



Oriental Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in cooperation with
Chiang Ching-kuo International Sinological Centre at Charles University
invite you to a lecture on

Zhuangzi: How to Read a Text without an Author

by

prof. Paul R. Goldin (University of Pennsylvania)

Most interpreters of Zhuangzi 莊子 (Master Zhuang) have proceeded as though the most important parts were the work of a wise old man named Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (369?–286? B.C.), even as they concede that the bulk of the received text must have been written by other hands. The techniques of distinguishing the allegedly authentic sections by Zhuang Zhou from the later additions are all fallacious; moreover, those sections of the text that no one seriously attributes to Zhuang Zhou are not without their own merit and do not deserve to be disregarded. Thus the best way to understand the text is to acknowledge that it has no single author – that it is, therefore, not necessarily consistent and that it contains material from diverse periods (probably a span of centuries) combined by a later redactor according to criteria that are unknowable today and might have been anachronistic even in antiquity. More fruitful than to try to reconstruct "the philosophy" of the semi-legendary Zhuang Zhou is to analyze the interlocking philosophical themes of the text, which help explain why it was beloved and transmitted all across East Asia.

Paul R. Goldin is Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Pennsylvania.

When: Wednesday, September 3, 2014, 17:00–18:30
Where: Charles University, Celetna 20, room 118



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