

Selling Sagehood: The Philosophical Marketplace in Early China

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When we speak of the marketplace of ideas we generally use the phrase figuratively, referring to free intellectual competition through which the validity of ideas is tested. In analyzing the development of early Chinese thought we may appropriately use the phrase with a more explicit, economic meaning. The men whom we now identify as China's first philosophers were not initially viewed as pure thinkers, but as men who possessed ideas of tangible value, political or personal, to the economic elite of the era. Their *daos* (teachings) were commodities and our understanding of early Chinese thought can be enriched if we better understand the ways in which market forces governed the development of ideas and doctrines.

Among the economic constraints that bore on the growth of philosophy in Warring States China, the most fundamental were related to the centralized state structures that grew from new agricultural and military technologies following from China's entry into the Iron Age. Cho-yun Hsu demonstrated in great detail thirty years ago that the demand for talented men created by these changes fatally undermined the monopoly that China's traditional hereditary elite held on positions of power and status (1965). The implications of Hsu's findings for the emergent structures of Chinese thought were formulated by Donald Munro, who correlated them with the general belief in the descriptive equality of men that shaped the most basic doctrines of both Confucian and Daoist schools (1969). These beliefs, and the consequent claim that any man with useful ideas or good character should receive patronage and employment, were axiomatic to the intellectual marketplace of ancient China.

This essay explores smaller scale economic and social factors that shaped the market of ideas during the Warring States and Qin periods. For this kind of analysis, issues of theoretical debate between schools and individuals, normally at the focus of our interest in discussions of early thought, are less central. Instead, we will seek some perspective on the ways in which the philosophical community as a whole shaped its enterprise in response to those people whose patronage provided thinkers with economic livelihood and social position. As a consequence of this sociological orientation, our analysis will tend to stress similarities rather than

distinctions among philosophical schools. Our principal goal is to outline the contours of early philosophy as a socially located profession providing a range of goods, rather than to delineate the varied forms of the philosophical goods themselves.

Five Basic Commodities

If we are to consider early Chinese thought as a marketplace, we need to propose at least a provisional list of commodities that were offered for sale by its participants.¹ After formulating a starting list, we will see how its items differ from a full inventory of the major ideas of early Chinese philosophy.

While there is a great diversity among the early Chinese philosophical schools, there was also significant overlap in terms of key concepts. For example, a number of schools laid great stress upon the importance of *de* (character, virtue, power) in connection with personal, social, or metaphysical transformation. The specific way in which *de* was to be understood varied according to the doctrinal contexts of the various schools—which is why, in part, the word is so difficult to translate—but the basic notion that by cultivating a quality referred to as *de* one could attain a form of personal excellence and social leverage was common to several types of thought. The theory that personal virtue could endow a man with the ability to attract, lead, and transform others was a widespread social and political notion.

In using the marketplace analogy to discuss early Chinese thought, it will be useful to distinguish between concepts such as *de* and the ideological contexts in which they appear. *De* was a marketable commodity: a thinker appealing to a potential patron might offer a *dao* for the attainment of *de*. The thinker might be distinguished within a community of peers for the uniqueness of that *dao*, but from the standpoint of the wealthy or powerful consumer, the commodity of interest was the *de* and the social leverage that it would provide.

For example, the appeal that early Confucianism might have for a person in a position of power would not likely lie in the attractiveness of ritualism or the imperatives of filiality and benevolence, but rather in the claim that in adopting such behaviors a person might gain increased moral sway over local and neighboring populations.² The Mohists, opponents of Confucian ritualism and

1. I refer to these intellectual goods as commodities because they became subject to forms of explicit exchange, typically for patronage stipends or disciple tuition, during the Warring States period. Earlier, such intellectual goods in the possession of well-placed patricians or hereditary functionaries might have enhanced their stature, but not in the context of conceptually defined exchange.

2. Mencius repeatedly made this argument in his appeals to kings. It seems unlikely that most potential patrons of Confucians would have made a clear distinction between embodying virtues, which is the way we ordinarily think of the term *de* in a Confucian context, and being looked upon as a benign source of grace by others, which seems to have been an earlier and more common meaning.

narrow filiality, promoted the ethical ideal of the universal-minded ruler. To the degree that rulers may have responded to Mohism, that response would not have been to the moral imperative of universality, but to Mohist arguments that ritual *li* would impoverish a state and alienate its people, while rulers implementing the policies of universality would gain the type of personal ascendance over others that would yield social leverage and secure power.³

Among the basic marketable commodities offered by early Chinese thinkers, we may note five that predominated and spread widely among the different schools. The notion of transformative *de* was one of these. The others include the following: the notion that one could learn to control all situations through arts of proper timing, variously referred to as “timeliness” (*shi*) and “situational propensities” (*shi*);⁴ the belief that *qi* (vaporous energy) could be harnessed to gain leverage over objective constraints generally beyond the power of an individual to overcome; the idea that administrative design could produce social order and make power secure; and the belief that correlative natural categories could be manipulated to order society and gain leverage over the natural world.

To change idioms for clarity, the following five hooks were the principal ways in which philosophers attracted patronage: learn how to win friends and influence people; learn how to do the right thing at the right time; learn how to turn your body into a spiritual vessel; learn a perfect management system; learn how to harness the rhythms of the cosmos and make them work for you.

During the Warring States period, practical formulas for these aims seem to emerge as dominant commodities in roughly this order, packaged differently by various schools in each case. This is not by any means to say that early Chinese philosophy is limited to these ideas. Many of its most powerful philosophical ideas, such as its identification of the problematic aspects of language, are not among the basic notions listed here. This is because such ideas, while philosophically significant, had little practical appeal for potential patrons and so did not directly affect the market.

Abstruse philosophical arguments could, however, be commoditized as esoteric exotica which could raise the status of the patron who endorsed them by virtue of their strangeness. The status of the philosopher of language Gongsun Long at the court of the warlord Pingyuan Jun in Zhao, for example, could be seen as a case of a thinker being engaged not because he offered a *useful* commodity, but because it

3. The Mohists do not much use the term *de*, and as an “action ethics” Mohism is less concerned with personal attributes than with behavior. However, the social outcome Mohists claimed for adherence to their universalist maxims is identical in essentials with that claimed by Confucians for virtue cultivation: the attraction and transformation of others.

4. I borrow the term “propensities” from François Jullien, who has pointed out that the notions of “timeliness” and recognition of propensities are complementary concepts framed in metaphors of time and space. See 1992: 11n.

enhanced his lord's stature to be seen patronizing a "luxury item." In this sense, we may add as a sixth basic commodity the notion that high quality intellectual arts or *daos* were in themselves valuable, and so marketable without regard to their specific content.

Basic Stages of Market Development

The philosophical market developed through five stages: 1. the period of Confucius's later career (about 500–480 [all dates are B.C.]), during which the roles of itinerant minister and master of a *dao* become linked; 2. a phase that begins with the decision of Marquis Wen of Wei, in the second half of the fifth century, to base the composition of his court on the recruitment of wise men from other states; 3. the establishment of the Jixia Academy in Qi about a century later, which formalized the practice of government patronage of wise men without a fixed linkage to ministerial duties; 4. the devolution of patronage during the mid-third century from state courts to the households of major warlords; and 5. the establishment of the *boshi* (erudite) system, which under the Qin made the state not only the patron of philosophy, but its regulator.

