

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

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

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1997	Columbia University
M.A. (drs)	1991	Leiden University, the Netherlands

Professional Record:

2011–present	Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Michigan
2006–2011	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Michigan
2004–2006	Assistant Professor, Department of History, McDaniel College
2003–2004	Substitute Assistant Professor, Department of History, Brooklyn College, The City University of New York
Fall 2001	Lecturer, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, University of California at Berkeley
1998–2000	Lecturer, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University
1997–1998	Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Asian and Middle-Eastern Cultures, Barnard College,
1997–1998	Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of History and International Studies, Marymount Manhattan College

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor de Pee is broadly admired by faculty and students as a rigorous and generous classroom teacher. In all of his classes, he brings exceptional expertise on the relationship of language to cultural knowledge and the ways in which texts connect the past and the present through the mediation of genre. He routinely gives significant time and care to working with undergraduate students far afield from his own areas of research: from the first-year students he seeks to engage in conversations on the power of precise writing to the enormously flexible and hands-on mentoring he has given to History honors students across all geographic areas and time periods. His impact is further evidenced by the administrative leadership he has given to the History honors program, which guides students through the one-and-a-half-year process of writing a senior thesis. Professor de Pee has also served on nine UM dissertation committees since his tenure in 2011; and he has taught/mentored large numbers of graduate students in multiple disciplines through the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Program dissertation writing seminar.

Research: Professor de Pee is a wide-ranging cultural and intellectual historian of “middle period China,” and within that period, he specializes in the history of the Song dynasty. His

appointment is 100% in History, but Professor de Pee also has strong ties to the Center for Chinese Studies (on whose Executive Committee he has served) and the Medieval and Early Modern Studies program (which he directed from 2014–2019). Chronologically, his work focuses on the “middle period” of 800–1400 C.E., although Professor de Pee has often drawn longer historical connections. Professor de Pee is equally unusual among early Chinese historians in his recurring efforts to dialogue with European medievalists and flesh out wider points of transnational/global comparison. Methodologically, Professor de Pee is widely admired for his subtle command of multiple languages; his deep familiarity with Chinese literary genres; his voracious reading of entire archives; and his magisterial knowledge of middle period China as a whole (including its economic development and infrastructure—canals, roads, city walls, and so forth).

Recent and Significant Publications:

Losing the Way in the City: Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis in Middle-Period China, 800–1100 C.E. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming 2021.

“Circulation and Flow: Immanent Metaphors in the Financial Debates of Northern Song China (960–1127 C.E).” *History of Science* 56, no. 2 (2018): 168-95.

de Pee, Christian, Lam, Joseph, and Powers, Martin, eds. *Senses of the City: Perceptions of Hangzhou and the Southern Song, 1127–1279*. Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2017.

“Cycles of Cathay: Sinology, Philology, and Histories of the Song Dynasty (960–1279) in the United States.” *Fragments: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Ancient and Medieval Pasts* 2 (2012): 35-67.

Service: Professor de Pee has provided strong leadership and service in a wide variety of post-tenure contexts: as the leader of the History honors program; as the director of the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Program; on the Executive Committees for the Anthro-History program and the Center for Chinese Studies; on the steering committee for the Eisenberg Institute of Historical Studies; and as History’s associate director of graduate studies. In each of these roles, colleagues have admired the seriousness and care with which Professor de Pee has engaged with the leadership tasks at hand. They have also admired his important role in mentoring/supporting junior women colleagues in his fields, as well as his meticulous work on editorial boards for leading journals in Chinese history.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “de Pee is most unusual among Western historians of China in his nuanced and broad use of literary works—poetry in particular in much of *Losing the Way*—in his writing about elite values and attitudes in the past. This alone makes the work unique and valuable.”

Reviewer (B): “Through this work Professor de Pee is offering a new paradigm for our understanding of cultural change in Middle Period China ... Like all new theories, it will be discussed and tested, quite possibly with pushback from others. But its importance as a contribution to the field cannot be denied.”

Reviewer (C): “Collectively, the book and articles represent a cohesive, original, and significant body of work.”


Reviewer (D): “This [new] book is beautifully written, and no one who hasn’t tried to turn Chinese poetry into English poetry can ever begin to appreciate the work that went into the graceful introductions to poets and poems that have gone untranslated, in the main ... Chapter 3 is a marvel, because it pulls together into an organic unity or single cultural manifold ideas the disparate strands of thinking that previous scholars have discussed for years, without quite getting to the heart of it.”

Reviewer (E): “Professor de Pee has substantially contributed to the changing understanding of this period in two regards: (1) by unfolding this era’s high veneration of textual practice (2) by shedding light on practices of reading and writing as a way to encounter the world.”

Reviewer (F): “[T]he quality of thought is truly outstanding. For hundreds of years, almost a millennium, people have been reading that Song poetry and prose without seeing in it what Christian sees and shows us. He is able to take a mass of material and pull out a pattern that both makes sense in emic terms and relates to what scholars have found about the material conditions of the time.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor de Pee’s research and teaching combine bold theoretical risk-taking with exceptional language skills and a mastery of complex archives. Since tenure, his research productivity has been high and wide-ranging; he has created new forms of dialogue and comparative exchange with other fields/disciplines; and his overall body of work has been recognized through a number of highly competitive awards. He has also been a committed, successful teacher and mentor of undergraduate and graduate students, and a generous citizen and leader in multiple units. For all of these reasons, the Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Christian de Pee be promoted to the rank of professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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