

March 1, 2022

Library and Information Technology Services
Hamilton College
198 County Road 13
Clinton, NY 13323

Dear Members of the Hiring Committee,

I am writing to apply for the position of Digital Scholarship Librarian in Library and Information Technology Services at Hamilton College. Currently a PhD candidate in Assyriology at Brown University with expertise in digital humanities and ancient history, I have experience in furthering research in the humanities through novel scholarly communication and research methods, using digital tools to make the ancient world as widely available and accessible as possible. I hope to apply my background in digital humanities project management, digital imaging, data management, and scholarly communications to the role of working closely with Hamilton students and colleagues in the planning, implementation, and support of collaborative digital humanities projects.

After many years of working on a variety of digital humanities projects that make use of a plethora of DH tools, I want to work for LITS at Hamilton because I want to facilitate the ongoing support of digital humanities investigations of the ancient world. I have conducted research using such methods as photogrammetry, document photography, digital mapping, data curation, and network analysis. As a graduate student, I received funding to make 3D models of the cuneiform collection in the John Hay Library using high quality, carefully executed object photographs. I worked with digital technologists in the Brown University Library to develop a reproducible imaging workflow for future use by faculty and students. My work on this project won the Brown University Library Innovation Prize in Digital Humanities for its transparency and reproducibility. I will bring this experience to Hamilton in helping both faculty and students approach material culture centered projects with digital imaging methods.

Through completing a digital imaging and curation project around cuneiform objects, I became interested in the provenance of such objects, sparking the Where is the Cuneiform? project, which involves using digital mapping tools to identify cuneiform collections in US colleges and universities in an effort to trace the many lives they have lived. Similarly, I used more robust versions of the same software to map and conduct a geospatial analysis of participants in the ASOR Annual Meeting over the course of ten years, identifying key areas for targeted outreach and the addition of important accessibility measures. I am excited to apply these skills to Hamilton's work identifying, collecting, and curating the broadest range of modern scholarly materials.

Proper documentation and assessment of large digital collections are crucial to my digital humanities work. I have gained valuable experience with metadata processing and with the transformation of large datasets. In making sure my datasets were both machine-readable and best-suited for future use, I developed strong skills with transformational tools like OpenRefine for datasets ranging from 180 entries of bibliographic information to almost 87,000 entries containing fifty years of citation data. I am equally as adept at cleaning and controlling metadata for long term storage in a library digital repository using tools like Tropy, which were critical for the final stages of digitizing cuneiform objects and their accompanying archival records. I will

bring my experience with metadata processing and with transforming large datasets containing bibliometric information in a library setting to LITS with great enthusiasm and commitment.

Working in the digital humanities has been a series of lessons on the importance of digital sustainability and staying familiar with emerging trends in open scholarly practice. My work has been stored and published in various library repositories and open access journals like the *Journal of Open Humanities Data*. I continue to build my knowledge of such practices and stay abreast of important trends in the field through my work with the Digital Publications Initiative at Brown University, where I support a multifaceted team in producing media-rich, born-digital scholarly monographs. Further, I am deeply familiar with the requirements for data storage and sustainability plans as preferred by major granting agencies like the National Endowment for the Humanities.

My past experience with the National Endowment for the Humanities puts me in a unique position to help project directors secure funding from federal agencies. As an intern and then Program Specialist in the Office of Digital Humanities, I served as program officer for a series of applications, overseeing their review and presenting them to the National Council on the Humanities. Through May 2022, I remain involved with the NEH as a Program Specialist in the Office of Federal/State Partnership, managing the reporting process for state and jurisdictional humanities councils to the NEH. Beyond the NEH, I put my knowledge of grant-writing and grant-making to use as an editorial assistant with the DPI. Due to the high cost of media-rich publications, I support DPI staff and faculty authors in identifying and applying to appropriate funding opportunities for their digital projects.

Finally, I have long been committed to public and accessible scholarship from all levels of the academy and beyond. As a graduate student teaching assistant, I frequently worked one-on-one with students to develop unique research projects and guide them in their exploration of the ancient world, often for the first time. I was also selected by the College Curriculum Committee to supervise two students in designing their own independent study on gender and sexuality in the ancient world. Building on this student-centered work, I am currently the graduate student representative on the committee to configure and implement a digital humanities certificate for PhD students at Brown. I have also long been an advocate for the humanities outside the walls of academia. Noticing a gap in our graduate education experience, a colleague and I founded *The Ratty*, a public scholarship blog by and for graduate students intended to train them in how to edit public scholarship and share their own research with a wide audience. I want to bring my long record of humanities advocacy along with my combined five years of experience in public-facing museum roles to the advanced work undertaken by students and faculty at Hamilton.

It is my hope that as your new Digital Scholarship Librarian I can make important contributions to doing and sharing humanities research in new and innovative ways. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'S. Mohr', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Sara Mohr