Confucius: The First Salesman

Confucius (551–479) seems to have been the first man to be recognized as basing his economic sustenance and social persona on the role of freelance instructor.⁵ Clearly, knowledge was transmitted by specialists prior to Confucius's day and there is no persuasive reason to believe that such transmission had never occurred in private contexts. But because Confucius was explicitly training men in generalized patrician skills that would earlier have likely been transmitted by family members or tutors in residence with wealthy or powerful families, the freelance and mobile nature of his social persona seems to have attracted notice.

Confucius's students were clearly aiming at economic rewards and social position.⁶ Confucius accepted tuition and may have had little else to live on for periods of his life.⁷ At times Confucius did receive the benefits of patronage. Such treatment, however, was a consequence of his standing as a wise man, rather than

5. All dates for philosophers' lifetimes are according to Qian 1935, and should be viewed as provisional.

6. "A student willing to study three years without taking a position is hard to come by" (*Analects* 8.12). (*Analects* passages are cited by Harvard-Yenching Institute concordance numbers.)

7. "From those who have offered as little as dried sausages on up, I have never refused anyone instruction" (*Analects* 7.7). The *Analects* and Confucius's *Shiji* biography agree that he was at times reduced to penury.

of the attractiveness of his *dao*, which turned out to be marketable only to his student audience.⁸

In seeking for patronage and employment at the various courts of eastern China, Confucius was hoping to make use of the precedent of “guest ministers” that had been established during the Spring and Autumn period by such men as Baili Xi in Qin and Confucius’s contemporary Wu Zixu in Wu. But Confucius differed from these men in that he sought position not on the basis of his worthiness alone, but on the basis of his *dao*: a set of ritual prescripts that were designed to transform both individuals and states. The distinction between patronizing a person because of his worth and because of his *dao* was a necessary foundation to the establishment of the philosophical market.

After Confucius’s death his disciples dispersed, and most of those who became leading figures in the nascent Confucian community initially replicated their master’s pattern of seeking economic sustenance by becoming private teachers.

The Court of Marquis Wen of Wei

While Confucius established the model that would become the basis of the professional philosopher in China, the lack of appeal of his particular program prevented him from opening a broad market. The next step towards the establishment of such a market occurred several decades after his death, and it was a consumer who took the lead.

In 446 the newly enthroned ruler of the upstart state of Wei, Marquis Wen, issued a call for men of talent to serve him at his court. The marquis’s motives seem to have been two-fold. Wei was one of the three successor states of Jin, and as a usurper state not yet acknowledged by the Zhou royal house, Wei was undoubtedly anxious to enhance its legitimacy by establishing a reputation as a haven for worthy men. In addition, the balance of power between Wei and the two other Jin successor states, Han and Zhao, was unsettled, and Wei was in search of military and administrative talent that could give it an edge.

The call of Marquis Wen changed the nature of the phenomenon of the guest minister. Whereas such ministers had earlier been appointed to court positions on the basis of the unique circumstances that took them from their home states to another, Marquis Wen’s ministers were recruited, and Wei’s personnel policy became consciously interstate in nature.

Moreover, the case of Wei illustrates complex patterns of patronage that bore upon the structure of the philosophical marketplace. The *Shiji* recounts how the political stature of natives of the Wei court was determined, at least in part, by the number and quality of the “guests” whom they introduced into the Marquis’s

8. For example, see the case of the stay in Qi recounted in *Analects* 18.3.

service (44.1840).⁹ The philosophical figures of the Warring States period needed to fashion their approach to powerholders in terms of a multilevel culture of courtiers, which could involve tailoring one's message for a succession of patrons.¹⁰

Among those who responded to Wei's recruitment was the prominent Confucian disciple, Zixia (507–420), who became court tutor. However, the outstanding member of Marquis Wen's court was not Zixia but Li Ke (455–395), who eventually served as prime minister.¹¹ Li Ke is associated with a technocratic system of agricultural administration that seems, in many respects, a precursor of later Legalist models, and he is sometimes referred to as a father of Legalism.¹² The *Shiji* attributes the rise in warfare during subsequent generations to his state designs (30.1442). Yet Li Ke is elsewhere classed as a Confucian, the pupil of Zixia.¹³ This puzzling reference is paralleled by the example of Wu Qi (440–381), a general of Wei initially recommended by Li Ke, whose name is attached to one of the major militarist texts attributed to this period. Wu Qi, who was eventually assassinated while serving as prime minister to Chu, is characterized as "greedy and lustful," but is also listed as a student of Confucius's disciple Zeng Zi and a transmitter of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* in the Confucian classical tradition.¹⁴

9. The specific events narrated may be apocryphal, but the social dynamic appears credible.

10. The "Wen" chapter of the *Guan Zi* notes as an issue the number of courtiers in a state who serve the ruler while simultaneously retaining a position in a grandee household (*qun chen you wei shi guan-dafuzhe*, following the interpretation of Shi 1988: 251). The complexities of Warring States patronage, in particular the relation between patronage as a retainer (*shike*) and as a courtier (*binke*), has been analyzed by Aihara Junji (1960: 223–50).

While this essay employs the metaphor of the marketplace, a more nuanced presentation might compare the impact of the courtier role on philosophical discourse to that described by Mario Biagioli with regard to Renaissance science (1993).

11. I am identifying Li Ke and Li Kui, following common practice.

12. Li Ke's policies are recorded in the *Han shu*, "Shihuo zhi" 24a.1124–25. Concerning his characterization as a Legalist, see Hu 1962: I.265 (subsequent pages include a very detailed analysis of his economic policies). The notion of a Legalist "precursor" often focuses less on theories of law in government than on the design of new and efficient systems to improve social order, economic output, and military strength. Li Ke's success in Wei helped prepare the ground for the idea that technocratic theory should be a part of philosophical discourse, which became very powerful after the fourth century reforms of Shang Yang in Qin.

13. The *Han shu*, "Yiwen zhi" lists a *Li Ke* in seven *juan* under the Confucian category, and identifies the author as a disciple of Zixia.

14. Characterization: *Shiji* 65.2166; as Zeng Zi pupil: 65.2165; on the tradition of Wu as transmitter of the classics, see Qian (1935: 192–95) (Qian dismisses the claim). He is also

How do we account for such men being classed as Confucians and what could this imply concerning the scope of the early philosophical market? Perhaps two complementary conclusions may be drawn. First, during the mid- to late fifth century, Confucians were forced to diversify their audiences from those who wished to acquire the master's *dao* to all who would pay to acquire polished skills useful at court. Second, those whom Confucian teachers provided with the teaching's prized commodity, the path towards social leverage through ritual *de*, sought out other goods to sell upon finding that there was no realistic market for *de*: in the case of Li Ke, administrative design, in the case of Wu Qi, military tactics.¹⁵

A variety of other worthies appear in the lists of men at the court of Marquis Wen: Tian Zifang, a disciple of Confucius's pupil Zigong; the reclusive Duangan Mu, who is said to have once been a great merchant; and others associated with various strengths of government.¹⁶

This evidence allows us to suggest that the opening of an interstate market for guest ministers in Wei may have triggered diversity in the philosophical marketplace, as associates of the luckless Confucians abandoned the Master's ritual pieties in order to develop expertise in non-Confucian fields that allowed them to create new intellectual commodities more appealing to men of wealth and power.

