

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

Christian de Pee, assistant professor of history, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1997	Columbia University
M.A.	1991	Leiden University

Professional Record:

2006 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Michigan
2004 – 2006	Assistant Professor, Department of History, McDaniel College

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor de Pee is a dedicated and challenging instructor, who has been a valuable contributor to the department’s teaching mission. He seeks to engage students with primary texts in the original language, often in ancient, unpunctuated editions, thus helping them to appreciate the active process by which historical texts are created. With undergraduates, he has undertaken highly demanding courses on East Asian history, including seminars and larger lecture courses at the core of the curriculum. For graduates he has taught three courses, including the core introductory course for history graduate students. He has served on ten Ph.D. committees and three Master’s committees in history and in other units. He has also advised undergraduates working on senior theses or independent study.

Research – The range and depth of Professor de Pee’s scholarship is exciting. It combines the most classical forms of source-based erudition and exceptional linguistic skills with theoretical sophistication. His articles and his monograph, *The Writing of Weddings in Middle-Period China: Text and Ritual Practice in the Eighth through Fourteenth Centuries*, have made a major impact in the field of Chinese history and in the comparative study of medieval or premodern societies. Together with his edited volume, *Rock, Paper, Scissors: Fragments of Local History in Middle-Period China*, and his two emergent projects, his work represents a substantial contribution to cutting-edge scholarship on the history of China, where Professor de Pee is already acknowledged to be a leading pioneer. Professor de Pee currently holds a fellowship at the Institute for the Humanities in support of *Visible Cities*, his current research project.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Purchase on power: Imperial space and commercial space in Song-Dynasty Kaifeng, 960-1127,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 53:1-2, 2010, pp. 760-794.

“Wards of words: Textual geographies and urban space in Song-Dynasty Luoyang, 960-1127,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 52:1, 2009, pp. 85-116.

The Writing of Weddings in Middle-Period China: Text and Ritual Practice in the Eighth through Fourteenth Centuries, State University of New York Press, 2007.

“Words of seduction, lines of resistance: Writing and gender in Zheng Xi’s *Dream of Spring* (1318),” *Nan Nü: Men, Women, and Gender in China*, 9, 2007, pp. 247-283.

Service – Professor de Pee has assembled a diverse and impressive record of service. He has served on the Honors Committee and as an undergraduate advisor in the Department of History while also serving on the Steering Committee of the Eisenberg Institute of Historical Studies (2008-2010). He also served a two-year term on the Program in Anthropology and History Executive Committee. He has been active in the Center for Chinese Studies and in the Medieval and Early Modern Studies program.

External Review:

Reviewer (A)

“...Professor de Pee’s work belongs to a broader, cross-disciplinary, revisionist effort that exploits the benefits of traditional Sinological training, while aggressively interrogating the textual record...”

Reviewer (B)

“I will henceforth expect graduate students in this field to read *The Writing of Weddings* not only for its content about middle-period society and culture but also for its methodological significance. De Pee is the first person in our field to bring a cultural studies approach to bear on social history.”

Reviewer (C)

“...the book is a bold manifesto calling for nothing less than a revamping of how Chinese history is practiced. ...he deploys his textual findings and rhetorical panache in the service of trenchant historical observation and argument. De Pee employs sources that few have dare to broach, and makes numerous and significant contributions to our understanding of Middle Period history.”

Reviewer (D)

“This is possibly the most important, and certainly the most creative, book on the middle imperial period to have appeared in the past decade. ... On the basis of what I have read, I have no difficulty whatsoever in declaring Professor de Pee to be at the head of his cohort.”

Reviewer (E)

“...he has gone much further than myself in offering alternative and thoroughly original interpretations. He has been able to do this in large part by expanding the archive of source materials, moving out of the usual frames of reference to deal with poetry, notebooks, household ritual texts, almanacs and calendars, guidebooks and archaeological materials. The results are quite stunning and the range of his erudition extraordinary.”

Reviewer (F)

“Everything that I learned at the feet of a master Song historian...now looks just a bit different, not to mention outdated, and I am meanwhile profoundly grateful for [sic] de Pee for writing one of the few books that makes us fundamentally rethink gender dynamics, the use of writing as ‘public space,’ and Confucian learning in middle-period China.”

Reviewer (G)

“There are many middle-period specialists whom the far more numerous scholars of the later period are vaguely aware of, and a smaller group that they/we actually read; de Pee is heading toward and has a good chance of winding up in the latter category. And that, it seems to me, makes him somebody that any department should want to keep.”

Reviewer (H)


“There is no one who works quite like de Pee does. His work requires erudition in history, literature, and cultural theory, all of which he possesses. ... If I were listing the most important works published in the last 10 years on the Song dynasty, *Writing about Weddings* and ‘Traffic in Words’ and ‘Purchase on Power’ would appear on the list.”

Reviewer (I)

“He brings a sensibility and sensitivity to text that one seldom sees. It is this combination of textual savvy and appetite for knowledge that puts him above any other social historian of his cohort. ... If I were a student of the middle history of China and I were prepared to work hard and well, I would want to do it under his guidance.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor de Pee is an acknowledged leader in his field. He is a successful teacher and also has an impressive record of service. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Christian de Pee be promoted to the rank of associate professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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

May 2011