

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

Brian B. Schmidt, associate professor of Hebrew Bible, with tenure, Department of Near Eastern Studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Hebrew Bible, with tenure, Department of Near Eastern Studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

D. Phil.	1992	University of Oxford
Th.M.	1983	Dallas Theological Seminary
B.S.	1977	Florida State University

Professional Record:

1997 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Michigan
1992 – 1997	Assistant Professor, Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Schmidt’s dedication to enriched training and learning on the Hebrew Bible and ancient Israel is evident in his carefully organized course offerings. His passionate commitment to integrating a broad range of data in his research and to contextualizing the Hebrew Bible within broader patterns of society, religion, and culture is strongly communicated in his teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Professor Schmidt’s successful four-semester sequence of the classical Hebrew language reliably enrolls a strong number for ancient language instruction. Students recognize both the uniqueness of his multi-dimensional approach and his gift for rigorous yet user-friendly pedagogy in language teaching, and they display it in their strong evaluation scores and comments. Professor Schmidt has mentored a large number of graduate students in Hebrew Bible/Ancient Israel at Michigan, acting as chair for fourteen completed Ph.D.s, with ten defenses in the period from 2004 to 2013.

Research – Professor Schmidt’s research and publications set a powerful and rigorous model for work within the field of Hebrew Bible and ancient Israel studies. His research combines archaeological and anthropological work with philological and paleographical work in an exemplary fashion. In the last three years, he has produced an impressive body of material, including a new monograph, two edited volumes, eight articles and book chapters published or in press, as well as a number of encyclopedia entries, with one monograph currently under contract (to be supported by a Michigan Humanities Award), and another book project in preparation. He is profoundly committed to the principle of context on all levels and the rigorous integration of artifact, epigraph, and text in his work. Professor Schmidt is not afraid to take risks and make creative leaps in his publications. His work provokes excitement and, even among colleagues who disagree with his conclusions, vigorous debate, and he makes a fresh contribution to a well-established branch of research on ancient religion that has witnessed a sharp acceleration in recent decades.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“May Yahweh Bless You and Keep You...: More Musings on ‘Cult’ and *Favissae* at Kuntillet Ajrud,” Zauber und Magie” - Magie im antiken Palästina und in seiner Umwelt, J. Kamlah, et al. (eds.), Harrassowitz, in press.

“Gender marking, overlapping and the identity of the Bes-like figures at Kuntillet Ajrud,” in History, Archaeology and the Bible Forty Years After “Historicity.” Changing Perspectives 6, Copenhagen International Seminar, I. Hjelm and T. L. Thompson (eds.), Routledge, 2016, pp. 85-111.

The Materiality of Power: Explorations in the Social History of Early Israelite Magic, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 105, Mohr-Siebeck, 2016.

Contextualizing Israel’s Sacred Writings: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production, B. Schmidt (ed.), Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2015.

Service – Professor Schmidt has served on numerous Near Eastern Studies (NES) standing committees and position searches. He made his greatest contribution as a member, and sometimes chair, of the Curriculum Committee, which recently undertook a complete revision of the NES curriculum. Professor Schmidt has supervised numerous NES doctoral dissertations and served on thesis committees (M.A. and Ph.D.) in many other units, in addition to directing a significant number of B.A. honors theses. Beyond the department, Professor Schmidt sat on the Executive Committee of the Jean and Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and organized major scholarly conferences at the university in 2007 and 2015. He also serves a key role in the endowed David Noel Freedman lecture series and George E. Mendenhall symposium. Professor Schmidt maintains a high profile within the American and international fields of biblical studies, in part due to his editing work for the Society of Biblical Literature. Since 2015, he has been general editor of their reconfigured series, *Archaeological and Biblical Studies*, which has produced three volumes and has several more in the works by prominent authorities.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“Professor Schmidt’s service as an editor is a particularly distinguished aspect of his service to the profession, and this includes both his work as a volume editor and his work on editorial committees. ... Professor Schmidt has also been very dedicated to the sometimes unappreciated task of producing materials for reference works in the field of biblical studies and West Semitic religions.”

Reviewer (B)

“Professor Schmidt has assembled a fine dossier of publications. ... This strong publication record also divides into two categories: those that contribute new knowledge to the field, and those that serve the field in other capacities. The service component – edited work, reviews, translations, etc. – is robust and truly laudable.”

Reviewer (C)

“...Professor Schmidt’s service contribution to the discipline is really excellent. He not only is efficient in his task as an editor but also detailed, nuanced and positive as a reviewer of proposals and papers.”

Reviewer (D)

“One of the great strengths and distinguishing characteristics of Brian’s work is his ability to integrate literary and archaeological evidence – something that not enough scholars attempt to do, and even fewer accomplish successfully.”

Reviewer (E)

“Both [the] quality and quantity of [Schmidt’s work] are remarkable. That is why his research and his publications are taken worldwide into consideration and are intensively quoted in the scientific community.”

Reviewer (F)

“Schmidt’s new book The Materiality of Power...is nothing less than a tour de force, the mature result of many years of careful research and reflection on phenomena often labeled ‘magic,’ their literary and social contexts, and the role they ought to play in considerations of Israelite religion. Aside from being well written and thorough, the book is quite original in its arguments and important for the implications of its conclusions.”

Reviewer (G)

“...Prof. Schmidt provides an excellent role model for how such careful work should be done and, in my opinion, this puts him in an excellent position for his already good reputation to grow even further as the discipline necessarily shifts it[s] focus more so to the very approach that he has been exemplifying throughout his career.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Schmidt has established himself as a leading scholar in the study of the origins of Israel in the Bronze and early Iron Age Levant. His record of teaching, service, and research are excellent. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Brian B. Schmidt be promoted to the rank of professor of Hebrew Bible, with tenure, Department of Near Eastern Studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



---

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

May 2017