Packaging the Commodity: The Invention of Philosophical Texts

One key development in the marketing of wisdom during the Classical period is the invention of the philosophical text. Texts, of course, had the practical value of storing *daos* in conveniently retrievable form. However, they also could possess value as commodities. Wisdom texts are among the objects that we recover from the graves of the elite, and the treasured status which made them suitable grave goods would also have endowed them with market value for the living. But although the appearance of texts as a marketing vehicle is an important step in the evolution of the market, the date and early significance of this invention are difficult to determine.

The *Analects* is often believed to include passages recording the recollections of Confucius's own disciples, and its earliest phases of composition would, if this were true, date from no later than the mid-fifth century. But the *Analects* was clearly not composed to be marketed to an audience external to the Confucian group itself. Many of its cryptic passages make little sense without the support of a

listed as a pupil of Zixia (*Shiji* 121.3116). Qian argues that he was not a pupil of Zeng Zi but of his son (1935: 156). This is surely the correct way to read the evidence.

15. Wu Qi's *Shiji* biography (65.2165–68) portrays him as thoroughly evil from youth, yet the latter portion of the text offers a strikingly different portrait which is in some respects quite close to Confucian values, even including a speech concerning the priority of *de* over strategy in war.

16. A full list with discussion is found in Qian 1935: 129–34.

dense teaching tradition; moreover, paradoxical ambiguity and understated modesty, two of its recurrent themes, seem unlikely tools for marketing to wealthy patrons.

The example of the *Analects* highlights the possibility that well-defined schools of thought may not have required texts that presented an expository description of their ideas. In fact, such schools would not necessarily have benefited from the production of such texts, as this would have removed control of the teaching from the teachers, and, in essence, allowed for tuition-free transmission. Perhaps for this reason the earliest and most highly developed of the pre-Qin schools, Confucianism, seems not to have produced an expository philosophical text until the *Xun Zi* was edited during the mid-third century.¹⁷

It is not currently possible to come to definitive conclusions about the dates of composition of most early texts and any theory concerning the period at which texts were first packaged for consumers at large will necessarily be speculative. However, claims that any specific texts reached such form before the middle years of the fourth century appear to me unlikely. Even so crudely formulated a text as the *Mo Zi* appears not to have reached written form until after the Mohist cult split into three factions, in the early fourth century.¹⁸

I suggest, then, that somewhere close to 350, original thinkers and disciples of masters first packaged the *daos* which became their paths to wealth and status as physical commodities, a concrete token of the value that these men promised to

17. As I will explain, I regard the *Daxue* and *Zhongyong* as Qin period texts.

18. I am following Graham (1989a: 35). Graham elsewhere suggests 350 as a closing date for the formulation of the central Mohist theses (1978: 5n7). Another philosophical text for which a very early date has been claimed is the *Yan Zi chunqiu* (see Stephen Durrant's discussion in Loewe (1993: 486–87). I am not very familiar with this text and can only offer a concurrence with Durrant's observation, in support of Liang Qichao's late dating of the text, that its style fits very well the literary environment of the late Warring States.

An important recent argument in this connection concerns the *Sun Zi*, for which some would now claim a fifth-century date, based on portions of the text recovered at the Yinqueshan site in Shandong; see Wu 1975: 7, and Yates 1988: 217–18. The passage in question is translated in Ames 1993: 174–76. Ames nevertheless dates the period of composition to 400–320 (*Ibid.*: 24). A passage in that manuscript predicts that the state of Zhao will reunify the former territories of Jin, an outcome which never came to pass. This has led some scholars to argue that the passage could not have been written after 403, when the Zhou royal house officially acknowledged the legitimacy of all three Jin successor states. However, since the force of the prediction is only to assert that Zhao will, at some future time, prevail over Wei and Han, it seems to me that the date of 403 bears no significance. The passage suggests only that this redaction was composed as a marketing tool in the state of Zhao at a time when its relations with Han and Wei were strained, which was quite often the case. It may have been this regional marketing feature of the passage which led to its absence from other transmitted editions.

potential patrons.¹⁹ If the date is correct, it seems beyond coincidence that the profusion of texts should coincide with the establishment in Qi of the Jixia Academy during the reign of King Wei (357–320).²⁰ The creation of the academy marks a major change in the conditions governing the philosophical market. It is the first example of government patronage of an interstate corps of philosophers without an entailed relationship to government responsibilities, a change which liberates philosophers from the allure of political ambition (though not from dependence on political actors).²¹

The Intellectual Commodities of the Early Fourth Century

Before examining in more detail the significance of the Jixia Academy, I would like to consider the major philosophical ideas that had emerged by the time of its creation in terms of the five major intellectual commodities enumerated earlier (the sixth item, doctrines as exotica, does not play the same sort of role).

The earliest forms of Confucianism and Mohism do not seem to have attracted support beyond an audience of disciples because the most powerful lure they offered placed too great a demand on the ethical commitment of potential patrons. Both schools offered paths to success that required unremitting moral effort, and this approach has historically had few takers. During the fourth century, however, Confucians, and perhaps Mohists, seem to have assimilated more marketable ideas, which they shared in common with other thinkers.

In the case of Confucianism, one major development was the emergence of the doctrine of timeliness, a theme of restricted scope in the early portions of the *Analects*, but a basic notion for Mencius. The concept of timeliness—that there existed attainable skills that would allow a virtuoso actor infallibly to read proper imperatives out of the apparent randomness of particular circumstances—spread far beyond Confucianism in the fourth century. It is a major feature of the *Sun Zi*'s art of the general, particularly if timeliness is understood as embracing the counterpart

19. While disciples of the largest and best established schools, namely, Confucianism and Mohism, could have, and eventually did, market their texts under the names of the leading figures of their schools, thinkers not associated with schools sanctified by tradition generally enhanced their texts by ascribing them to figures of mystery or historical authority.

20. The historical texts give contradictory information concerning the date of the founding of Jixia. Qian Mu argues well but not conclusively for the beginning of King Wei's reign (Qian 1935: 232–33). For evidence of an earlier founding date, see Kanaya 1987: 304–5.

21. The interstate nature of Jixia patronage distinguishes it from the custom of “honoring worthies” which was said to be a feature of the court of Duke Mu of Lu (r. 415–383). The duke's policies in his small state seem to have been an attempt of the court to enhance its legitimacy chiefly by linking itself to the growing posthumous reputation of Confucius, a native son.

notion of responding to situational propensities (*shi*).²² The concept of timeliness is basic to the entire notion of sagehood as it was construed during the late Warring States period, and the proliferation of competing claims by schools to possess the unique route to these skills suggests its appeal to consumers.²³

The fourth century also seems to have seen the rise of interest in the notion of *qi* across a number of philosophical divisions. Texts dating from this period that show an interest in the concept include the militarist *Sun Zi*, which discusses its manifestation among massed troops, the quietist proto-hygiene *Nei ye* text, the *Zhuang Zi*, in tales such as the Cook Ding story, and the *Mencius*, which links the cultivation of *qi* with the figures of virtuoso martial artists. While *qi* already possesses many dimensions of meaning by this time, its most marketable feature was not likely to have been its cosmological significance, but rather the various sorts of physical prowess which were said to be consequences of harnessing its power, along with its potential for increasing longevity.²⁴

The philosophical market, then, began to broaden during the first half of the fourth century in large part because philosophers began to offer two new and attractive products—control over timing and situational propensities, or power distributions, and control over *qi*—in a variety of theoretical and practical packages.

