

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Benjamin W. Fortson, assistant professor of classical studies, and assistant professor of linguistics, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of classical studies, with tenure, and associate professor of linguistics, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

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|------|-------|--------------------|
| 1996 | Ph.D. | Harvard University |
| 1989 | B.A.  | Yale University    |

Professional Record:

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| 2003 – present | Assistant Professor, Department of Classical Studies and Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan |
| 1998           | Lecturer, Harvard University   |
| 1997 – 2003    | Associate in Linguistics, Harvard Division of Continuing Education and Summer School                       |
| 1997 – 1998    | Lecturer, Northeastern University  |

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Fortson is an able and dedicated instructor who is very successful in all teaching and teaching-supported activities: classroom, pedagogical writing, and one-on-one work with students. He is willing to devote extra time, beyond all standard expectations, to helping students learn. He is popular with students and rigorous. He has directed senior Honors theses in linguistic topics and we can anticipate dissertations to come now that the news is abroad that he is at Michigan.

Research – Professor Fortson is a specialist in the history of Latin and the Italic languages, but he has published important work over an immense range in Indo-European, including Celtic, Sanskrit, and Hittite. The breadth and depth of his expertise are most impressively displayed in his 2004 textbook, *Indo-European Language and Culture*. His overall research record is robust in quantity and absolutely first-rate in quality. He displays both diversity and coherence, and there is no doubt that he will continue to produce highly original, carefully reasoned, and empirically and theoretically sophisticated work.

Recent and Significant Publications:

*Indo-European Language and Culture: An Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, 2004 (Revised edition under contract, expected 2009).

*Language and Rhythm in Plautus: Synchronic and Diachronic Studies*, de Gruyter, to appear 2008.

“The origin of the Latin future active participle,” in *Verba Docenti: Studies in Historical and Indo-European Linguistics Presented to Jay H. Jasanoff by Students, Colleagues, and Friends*, A. J. Nussbaum (ed.), Beech Stave, 2007, pp. 83-96.

“Linguistics and cultural notes on Latin *Iūnius* and related topics,” in *Indo-European Perspectives (Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph Series 43)*, M. R. V. Southern (ed.), 2003, pp. 61-77.

Service – Professor Fortson served on the Undergraduate Affairs Committee and was the Classical Civilization concentration advisor. He was responsible for formulating and getting departmental approval for the new Classical Civilization minor and for various reforms in the concentration. He has served on the Classical Studies Chair’s Advisory Committee as well as in the graduate admissions process. He is currently chairing a review of the Elementary Latin Program, which is expected to result in significant reforms in a crucial area of the undergraduate curriculum.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“Ben’s *Indo-European Language and Culture* covers an immense amount of ground, is very specialized but easy to understand, serves both as an introduction and as a reference book, and is deservedly very successful.”

Reviewer (B)

“...I seriously believe that the quality of Fortson’s work is head and shoulders above nearly everyone of his age cohort... Fortson’s scholarship is impeccable and important, and his recent productions already deserve characterizations like ‘masterful’ or ‘virtuosic’ – terminology one might normally reserve for the most distinguished senior scholars.”

Reviewer (C)

“You may be tempted to discount this work [*Indo-European Language and Culture*] on the grounds that it is a textbook, but doing so would be very short-sighted, as it is one of the most significant developments in the field in the last decade, perhaps the last two decades.”

Reviewer (D)

“...Fortson’s publications are of high quality. ... There are very few scholars who have comparable interdisciplinary abilities in the field of historical linguistics.”

Reviewer (E)

“Fortson’s *Indo-European Language and Culture: An Introduction [IELC]* is the most important work of its kind in print. ... Textbooks in Indo-European *have* to be written by major scholars; they are not like introductory language or science texts, where the substance is settled and presentation is everything. Fortson’s exceptional mastery of the material and his skill at presenting it fairly but firmly make a winning combination. *IELC* will not be equaled any time soon.”

Reviewer (F)

“Fortson’s work is comparable in quality to the work of the other leaders in the field, and his rate of publication is similar to that of the most productive among them. ...I urge in the strongest possible terms that Ben Fortson be promoted and tenured in your department.”

Reviewer (G)

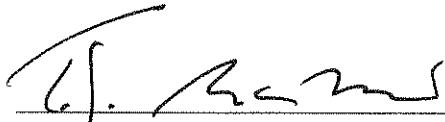
“In his own scholarship, Ben has distinguished himself both by a creative line of research and by writing what immediately became the standard English-language textbook in our field. His book on Plautine rhythm promises to become a standard point of reference for studies of linguistic prosody in Latin (and for that matter Greek, since linguists often study the classical languages together).”

Reviewer (H)

“...Dr. Fortson is a scholar of the highest distinction and, beyond any doubt, a prominent comparative Philologist and one of the best specialists in Latin today. This opinion is actually a widespread one, as shown by the distinctions and commitments he has received.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Fortson is an outstanding scholar, teacher, and colleague. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Benjamin W. Fortson be promoted to the rank of associate professor of classical studies with tenure, and associate professor of linguistics, without tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Terrence J. McDonald  
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,  
Professor of History and Dean  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

May 2009