Ruler 聖王.

The Confucian idea of empire as advocated by Dong Zhongshu appears to be similar to the Roman emphasis on *mos maiorum*. Both set a high value on tradition. Respecting the republican tradition and justifying his own status, Augustus never violated the order of Roman law. At the same time, Roman law would facilitate sustainable support for *Pax Romana*. The institutions of empire were also based on laws and traditions. It is said in general that, with the fall of the Republic, the emphasis on rhetoric and oratory that had been an important feature of education began to decline. However, the legacy of rhetoric flowed into school education and into the sphere of law after political liberty began to diminish. Perhaps the most important achievement of *Pax Romana*, in some sense, lies in the voluminous works of Roman law. Moreover, this is not unrelated to the fact that Augustus attempted to maintain the traditional order and to remain within the constitutional tradition. Thus, at least the beginning of *Pax Augusta* was as much republican as it was a product of empire. Likewise, there were

38 This comparison is developed from Loewe (2011) 121.

two facets of *Pax Sinica* from the time of the emperor Wu: ‘outside Confucian, inside Legalist’ (*wairu neifa* 外儒内法).³⁹

4 Epilogue: *Pax Sinica* or Sino-centrism

An important contribution of Dong Zhongshu is that he made Confucianism the official discipline of Chinese empires. It is difficult to discern the actual degree of influence that his concept of Confucianism had on the Former Han or on each historical period. From different perspectives, evaluations of him can vary – as a follower of syncretism⁴⁰ between Confucianism and Legalism, as a designer of imperial Confucianism,⁴¹ or as a forerunner of the Confucian-Legalist state⁴² – but each of these conceptions may belie a one-sided truth. In fact, Dong Zhongshu’s ideas were linked to a Confucian agenda for the Han Empire, especially the foundation of the ‘Imperial Academy’ (*Taixue* 太學),⁴³ the educational curriculum of which consisted mainly of Confucian classics.⁴⁴ The products of this educational system played a major role in the history of China and of East Asia, though as an exclusive cultural ideology.⁴⁵

Furthermore, in a weaker sense, the Confucian worldview should be regarded as one of transparent Legalism: not only had it dominated the Chinese people within their history as the official ruling idea of empire, it also influenced the

39 See Clower (2014) 22–23, esp. n. 51. He suggests that the term *ru biao fa li* 儒表法裡 or ‘Confucian on the surface but Legalist on the inside’ refers to the “machievellian Legalist school of statecraft which was one of the competitors to early Confucianism”; the context in which he notes this term is an attempt to explain the conformism of imperial Confucianism.

40 But for the ‘syncretism’ of Dong Zhongshu on the basis of Confucianism with the universalistic theories of Yin-Yang and Five Phases (陰陽五行), see Kramers (1986) 753–754.

41 Fairbank/Goldman (2006) 62 describe the ‘Legalist-Confucian amalgam’ as “Imperial Confucianism”.

42 Zhao (2015a) 262–263 argues that the advent of the Confucian-Legalist state occurred in the Former Han. “Of these early Western Han thinkers, it was Dong Zhongshu whose highly influential synthesis of Daoist worldviews, yin-yang cosmology, and Legalist statecraft was openly centered on Confucian values” (277).

43 There is a detailed discussion about this in *Hanshu*, ch. 56, in Loewe (2011) 136–148.

44 For the Five Confucian classics, see Nylan (2001); Loewe (1993).

45 Though their modest attitudes are careful, nevertheless the detailed study of Mutschler/Mitag (2010) appears to be confident and successful in comparing the ‘historical universalisms’ of the empires of ancient Rome and China.

civilization of East Asia as an inevitable core ideology.⁴⁶ *Pax Sinica*, which had been formed virtually since the reign of emperor Wu, developed into a controlling ideology, i.e. Sino-centrism (*Zhonghua* 中華).⁴⁷ Greco-Roman civilization is usually referred to as the source of Euro-centralism or Orientalism. Likewise, to trace Sino-centrism back would be to arrive at the early *Pax Sinica*, which has been the focus of this study.

In the history of the civilization of East Asia, especially of what can be termed the cultural sphere of Chinese characters (漢字), China has remained at the core for a long time. Even today, China is referred to by its neighboring nations as the ‘Central Country’ 中國.⁴⁸ The term 中國 for China has historical as well as ideological meaning. The division between the civilized and the barbarian, the superiority of certain nations, and the patterns of Orientalism have often been repeated in East Asia.⁴⁹ This grand narrative of Chinese empires looked to disappear with modernization, but it can be held to be latent in recent imperial discourse under the newly shaped concept of *Pax Sinica* as a likely counterpart to *Pax Americana* or Euro-centralism. Hence, although Sino-centrism 中華 is a historical concept, it is also ideological, and may create the unwelcome impression of an unequal relationship and bring to the surface the past order of nations in East Asia. On the other hand, *Pax Sinica* as investigated here is comparable to *Pax Romana*, for the examples of stable hegemony in ancient Rome and China were established in both cases by eclectic rulers during periods of transition. For China, *Pax Sinica* is supported by the two foundations of Confucianism and Legalism. The ‘outside Confucian, inside Legalist’ mentality had been perhaps traditionally typical of Chinese people, also serving as a ‘middle way’ of establishing and maintaining an empire. Therefore, it would be interesting to consider the initiatives that have been adopted in *Pax Sinica* in the Peo-

46 If it is the case that “Legalism was liked by rulers and Confucianism by bureaucrats” (Fairbank/Goldman (2006) 62), it is not strange that the Confucian preference for the periphery was somewhat compulsory in the Sino-centric order of East Asia.

47 Similarly, *Pax Augusta* turned into a hegemonic peace ideology like *Pax Romana*; for a detailed argument about this, see Parchami (2009) 31–57. On this point, one may be able to refer to Sino-centrism as ‘Confucian Imperialism’, not imperial Confucianism. For a detailed politico-historical argument for the influence of Confucianism in East Asia, see Shin (2012) 21–217.

48 Chugoku (中国, Japanese), Jungguk (중국, Korean) and Trung Quốc (Vietnamese) all originate from Zhongguo (中國). In contrast, for the traditional view and a recent different contention about the origin of the name ‘China,’ see Wade (2009); Malinowski (2012).

49 The early name of Korea (Joseon 朝鮮) means the land of ‘morning calm’; and the name of Japan (Nihon 日本) has the land of ‘sun origin’ as the literal meaning in Chinese characters. Both countries are placed in the ‘Oriental’ region in relation to China. See Seth (2011) 16–17.

ple's Republic of China which may permit it to attain hegemony in the global world order.⁵⁰ Perhaps the present is another period of transition.⁵¹

50 A 'Confucius Peace Prize', which was established by a Chinese businessman in 2010 and was discontinued amidst controversy in 2018, is interesting in this regard (Stearns 2014, 29); Callahan (2008) is also helpful, but it is necessary to read carefully here, since it sets out on the basis of a Japanese perspective which seems somewhat excessive.

51 See Zhao (2015b) 381. The so-called 'Belt and Road Initiative' (一帶一路) could be considered a byname for *Pax Sinica*. On the BRI, a Chinese government global policy, see Huang (2016) and Clarke (2017).