As the century came to a close, however, a very different kind of philosophical product appears to make its first important impact on the market. The notion that government systems design could reach the technical level of a *dao* seems to emerge in the wake of the famous successes of Shang Yang in the state of Qin, where he enacted his revolutionary reforms during the period 359–338. The

22. See Jullien 1992: esp. 23–32. While militarists may not have been the first to isolate the concepts of timeliness and situational propensities, the obvious marketability of their works in the context of Warring States period demand for innovative military strategy and coordination very likely gave militarist terminology a leading role in the philosophical competition for patronage.

23. It seems to me legitimate to see the doctrine of timeliness as a source for such action prescriptions as *wuwei* in the *Dao de jing*, *bu de yi* in the *Zhuang Zi* (particularly in the chapter “Renjian shi”), and *shun* in Huang-Lao texts.

24. While Mohist texts do not engage the concept of *qi* in any substantive way, it is possible that patrician interest in *qi* enhanced the attractiveness of Mohist paramilitary retainers because Mohists were viewed as a cult that had mastered the mobilization of *qi*. Mohists were famous for subduing ordinary dispositions in favor of the often fatal imperatives dictated by their uncompromising universalism, and I have elsewhere argued that their ability to do so was viewed as a product of *qi*-cultivation (Eno 1990: 260 n56). While Mohists seem to have opposed the viciousness of *qi*-crazed bravos like Bogong You, described by Mencius, their own fanatical behavior may have appeared to be the consequence of powers of *qi* cultivated through devotion to their own brand of righteousness. Mark Lewis presents portraits of warriors with excessive *qi* in *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (1990: 222–26) and includes a passage indicating the Mohist attitude towards them. For the most famous instance of Mohist fanaticism, see Graham 1989a: 44–45.

growing crescendo of technocratic writings from the end of the fourth century through the following century, which command compendia such as the *Guan Zi*, invade Confucian texts such as the *Xun Zi* (and perhaps some early ritual texts), and form the distinguishing substance of Legalist texts, reflects the impact of this new philosophical product just as the Jixia period reaches its first flourishing.

Moonlighting and Nontraditional Students

An issue that deserves investigation but for which evidence does not seem to be abundant is the means by which philosophers eked out a living when patronage was scarce. As noted earlier, the disciples of Confucius seem to have, from the time of their master's death, established themselves as a professional group specializing in cultural training, literary tutoring, and performance of ritual ceremonies necessary for gracious living in the elite stratum of society. These activities, though clearly related to the cult's philosophical teachings, constituted a nonphilosophical form of professionalism that cushioned the school against difficult times when major government patronage was not forthcoming.²⁵

In time, the Confucian school seems to have been deflected from both its political idealism and its original ambitious designs for self-transformation by increasing immersion in and patronage of its textual program, a phenomenon we will encounter further below. Xun Zi, who attacks what he regards as false Confucians with a bitterness surpassing that directed even at Mohists, clearly views these men as cynical and self-interested manipulators of the good reputation of their school.

Mohists, like the Confucians, turned extraphilosophical professional skills sanctioned by their doctrine to economic advantage, in their case by pioneering the science of defensive warfare. I would not want to suggest any cynical motive in this on the part of individual Mohists, who were surely the least self-regarding members of early Chinese society. But by fashioning a profession from their doctrinal obsessions they ensured themselves an acknowledged role in society and undoubtedly earned rewards of honor and esteem that were uniquely sustaining to the psychology of their group.

It is not the economic aspects per se that make the extraphilosophical activities of these men of interest, rather these activities suggest that philosophy in early China generated spin-off products that became secondary, and in some cases primary, professional engagements of the philosophers. Thus it seems logical, although direct evidence may be less than complete, to anticipate that the men who carried the messages we now label Daoist earned patronage on the basis of their personas as hermits,²⁶ that cosmologists specializing in models of *qi* and, later, yin

25. I examine these aspects of Confucianism in more detail in 1990: 60–62.

26. Aat Vervoorn, in his *Men of the Cliffs and Caves*, explores many forms of eremitism in early China and discovers during the post-Warring States era many ways in which

and yang, were among the same men who earned the patronage of the wealthy by providing them training in or treatment with various forms of physical, dietary, medical, and sexual hygiene, and that the specialists in natural categories whom we will encounter shortly, pocketed substantial fees by marketing new and improved forms of knowing the future.²⁷

Along with this diversification of secondary products, we may expect that there was a parallel attempt to discover new and diverse consumer groups. Student tuition was unlikely to have been a fully rewarding source of income during times of sparse patronage (witness Mohist descriptions of impoverished Confucians). In sustaining themselves, the early schools may well have searched for formulas that would earn them access to new markets.

One possibility that may have been overlooked is the role that the increasingly wealthy merchant class may have played in sustaining philosophy. It would not be unusual in world history for a class of nouveau riche to seek the patina of social legitimacy through patronage of the intellectual arts. Apart from the merchant-turned-prime-minister, Lü Buwei, whom we will mention again later, the *Shiji* does not record such patrons. However, this may in part be due to the ambivalent attitude of Han society towards merchants; after all, Sima Qian has very little to say about the class in any respect. However, among the few pre-Qin figures discussed in the *Shiji*'s account of great merchants, at least three do seem to suggest connections with the philosophical market.

The most famous of these is Confucius's prominent disciple Zigong (Duanmu Si, 520–450), who is said to have become wealthy as an itinerant merchant after the death of the Master (*Shiji* 67.2201; 129.3258). The *Analects* includes an apparent reference to Zigong's mercantile skills even before Confucius's death ("Si has not received any official commission, nevertheless goods proliferate with him" [*Analects* 11.18]). The wording of the passage is difficult to interpret. It is possible that the phrase is an insertion into a preexisting characterization of Zigong as a clever speaker and predictor of events, which accords with the *Zuozhuan* accounts of his activities during Confucius's lifetime.²⁸ While it may be true that Zigong became a merchant, it is also possible that his reputation as a merchant reflects a pattern of interaction between the Confucian faction which was associated with him

playing the hermit could lead to social prestige and even material reward (1990). The tale of Bo Yi and Shu Qi, cited in the *Analects* and elsewhere, would already have established the possibility for hermits to "extort" patronage in return for the political benefits of having a righteous recluse nest at one's court.

27. The peculiarly nonphilosophical flavor of much Han Dynasty learning may be the result of a general displacement of the primary enterprise of the early philosophical community by the more easily marketable secondary products that developed from these closely related but extraphilosophical pursuits.

28. The *Lüshi chunqiu* also pictures Zigong as a wealthy man while a disciple (*Cha wei* 16/6) (Chen 1984: 1003).

in the state of Qi and merchant-patrons there.²⁹ Confucians in Qi may have found that packaging the founder of their faction with a merchant reputation improved their ability to attract patronage from this increasingly influential class.

