

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

Christian Crisostomo, assistant professor of Middle East studies, Department of Middle East Studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Middle East studies, with tenure, Department of Middle East Studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2014	University of California, Berkeley
M.A.	2010	University of California, Berkeley
M.Th.	2008	Dallas Theological Seminary
B.S.	2005	Cornerstone University

Professional Record:

2015 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Middle East Studies, University of Michigan
2014 – 2015	Post-doctoral Researcher, University of California, Berkeley

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Crisostomo infuses his teaching with the same multidisciplinary and innovative approaches that characterize his research. He integrates a broad range of data, media, and hands-on opportunity in his courses, and emphasizes the contextualization of ancient Mesopotamian culture and language within broader patterns of society, religion, and culture, demonstrating the relevance of ancient history for the modern world. He is on the front-lines of developing new effective pedagogies, classroom technology, and curricular innovation, attracting new constituencies; e.g., from STEM fields to Middle Eastern Studies (MES). His classroom is a model implementation of the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Professor Crisostomo cares deeply about the success of each individual student, and is always available to them; he mentors both undergraduate and graduate students inside and outside the Department of Middle East Studies.

Research – Professor Crisostomo is an accomplished cuneiform scholar, who is already highly regarded by his colleagues in the United States and abroad. He combines outstanding philological skills with multidisciplinary analysis. He is unafraid to challenge long-held assumptions in his field and to introduce models from linguistics, sociology, and other social sciences into his approach to the data. Professor Crisostomo’s publications show impressive clarity in structure and argument, and what one reader terms a rare capacity for synthesis. His monograph, *Translation as Scholarship* (2019), uses a productive paradigm (“analogical hermeneutics”) for understanding not only scribal practice and multilingualism, but intellectual history of the Ancient World more broadly. His involvement in a Mellon-funded collaborative project, a grant for an edition of key texts, several projects in the digital humanities, and a second book project supported by an ACLS fellowship indicate high visibility and future leadership in his field.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Translation as Scholarship: Language, Writing, and Bilingual Education in Ancient Babylonia, De Gruyter, 2019.

“Sumerian divination,” in The Scaffolding of Our Thoughts: Essays in Assyriology and the History of Science in Honor of Francesca Rochberg, edited by C. Jay Crisostomo, et al, Leiden: Brill, 2018 pp: 148–168.

“The Sumerian discourse markers u4-ba and u4-bi-a,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 69, 2017, pp: 49–66.

“Old Babylonian legal documents from Isin in the Hearst Museum of Anthropology, Berkeley,” *Revue d’Assyriologie*, 112, 2018, pp: 103–121.

Service – Professor Crisostomo has worked in a variety of leadership, governance, and service capacities, on behalf of the university and in his wider professional environment. He has served on all the important departmental committees, including a search committee. Outside of MES, Professor Crisostomo served a three-year term on the Executive Committee of IPCAA, and is in his fourth year of service on the “Baghdad Committee” (Committee on Mesopotamian Civilizations) of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR). He has also served as a reviewer for highly esteemed, peer reviewed publications such as the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* and the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, and for the Brill’s series, Cuneiform Monographs.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“I would estimate that his most important work is ‘Translation as Scholarship’... This domain of his – The language and intellectual world of Mesopotamian scholars – may seem narrow to an outsider, but it is a very rich field and one of the most important keys to the understanding of the Ancient Near East.”

Reviewer (B)

“In addition to the consistently high quality of the candidate’s scholarship, Jay has also been a very good citizen in the field. ... He also supported the work of...scholars by taking the time to meet and talk to them at conferences and he has also been very good about answering questions addressed to him by his colleagues, and to solicit the advice and criticisms of others to improve the quality of his own work.”

Reviewer (C)

“...judging by the unpublished work included in his dossier, the candidate is on the right track: his publication rate keeps accelerating. In his articles, Dr. Crisostomo draws on his past scholarship but also makes forays into new areas. His study of the meaning of the Sumerian discourse markers u4-ba and u4-bi-a...shows his ability to deal competently not only with Sumerian lexicography, but also with Sumerian grammar and even Sumerian literature. ...I do believe that Dr. Crisostomo is among a small group of outstanding...Assyriologists in the US who will be able to make significant contributions to their discipline in the future – and have already started to do so.”

Reviewer (D)

“If his conference presentations are a good indicator, then Professor Crisostomo is a caring and challenging instructor. He is also at the leading edge of scholars bringing greater attention to the digital humanities aspects of our work, and I am confident that this enriches his classrooms as well. ... He is recognized as an authority in his area of our field, and his scholarship is a model for modern, interdisciplinary inquiry into ancient linguistic traditions. ... His work has contributed to my own teaching and research. I get a strong sense that his scholarly work informs his work with students, and makes a strong contribution to the mission of the University of Michigan.”

Reviewer (E)


“...the excellence of C.J.C.’s work requires no further demonstration. He shows sound erudition and a rare capacity of synthesis. He masters with equal ease the fields of epigraphy, philology and linguistics. In his publications, he seizes every opportunity, when considering methodology and putting things back in their context, to introduce his intended and difficult field of research.”

Reviewer (F)

“Jay’s output is both prodigious and impressive for a scholar who is only five years out from his PhD. What struck me reading across the whole oeuvre this summer is his unique ability to see ancient language(s) in *social* terms... He has brought sociolinguistic approaches to the formerly very abstract study of the Sumerian and Akkadian languages, and the ways in which they interact, in a manner that adds a completely new dimension to our understanding of the ancient Middle Eastern record. This is a vital move in the maturation of our discipline and will prove to be deeply influential.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Crisostomo is an exemplary multidisciplinary scholar who integrates classroom teaching, mentoring, research, and service to his field, resulting in paradigm-setting publications and wide recognition as an emerging leader in his field and beyond. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Christian Crisostomo be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Middle East studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Anne Curzan, Dean
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