

“Pre-Qin Thinkers: Philosophical Thoughts and Debates”

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**The “Sinological Challenge” to Chinese philosophy:
A response from a post-disciplinary perspective**

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Some scholars of Early Chinese philosophy see the knowledge provided by Sinology as a challenge to the development of sound philosophical enquiry. What Sinology tells us about the historical context and the textual, material and intellectual culture of the period is considered detrimental for pursuing a philosophically minded research. For that reason, these scholars believe that Chinese philosophy must erect itself as a distinct discipline (with its own set of problems and methods) opposed to Sinology, and that it is legitimate to ignore the Sinological “challenges.”

In my view, Sinology does not offer a challenge, but an opportunity to engage with a multitude of approaches and perspectives to more efficiently address scholarly problems and questions. I offer my own research as an example of how to integrate the knowledge and analytical tools offered by Sinology in a philosophical study of Early China. Focusing in two of the most important Sinological challenges (the challenge to the notions of “book” and “author,” and the “literary argument” challenge), I show that using the methods and knowledge provided by other disciplines does not jeopardize but, much on the contrary, invigorates and revitalizes philosophical research.

My perspective is post-disciplinary: inspired by pre-disciplinary cultures such as Early China, post-disciplinarity engages inquiry holistically, suspending the patterns and categories established by discrete disciplines, forging new paths for creativity and the search of meaning, and allowing new viable connections to emerge.

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