Two other biographical passages in the *Shiji* suggest interactions between philosophy and the merchant class. The strange story of the Yue militarist minister Fan Li is the more elaborate. Fan Li is known as the minister whose advice to King Goujian led to Yue's famous victory of vengeance over Wu in 482, and the *Han shu* lists him as the author of a militarist text (30.1757). Several accounts of his life tell us that after Yue's great triumph, Fan Li chose to sail off from Yue to start a new life, traveling first to Qi, where he acted as prime minister and was known as Chiyi Zipi (the "Leather Bag"), and then wandering off again, this time to the town of Tao in eastern Shandong, where he became a very wealthy merchant known as Lord Zhu (*Shiji* 129.3257).³⁰

Fan's decision is said to have been based in part on the observation that the principles that were put into practice to revive Yue economically and prepare it for victory could also be applied to ensure personal success and wealth. These principles are attributed in the *Shiji* to "Ji Ran" ("Thus calculated"), which was traditionally understood to be the name of Fan Li's teacher, but may equally well be understood as a text title (*Shiji* 129.3256; Qian 1935: 103–7).³¹ The brief description of the principles of "Ji Ran" read very much as a Huang-Lao style guide to state fiscal policy. The first sentence reads, "If one understands conflict then one prepares in advance. If one is timely in expenditures then one understands goods. When both these are manifest then the true nature of the myriad commodities comes fully into view." The text goes on to discuss in detail relationships between cycles of timing and market practices.³²

The tale of Fan Li is not very coherent as history. But it forges a folkloric link joining a class of potential patrons with a hero of the Huang-Lao cult and some of

29. The role Zigong played in the transmission of Confucian teaching is unclear. The possibility that he fostered the spread of Confucianism in Qi is explored in Kimura 1971: 200–1.

30. It is hard to avoid the impression that the image of the leather bag signals a folktale conflation of Fan Li with his adversary Wu Zixu, whose body was cast adrift in a leather bag by King Fuchai of Wu. Fan Li is said to have cast himself adrift in a boat as he went off to Qi (variously sailing the sea or up the Yangzi). The *Lüshi chunqiu* says, at one point, "Thus were Fan Li and Zixu floated off (exiled)" (*Liwei, Xin shu*, "Erpi" says that he committed suicide).

31. Qian also contends that the assignation of the name "Leather Bag" to Fan Li is a conflation with another man of Qi.

32. Du Zhengsheng has analyzed apparent relationships between the "Ji Ran" text and calendrical cosmology of the period (1990: esp. 486–95). His arguments suggest that common techniques for speculation in crops had been displaced into arcane formulas that would require merchants to consult initiates.

its ideas concerning timing.³³ The message of the tale is that ideas that thinkers may initially attempt to sell to those who hold power and office may be equally applicable to those who are in a position to employ them for their own personal benefit. Were we to analyze texts more consistently for their economic implications, we might find within them many hints of messages of this nature, stretching the appeal of certain doctrines, such as timeliness, to new audiences.

Another merchant biography with similar philosophical overtones concerns Bo Gui, a political leader in Wei who appears several times in the *Mencius*. Bo Gui, like Fan Li, is said to have relied on a set of timing practices resonant with Huang-Lao ideas. He is quoted characterizing himself as the merchant equivalent of a string of figures who represent ideas congenial to that cult. "My method of control over produce resembles the strategies of Yi Yin and Lü Shang, the military tactics of Sun Wu, and the legal designs of Shang Yang" (*Shiji* 129.3259).

The Jixia Academy and the Formation of a Market Community

When, about 350, the rulers of the usurping Tian clan in the state of Qi elected to follow the example of Marquis Wen in trying to strengthen their position by patronizing philosophy, they carried their experiment further than had been the case in Wei. The academy of scholars that they founded disengaged the marketing of *daos* to government from issues of state appointment. Scholars appointed to Jixia received a stipend from the Qi government but were under no political obligations (although some such scholars, such as Chunyu Kun, seem to have performed services for the court as individuals).³⁴

The establishment of the academy also had the effect of physically settling a wide variety of thinkers within a limited neighborhood, and this, more than any other phenomenon, may have given rise to the notion of the *zhuzi* (scholars) as a distinct group of people engaged in a uniform type of activity.³⁵ It may well be that it was during the early decades of Jixia that focused intellectual attacks of one school against another first emerged.³⁶ While this sort of adversarial advertising was intended by each school to advance its interests at the expense of its

33. We will discuss Fan Li's status as a Huang-Lao figure below.

34. Some interpreters hold that Jixia scholars were obliged to meet in convocations and advise the rulers of Qi (see, for example, Zhang 1990). This idea seems to be inspired by a late passage in *Yantie lun* "Lun Ru" that projects the government activities of Mencius and Chunyu Kun as standard for Jixia scholars in general; see Zhang 1991: 13).

35. If we accept the suggestion of Guo Moruo that the *Guan Zi* "Dizi zhi" chapter includes rules of behavior that were meant to apply universally in the academy, its cohesive identity would appear all the stronger (see Kanaya 1987: 314–15).

36. For example, one of the most famous and sustained of these, the *Mo Zi*'s attack on Confucianism in its "Fei Ru" chapter, describes Confucius's actions in the state of Qi and makes the Qi minister Yan Ying its chief spokesperson.

competitors', it may also be viewed as a recognition of certain features of community shared among all members of the Jixia group.

The advent of the close philosophical community at Jixia heightened competition among schools, and by the opening decades of the third century it had engendered intellectual cross-fertilization on a scale far surpassing that of the previous century. This accounts for the rapid diffusion among different schools of the ideas of yin-yang and the five forces, the last of the major new product lines to emerge during the Warring States period.

The features of Jixia discourse and the resulting eclecticism that is visible both in the works of individual thinkers such as Xun Zi and in the *Guan Zi* text, often regarded as at root a Jixia compendium, are too well known to require detailed discussion here.³⁷ The possible linkage of the Tian clan, which claimed Huang Di as its lineage ancestor, and the development of Huang-Lao ideology also suggests that this sole example of a truly syncretist school may also have owed its development to the environment of Jixia.

The nature of Jixia patronage, which seems to have been entirely gratuitous and extremely broad, makes the trends of Jixia less subject to new insights through the application of a market model: the types of competition spurred by the academy would have related more specifically to intellectual than to economic issues. However, it may be that increased awareness of shared professional identity among the members of *zhuzi* teaching traditions created a new sense of the need to distinguish the products of philosophy from those of non-philosophical wisdom peddlers: doctors, diviners, astronomers, shamans, and so forth. As the ideas of *qi* cultivation and the cosmologies of yin-yang and five forces theory increasingly bridged these two types of groups after 300, maintaining the distinction would have required some effort. The "Jin shu" chapter of the *Lüshi chunqiu*, which appears to be the product of a hygiene cult centered on the concept of *qi* nurturance, makes the following comment, expressing a low opinion for nonphilosophical approaches to health, "Nowadays, men value divination and shrine prayer, hence diseases come with increasing frequency . . . Shamanic doctors and poisoned herbal concoctions cure illness only by driving it out [once it is established], hence the ancients scorned them as superficial" (Chen 1984: 137).

The transition in Chinese thought that coincides with the Jixia era is one which moves from a period when individual thinkers with their disciples seek to make a place for themselves and their teachings in society to a period when the manufacture and marketing of philosophical *daos* is viewed as a respectable Chinese industry. The members of the philosophical community now understand the nature of the market and of their competitive position within it, and have developed some awareness that they possess a shared set of interests as well.

37. A good survey of Jixia debates appears in Zhang 1990: 82–86. The nature of his list illustrates how far beyond the limits of our five "commodities" debates ranged within the confines of the philosophical community.

