

Approved by the
Regents
May 21, 2015

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS

Ellen Muehlberger, assistant professor of Near Eastern studies, and assistant professor of history, College of Literature, Science and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Near Eastern studies, with tenure, and associate professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2008	Indiana University, Bloomington
M.A.	2001	Indiana University, Bloomington
B.A.	1995	Western Michigan University

Professional Record:

2009 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Near Eastern Studies and Department of History, University of Michigan
2008 – 2009	Non-Tenure Track Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, DePauw University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Muehlberger has compiled a very strong teaching record and her consistently high student evaluations show that she is successful at all levels. She designed and taught twelve distinct courses that have reached over 700 students. Professor Muehlberger has had impressive success teaching the near eastern studies' signature survey course both in terms of numerical evaluations and rebuilding enrollment. She has also taught essential survey courses and graduate seminars in three middle eastern languages – again with consistently high evaluations. In history, she has made a significant contribution to the graduate curriculum teaching the core introductory course for Ph.D. students. Her strategy of integrating graduate training in the teaching of undergraduate classes could be a model for other faculty.

Research – Professor Muehlberger's research focuses on the history of Christianity in the time period known as "late antiquity" (approximately 300 C.E. to 700 C.E.) and works with primary sources in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Coptic. Her monograph, Angels in Late Ancient Christianity, has received five highly positive reviews in significant journals in her field. She has also published articles in major journals that have very little overlap with the book, attesting to her broader interests and her ability to engage productively with many topics. Looking forward, Professor Muehlberger has begun to lay the groundwork for a second book project. In recognition of her stature in the field, she is also part of a multi-volume translation project from Cambridge University Press.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Angels in Late Ancient Christianity, Oxford University Press, 2013

"Negotiations with death: Ephrem's control of death in dialogue," Shifting Frontiers VIII: Shifting Cultural Frontiers in Late Antiquity, D. Brakke, et al. (eds.), Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012, pp. 23-34

“Salvage: Macrina and the Christian project of cultural reclamation,” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 81, 2012, pp. 273-297.

“The representation of theatricality in Philo’s Embassy to Gaius,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*, 39, 2008, pp. 46-67.

Service – Professor Muehlberger has been a valued citizen in her departments and has provided important service. Wherever she participated her contributions were thoughtful and constructive. In near eastern studies she supported the overhaul of the undergraduate curriculum, especially the structure of a new unified major. She was also an ideal mentor for graduate students, who often turn to her to share their concerns and discuss important issues. She has also played an important role in improving her departmental climates.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“All in all, I found this an admirable book, consistently full of insights coming from a combination of intelligent reading of sources and a fine command of a wide horizon of historical contexts.”

Reviewer (B)

“Muehlberger’s approach is firmly constructivist; she writes memorably of the ‘imaginative work’ of, for example, catechetical treatises in forming wider Christian assumptions, of the generation of mental images, and indeed of the importance of visualization.”

Reviewer (C)

“Her work is poised on an upward trajectory, already having made significant contributions to the field but with a great deal of promise for the years ahead.”

Reviewer (D)

“Dr[.] Muehlberger knows the bibliography, understands new critical approaches, and offers lucid expression of complex ideas in clearly ordered arguments which present new ways of reading. ... All the papers show awareness of wider implications for cultural history. ...they make a strong case for promotion and tenure.”

Reviewer (E)

“The next time I teach a graduate seminar in Late Antiquity, I will probably assign *Angels In Late Ancient Christianity*. Not only is it an exemplar of fine historical writing, it treats its subject in such a way as to elucidate with new insights some of the most important religious currents of the fourth century. ...it is beautifully and accessibly written...”

Reviewer (F)

“You have a splendid colleague with Ellen Muehlberger, a rising star if I ever saw one. ...[Angels In Late Ancient Christianity] is an excellent example of cultural history, in which I particularly liked the skillful use of theory. ...Muehlberger is a highly productive and internationally and nationally recognized expert in her field. Her awards, fellowships and invitations speak for themselves.”

Reviewer (G)

“...I see Muehlberger as clearly possessing the publication record, scholarly performance, and growing authority in her field to warrant tenure and promotion. Five refereed articles in major journals (including *Past & Present*), several additional essays in volumes, a book with Oxford Press, and numerous book reviews would certainly make her an excellent candidate for tenure and promotion to associate at [my institution].”

Reviewer (H)

“In reading her publications, I was struck again by her excellent linguistic skills and her nuanced and sophisticated approach to intellectual and social history, to the shifts that take place over time in the religious imagination, and to a compelling theoretical framework.”

Reviewer (I)

“I do not know Prof. Muehlberger as a teacher but benefited from reading her teaching statement. I found it a thoughtful and indeed moving account of how to welcome students unfamiliar with the humanities and ancient history into a fulsome ancient world.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Muehlberger has established herself as a productive and innovative scholar in her field. She teaches a broad range of indispensable courses to great acclaim from her students. She has also served well in both departments and the college. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Ellen Muehlberger be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Near Eastern studies, with tenure, and associate professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Andrew D. Martin
Dean, and Professor of Political Science
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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