

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

Erik A. Mueggler, associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of anthropology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1996	The Johns Hopkins University
M.A.	1990	The Johns Hopkins University
B.A.	1987	Cornell University

Professional Record:

2001 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan
1996 – 2001	Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Mueggler is highly respected among students for his imaginative and demanding style of teaching. He is deeply committed to the undergraduate honors students and has taught some of the larger second tier introductory courses within social cultural anthropology. His graduate teaching is outstanding. He has supervised or been a member of 24 dissertation committees, and he is advisor of record for a larger than average number of students in the early stages of their graduate careers.

Research – Professor Mueggler works at the intersection of many different fields in anthropology and history, including social-cultural analysis, the history of science, Chinese studies, and literature. Since being tenured in 2001, he has won eleven grants, including the MacArthur Fellowship (2002-2007) to support his second research project which resulted in a book manuscript and six articles. The manuscript – *The Paper Road: Archive and Experience in the Botanical Exploration of West China and Tibet* – received stellar reviews and is now in press at the University of California Press. He started his third major research project with two seed grants from units at the University of Michigan, which funded field research in northwestern China in Winter 2011.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- The Paper Road: Archive and Experience in the Botanical Exploration of West China and Tibet*, University of California Press, in press.
- “The Eyes of Others: Race, ‘Gaping,’ and Companionship in the Scientific Exploration of Southwest China,” in *Explorers and Scientists in China’s Borderlands*, S. Harrell, et al. (eds.), University of Washington Press, in press.
- “Bodies, real and virtual: Joseph Rock and Enrico Caruso in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 53(1), 2011, pp. 6-37.
- “George Forrest’s Rhododendron Paradise,” in *Timely Assets: The Politics and Temporalities of Resources*, E. Ferry and M. Limbert, eds., Santa Fe: School of Advanced Research Press, 2008, pp. 129-168.

Service – Professor Mueggler has consistently accepted positions of responsibility in the Department of Anthropology, including three one-year terms on the Executive Committee, numerous appointments related to graduate studies, a term on the Fellowships Committee, and as a member of search committees. His service to Michigan has been substantial, including a three-year term on the University Faculty Senate Assembly. A great deal of his focus has been to support the Center for Chinese Studies, where he served on their Executive Committee for four terms, Graduate Admissions Committee, and on the Theme Year Committee (2006-2008) for the 2007-2008 LSA Theme Semester entitled “China Now.” He has done considerably work with the Undergraduate Honors Program. His service beyond the University ranges from editorial and reviewing work for a number of journals in anthropology and Chinese studies, and administrative work for the Association of Asian Studies.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“In my judgment as an anthropologist of China, there is no better ethnographic monograph in the anthropology of China than *Age of Wild Ghosts*. But in addition, from my knowledge of colleagues teaching courses in anthropology, his book has a currency far outside the field of China in anthropology. *Age of Wild Ghosts* is, in my opinion, an anthropological classic.”

Reviewer (B)

“...expertise on China, the anthropology of environment and place, and anthropological and historical work in science studies all have a crucial place [in] today’s leading departments. That Mueggler brings these endeavors together so creatively and fruitfully helps keep Michigan’s anthropology program at the top of the heap, nationally and internationally.”

Reviewer (C)

“...Professor Mueggler’s scholarship is of exceptional quality, far exceeding anything else that has been done by anyone in the study of Chinese minorities, on a par with the very best scholarship done on the anthropology of China in general during the last 60 years. I would gladly trade my own fifteen mediocre books for his two brilliant ones.”

Reviewer (D)

“As you can see, I believe in Erik Mueggler...one of the most important ethnographers with one of the most exciting intellectual projects in anthropology today. ...[he] is that rare talent that keeps our faith going that the academic process of knowledge construction can be disciplined yet highly original, locally grounded yet globally significant and overall well deserving of the word: magnificent.”

Reviewer (E)

“I found this manuscript on botanical explorers riveting. The writing is luminous, almost hallucinatory. It is an absolutely original style, as is the subject matter.”

Reviewer (F)

“He combines fieldwork with the reading of archives – not just texts but also images and other material objects. Indeed, I was struck by the precision and insight he displayed in his analysis of Chinese texts in the opening chapter of *The Paper Road*. It reminded me of the painstaking

textual work done by my medievalist colleagues. Professor Mueggler would bring to [my institution]... Anthropology skills that many regular Anthropologists do not have.”

Reviewer (G)

“Among anthropologists of China and Tibeto-Burman peoples, Erik certainly ranks at the top of American academia. While his method often involves exploring the minutia of apparently offbeat topics – the price of hemp, the search for exotic plants, ideas about ghosts in Lolopo society – his deeper motives always involve important questions about national integration, power, imperialism, the individual and the state.”

Reviewer (H)

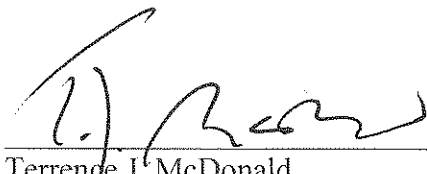
“In short, the book [*The Paper Road*] is both enormously engaging and, in the best sense, provocative. Like a mythic narrative or dream it inspires (at least in this reader) the conviction that much more might be said.”

Reviewer (I)

“I am constantly struck when reading Mueggler’s work with his originality and creativity.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Mueggler’s substantial research in progress and record of recent publications, and his excellent records in teaching and service demonstrate the quality and growth necessary for promotion to professor, with tenure. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Erik A. Mueggler be promoted to the rank of professor of anthropology, with tenure, 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

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