The Economics of Yue as Background to the Rise of Fangshi

The sharpest conflicts between the philosophical and nonphilosophical communities seem to have arisen during the post-Jixia period with the advent of learning traditions that go under the generic name of *fangshi*. The *Shiji* implies that the major ideas that lay behind *fangshi* arts were derived from the Jixia community through the philosopher Zou Yan (305–240). His teachings, we are told, were misunderstood by the *fangshi* of the coastal regions and perverted into superstition and immortalist doctrines (*Shiji* 28.1369).

After the Jixia period, the greatest market challenges to individual philosophical schools may not have come from competing schools, but from these *fangshi* cults, which appealed to rulers and the wealthy with exciting products such as foreknowledge, spirit control, levitation, and immortality. This key change in the market may have been the direct consequence of making the Qi capital at Linzi so prominent a center of philosophical discourse, and may also point to an important indirect connection between the history of philosophy and the economy of the early Warring States state of Yue.

Linzi, in the northern region of the Shandong Peninsula, is located near to the coastal regions where the *fangshi* cults flourished during the late third and second centuries. These cults, and in particular their notions of the flying immortals of the east, seem to be regional inheritances of the culture of the former states of Wu and Yue, which had flourished suddenly in the sixth and fifth centuries, only to die out abruptly under the spreading influence of Chu.³⁸

Perhaps the greatest geographical anomaly of the Classical period in China is the fact that seven years after Yue completed its conquest of Wu in 473 and consolidated itself in the Yangzi delta as the dominant power of eastern China, it relocated its capital hundreds of miles north of its base territory to the coastal outpost of Langye, on the southern edge of the Shandong Peninsula. The capital remained in Langye for about fifty years, separated from the Qi only by the permeable barrier of the central Shandong mountains.³⁹

The cultures of Wu and Yue, unlike those of the central states, were noted for their reliance on water transport and skills in sea navigation (Dong 1988: 274–81). Of the five major Warring States coastal ports, the southernmost two, Kuaiji (modern Shaoxing) and Gouzhang (modern Ningbo) were within the heartland of

38. In following discussion I am much indebted to current dissertation research by Chia-li Luo, who is tracing the history of cultural interactions between the peoples of the Taihu region, where the states of Wu and Yue were located, and other regions of early China.

39. As Chen Wei has recently pointed out, the history of Yue in Langye is not well documented, and the duration of the capital's location there may be questioned (1993: 57–58). Qian Mu offered extensive arguments that the site of the Yue capital was not at present-day Langye, but some 50–100 km. further south; his arguments are reasonable but neither convincing nor called for in light of the maritime significance of Langye (Qian 1935: 110–14).

the Wu-Yue consolidated state.⁴⁰ The relocation to Langye, which was the central coastal port, seems cogent only as a strategy for enhancing Yue's control of coastal trade and allowing it greater access to the markets of the two northern ports, which were located in the states of Qi and Yan.⁴¹

I speculate that the coastal *fangshi* cults are probably the product of heightened contact between Yue seafarers and local populations, and that the ideas that came to be associated with Zou Yan at Jixia were, in fact, probably originally inspired by these cults, rather than the other way around.⁴² While much work needs to be done to identify specific features of Wu-Yue culture which may have formed the basis of the *fangshi* cults, the likelihood that such a cultural link existed is reflected in accounts of the First Emperor of Qin's romance with immortalism, which locate his various rendezvous with those in search of the immortal isles at the former Yue capital of Langye (*Shiji* 6.247, 263).

If Wu-Yue culture lies behind the *fangshi* traditions, then the fact that it was the rulers of Qi rather than the competitor patrons of the Wei royal house who succeeded in attracting so great a portion of the philosophical community would appear to have had a dramatic impact on the course of intellectual history.⁴³ Together with the economic policies of the fifth century court of Yue, Qi's geographical location may have determined the direction of philosophical discourse after 300 as much as any other aspect of social or political history.

The Diffusion of Patronage

Between the final collapse of the Jixia Academy in 265 and the consolidation of China under Qin rule in 221, the philosophical market seems to have fragmented. No other single court managed to replace the role that the Tian clan had played in

40. Dong discusses the major seaports of the period (1988: 278).

41. Note the resonance between this political move and the tale of Fan Li's seafaring departure from Yue as a militarist and reemergence in Qi as a merchant, discussed earlier.

42. A similar point might be made concerning the relationship between Huang-Lao thought and these cults. The *Huang Di si jing* texts excavated at Mawangdui show intense borrowing from the *Yue yu* II, which Qian Mu speculated is the lost "Book of Fan Li" (1935: 453), and this may suggest the impact of Yue-influenced *fangshi* cults on early Huang-Lao thought. The *Wenwu* editors of the silk texts cite seventeen instances of textual overlap, which occur in three of the four Huang Di texts (not all are significant, but some not noted are). By contrast, Graham notes that the *Heguan Zi* includes more instances of overlap than any other text, with twenty (1989b: 508); yet the *Heguan Zi* is many times longer than the *Yue-yu* II, indicating denser borrowing from the latter.

43. King Hui of Wei (r. 370–319) appears to have attempted to recruit scholars during the era of Jixia, but without the success that characterized Qi.

Qi, and many philosophical professionals seemed to have searched out patronage away from the courts of legitimate rulers.⁴⁴

These were the decades when the great warlord-ministers dominated the politics of a number of states, from Lord Chunshen in Chu, the patron of Xun Zi, to Lord Pingyuan in Zhao, the patron of Gongsun Long. In the west, the merchant Lü Buwei, having succeeded to the office of prime minister of Qin, and seeking to compete with the great warlords of the east, also established a reputation as a great patron of thinkers. This is said to have been the origin of the *Lüshi chunqiu*.

Although this was a period of significant philosophical innovation, particularly in the articulation of Legalist and Huang-Lao types of thought, our information concerning the nature of the philosophical market is sparse. Any changes that may have begun to emerge during this period would, in any event, have been quickly terminated with the Qin conquest, which radically altered the shape of the marketplace of ideas.

One possible reflection of the new patron audiences that philosophers were addressing may be the gradual rise in the proportion of historical anecdote included in philosophical texts. Perhaps this is the consequence of a renewed need for philosophers, as aspiring guests at the courts of warlord patricians, to entertain in their persuasions and in the texts that they offered as commodities in exchange for patronage. In the *Han Fei Zi* we find a group of chapters in which tales are categorized together under headings of political or philosophical points that they may be used to illustrate (the various *chu shuo* or “stored up stories”). Perhaps in these final decades of the Classical era, when philosophers were competing most acutely with swordsmen and other martial artists for the favors of less-than-erudite warlord patrons, a new premium on the amusement value of intellectual packaging gave a decisive push to the anecdotal genre of philosophical writing, which makes many later Han works engaging despite their uneven quality as philosophy.

The Qin Conquest and the Regulated Market

The Qin is usually viewed as an antiphilosophical dynasty, which set out to destroy learning in order to implement a Daoist-Legalist policy of making the people ignorant. It is certainly so that in 213, at the urging of the prime minister Li Si, the First Emperor issued an order banning many philosophical texts and certain books that had come to have canonical status among a wide range of intellectuals. But as Derk Bodde has pointed out, the event took place late in the emperor’s reign and is unlikely to have had the devastating effect that is often attributed to it (1986: 72–73).

44. Zhang Bingnan describes records of a Wuyang Academy established by Yan in preparation for its invasion of Qi which attracted prominent men, such as Zou Yan, and persisted for some time (1990: 91). The fact that records of this academy are preserved only in the *Shuijing zhu* (6th c. A.D.) suggests that its influence was small.

The Qin conquest eliminated all the established sources of patronage for philosophy, and the abolition of feudalism removed the courts that had been home for so many thinkers. The wealthy families that had supported wise men all over China were relocated to the capital region in the far west for easier control, and the powerholders who replaced them were civil or military appointees, without the resources or mandate to patronage philosophers. While the philosophers would still have had recourse to the extraphilosophical professions that had sustained them throughout the Warring States era in times when patronage was scarce, they would now have been competing with *fangshi*, who had developed alternative systems of divination, hygiene, and so forth, and were, perhaps, in a better position to capture customers through their willingness to incorporate a greater body of popular tradition in their rationalizations.

However, the Qin soon moved to create an entirely new market, adapted from Jixia. This was the *boshi* or erudite system, a body of official appointments reserved for men outstanding in their knowledge.⁴⁵ This state-sponsored bureau of *boshi* is the heart of the small, closely regulated, but important philosophical market of the Qin. It is likely that members of all intellectual traditions, which surely shared a sense of awe that they were living in a generation that had seen the end of over 500 years of multistate warfare, looked upon service to the new government as an opportunity to take part in the future, while reaping the benefits of Qin rank and privilege in the process.

The *boshi* represented a relatively large number of high-ranking officers. In 213, at the convention of *boshi* that led to the policy banning certain books, seventy *boshi* were in attendance, and we must recall that these men had students who assisted them (*Shiji* 6.254).⁴⁶ It is clear from the scattered references to individual *boshi* and their activities in the historical sources that the *boshi* were a diverse group of men, including Confucians, *fangshi*, and others. No apparent attempt was made to limit *boshi* to Legalists or to men agreeing with Qin policies.

While we do not have any detailed description of the normal duties of the *boshi* outside of advisory conclaves, the *boshi* "were in charge of comprehending (*tong*)

45. Qian Mu concludes that the office predated the Qin. He traces the origins of the office back to the court of Duke Mu of Lu, nearly two centuries before the Qin conquest, and discovers examples of *boshi* in Qi in the Jixia era as well (1978: 165–66; see also Zhang 1990: 80). However, Qian does not make a strong case for interpreting these early instances of men who may have possessed the title *boshi* as precursors of the Qin system. The Qin *boshi* were not merely men titled in consequence of their wide knowledge, they were an appointed bureau of official advisors, on call for consultation and expected to maintain a library of resources that would allow them to provide to the state the most informed opinions available in the empire. The institution as thus described does not seem to predate the Qin.

46. The fact that *boshi* had followers is confirmed by the biography of Shusun Tong, a Qin *boshi* who transferred his allegiance to the Han. At the time that he did so, his followers are said to have numbered over one hundred (*Shiji* 99.2721).

the past and the present.”⁴⁷ This suggests that the task of the *boshi* was to assemble knowledge of the past so that it could, where warranted, assist the Qin program.⁴⁸ While one would expect that this would result in the generation of texts, none are listed in the “Yiwen zhi.” Because the *boshi* do not appear to have produced philosophical works, not much attention has been paid to them, and we may well ask whether the institution was a philosophical market of ideas at all.

I do not have a definitive answer, but I would like to suggest a hypothesis concerning the function of the *boshi* which proposes a way in which the office formed a bridge between the contending schools of the pre-Qin period and the highly text-based period that followed in the Han. I want to argue that the function of the *boshi* was to compose encyclopedic catalogues of the knowledge of the Classical period, representing the doctrines of all schools in anthologies and authoritatively comprehensive new digests, for use by the Qin emperors and courts of the future. Such projects would have imposed closure on the intellectual history of China prior to Qin control and would have been fully congenial to the spirit of the dynasty to unify, circumscribe, and control the cultural region of China.

If such was the encyclopedic project, where then are the texts? I suggest that the principal product of this project was the *Lüshi chungiu* in its current form. The text is said to have been completed under the supervision of Lü Buwei by his own courtiers in 239, but it includes passages that must postdate Lü's death, and we may question how Lü, during the ten prior years of his prime ministership, could ever have lured to the western outpost of Qin so diverse and outstanding a group of scholars and literary talents as would have been required to produce a text such as the one which bears his name. It seems far more likely that the text that Lü “displayed at the gate of the Xianyang market,” consisted of the “monthly ordinances” of the *ji* section of the text, which form a complete almanac. These, and perhaps the essays attached to them, correspond far better than the whole text to the claim reported in the *Shiji* that not a word could be added or subtracted to improve them. The *Lüshi chungiu*, with its encyclopedic and topically cogent arrangement, nearly standardized formats, relative unity of diction across different schools, and broadly balanced presentation of pre-Qin schools, is the sort of comprehensive product that the Qin government might have found appropriate to bring the past to closure.⁴⁹

47. Qian, quoting the *Han shu*, *Baiguan biao* (1978: 166).

48. The relation of the past and the present was a major issue for the Qin. The Qin conquest was a greater revolution than had been seen before in China, particularly after the First Emperor chose to follow the antifeudal policies of Li Si. The book-burning edict of 213 was undertaken in response to a criticism of these policies by a Confucian *boshi*, and its specific purpose was to put a stop to those who would “use the past to reject the present” (*Shiji* 6.255).

49. On passages postdating Lü's death, see Carson 1980: 435. Carson's entry on the text in Loewe notes a divergence of linguistic patterns between the *ji* and other sections (1993: 325-26).

In addition to the *Lüshi chunqiu*, outstanding unattributed texts such as the *Daxue* and *Zhongyong* make excellent sense as products of a *boshi* literary bureau. The *Daxue*, which cites as canon the “Qin shi” chapter of the *Shang shu*, supposedly the words of Duke Mu of Qin (r. 659–621), would be unlikely to exalt such a text had it been composed during any other period. The *Zhongyong*, which appears to fit so well as a complement to the *Daxue* and clearly blends elements of the teachings of both Mencius and Xun Zi, would equally represent the type of summative synthesis—the best of the Confucians—which such a model of *boshi* activity would entail.⁵⁰

Moreover, if the “Qin shi” seems an odd text for the Confucian *Daxue* to cite, how much odder that it appears in the *Shang shu*, many sections of which had clearly attained canonical status prior to the Qin. Duke Mu, though a hero of Qin history, was the ruler reviled in the *Shi jing* poem “Huang niao” because of his dying order that his most courageous men-at-arms be killed and buried with him. In view of the inclusion of this chapter in the *Shang shu* text, would it not be reasonable to see this collection, which closes with the “Qin shi,” as reaching its broadest state as a *boshi* compendium. After all, Fu Sheng, the man who hid the *Shang shu* text at the time of its ultimate proscription and became the source of its later transmission, was a Qin *boshi* (*Shiji* 121.3124).⁵¹

The evidence for this argument is not strong enough to do more than suggest that it represents a reasonable hypothesis. But it should be obvious that if this were the case, the Confucians would have been anxious not to advertise during the

50. Dating the text to the Qin would explain the problematic phrases, “In the world today, carts are identical in axle width; texts are identical in script; conduct is identical in roles” (section 28). Some previous scholars, noting such issues, have dated the text to the early Han (see Tu 1976: 13–14), but once the notion that Qin intellectual trends excluded Confucianism is questioned, the phrasing most naturally suggests a Qin date.

51. Regarding the *Shang shu* as a compendium completed by the Qin *boshi* could explain the puzzling fact that none of the chapters in the canonical version of the text which modern scholarship considers to be genuine (all located in the “Zhou shu” section) are cited in other pre-Qin texts, with the exception of the “Kang gao.” It may well be that these texts, which resemble early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, had been preserved near the old Zhou homeland in the Wei River valley, the region of the Qin capital of Xianyang. The scholars of the *boshi* corps, whose pre-Qin predecessors had generally sought employment in eastern China, could have been the first scholars granted access to these texts, which may have been stored in the Qin palace archives (destroyed in 207).

Though the Qin state clearly withdrew its approval of the *Shang shu* and outlawed its possession, this was by no means necessarily the case with other texts which the *boshi* may have assembled. The *Lüshi chunqiu*, *Daxue*, and *Zhongyong* appear unscathed after the fall of the Qin. Qian Mu has argued that the literary proscription extended to a relatively narrow range of texts, and also points out that it did not include copies in the possession of the *boshi* (1978: 167–68).

subsequent era of the Han Dynasty that important portions of their textual corpus were sponsored by the Qin state and produced by Confucian collaborators.⁵²

If the philosophical marketplace during the Qin was as I have suggested, it would account for certain features of post-Qin intellectual history. First, given the extraphilosophical trade of Confucians as masters of a textual tradition and teachers of the literary graces to young men of good family, it is likely that Confucians would have featured more prominently among the *boshi* than would the representatives of other schools, perhaps accounting for the fact that despite their "persecution," Confucians emerged from the Qin-Han transition much stronger than all but a few pre-Qin schools. Moreover, the transition of philosophical activity from an era of creativity and debate to one of canon closure and interpretation would have been well facilitated by a decade in which the marketplace of ideas became a forum for categorization, selection, and editorial digestion.⁵³

Conclusion

The perspective of the economics of the philosophical marketplace brings to the foreground aspects of the history of early Chinese philosophy not often attended to. Among the phenomena at least partially tied to issues of the market are the branching of Confucian disciples into new areas of marketing, such as administrative systems design (Li Ke) and militaristic strategy (Wu Qi), the creation of a philosophical community (as a consequence of Jixia patronage), the influence of *fangshi* cults on philosophy (a delayed result of economic policies in fifth-century Yue), and the transformation from an era of philosophy to an era of textual classicism (as a consequence of the *boshi* bureau activities under the Qin). While this brief account does no more than survey prospects for fruitful inquiry that

52. Confucians continued to keep appointments as *boshi* even after 213, as is shown by the presence of the Confucian ritualist Shusun Tong at a convocation in 209 (*Shiji* 99.2720). It seems best to withhold sympathy from the Confucians as a persecuted minority under the terror of the Qin, given the ambiguity of the evidence and the contributions they made to the construction of the historical account, particularly after 135. The picture of Confucians as Qin loyalists would help explain the aversion that the Han founder Liu Bang expressed towards them, and the fact that the proscription against the Confucian canonical texts was left in place until 191, over a decade after the Han assumed control of all China.

53. John Henderson has noted the importance to the fixing of a closed canon of some experience of sharp break with the past, and observes that the Qin provides this function in China (1991: 39–40). He means by this that the literary and institutional destruction associated with the Qin alienated the past from the present. But it may be that we should look at the Qin's closure of the past as a more positive response to the political revolution of Li Si's policies. The past was not alien because it was unreachable, but rather it had been closed off by the encyclopedist's urge to commoditize and control it.

a more nuanced market analysis of early philosophical activity could provide, I believe further research will show that the promise of this perspectival experiment is more than empty advertising.

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Glossary

Aihara Junji	相原俊二	"Ji Ran"	計然
Baiguan biao	百官表	Jin	晉
Baili Xi	百里奚	Jixia	稷下
<i>binke</i>	賓客	Kanaya Osamu	金谷治
Bo Gui	白圭	"Kang gao"	康誥
Bo Yi	伯夷	Kimura Eiichi	木村英一
Bogong Yu	北宮黝	Kuaiji	會稽
<i>boshi</i>	博士	Langye	琅琊
<i>bu de yi</i>	不得已	<i>li</i>	禮
Chen Qiyou	陳奇猷	Li Ke	李克
Chen Wei	陳偉	Li Kui	李悝
Chiyi Zipi	鴟夷子皮	Li Si	李斯
Chu	楚	Liwei	璃謂
<i>chu shuo</i>	儲說	Linzi	臨淄
Chunshen	春申	Liu Bang	劉邦
Chunyu Kun	淳于髡	Lu	魯
<i>dao</i>	道	Lü Buwei	呂不韋
<i>Daxue</i>	大學	"Lun Ru"	論儒
<i>de</i>	德	Lü Shang	呂尚
Dong Chuping	董楚平	<i>Lüshi chunqiu</i>	呂氏春秋
Du Zhengsheng	杜正勝	<i>Mo Zi</i>	墨子
Duangan Mu	段干木	<i>Nei ye</i>	內業
Duanmu Si	端木賜	Pingyuan	平原
"Erpi"	耳痺	<i>qi</i>	氣
Fan Li	范蠡	Qi	齊
<i>fangshi</i>	方士	Qian Mu	錢穆
Fu Sheng	伏勝	Qin	秦
Fuchai	夫差	"Qin shi"	秦誓
Gongsun Long	公孫龍	<i>qun chen you</i>	群臣有位事
Goujian	句踐	<i>wei shi guan-</i>	官大夫者
Gouzhang	句章	<i>dafuzhe</i>	
<i>Guan Zi</i>	管子	<i>Shang shu</i>	尚書
Guo Moruo	郭沫若	Shang Yang	商鞅
Han	韓	<i>shi</i>	勢
<i>Han Fei Zi</i>	韓非子	(propensities)	
<i>Han shu</i>	漢書	<i>shi</i> (timeliness)	時
<i>Heguan Zi</i>	鶡冠子	"Shihuo zhi"	食貨志
Hu Jichuang	胡奇窗	Shi Yican	石一參
Huang Di si jing	黃帝四經	<i>Shiji</i>	史記
Huang-Lao	黃老	<i>shike</i>	食客
<i>ji</i>	紀	Shu Qi	叔齊

<i>Shuijing zhu</i>	水經注
<i>shun</i>	順
Shusun Tong	叔孫通
Sima Qian	司馬遷
Sun Wu	孫吳
<i>Sun Zi</i>	孫子
Tao	陶
Tian	田
Tian Zifang	田子方
<i>tong</i>	通
Wei	魏
Wu	吳
Wu Qi	吳起
Wu Shuping	吳樹平
Wu Zixu	伍子胥
<i>wuwei</i>	無爲
Wuyang	武陽
<i>Xin shu</i>	新書
<i>Xun Zi</i>	荀子
Yan	燕
Yan Ying	晏嬰
Yan Zi chunqiu	晏子春秋
<i>Yantie lun</i>	鹽鐵論
Yi Yin	伊尹
“Yiwen zhi”	藝文志
Yue	越
<i>Yue yu</i>	越語
Zeng Zi	曾子
Zhang Bingnan	張乘楠
Zhao	趙
<i>Zhongyong</i>	中庸
<i>Zhou shu</i>	周書
Zhu	邾
<i>Zhuang Zi</i>	莊子
<i>zhuzi</i>	諸子
Zigong	子貢
Zixia	子夏
Zou Yan	鄒衍
<i>Zuozhuan</i>	左傳