

Voter Hall, 002
 Middlebury College
 Middlebury, VT 05753
 (802) 349-3178
 slieb@middlebury.edu

Employment:

- Professor of Arabic, Middlebury College (2021 to present)
- Associate Professor of Arabic, Middlebury College (2014 to 2020)
- Assistant Professor of Arabic, Middlebury College (2007 to 2014)

Education:

Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley (2007)

- Department of Near Eastern Studies: Arabic Literature
- Dissertation: “*Bedouin Without Arabic: Language, Poetry and the Mahra of Southeast Yemen*”
- Committee: Margaret Larkin (Chair), Bridget Connelly (Outside Member), John Hayes and James Monroe
- Examination Fields: Classical Arabic Poetry, Classical Arabic Literary Criticism, Andalusian Arabic Vernacular Poetry

M.A. University of California, Berkeley

- Department of Near Eastern Studies: Comparative Semitics
- Awarded with Distinction (2000)
- Examination Fields: Arabic Linguistic Tradition, Arabian Epigraphy, Cuneiform Akkadian

A.B. Dartmouth College

- Graduated *Summa Cum Laude* and with High Honors for Senior Thesis (1996)
- Major: Greek and Latin

Peer-reviewed Digital Scholarship:

- “Oral Poetry from Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula Part I: The *Qaṣīdah*.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.1301>
- “Oral Poetry from Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula Part II: Strophic Sung Poetry.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.1548>
- *When Melodies Gather: Oral Poetry of the Mahra*, Stanford University Press, 2018.
<http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=27390>

Peer-reviewed Print Scholarship:

- “Introduction to Yemeni Poetry.” Co-authored with James Dickins, Janet C.E. Watson, and Mohammed Shormani. *Love and Conflict: Yemeni Poetry on the Front Lines*. Edited by Roberta Morano, Janet C.E. Watson, and James Dickins. London: Routledge, 2025.

- “The Legacy of Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Zubayrī: Yemeni Activism in Poetry.” Co-authored with Amina Atiq. *Love and Conflict: Yemeni Poetry on the Front Lines*. Edited by Roberta Morano, Janet C.E. Watson, and James Dickins. London: Routledge, 2025.
- “Poetry and Nature in Southern Arabia.” Co-authored with Kamela al-Barami and Ahmed al-Mashikhi. *Language and Nature in Southern and Eastern Arabia*. Edited by Janet Watson, Diane Nelson, and Jon Lovett. London: Bloomsbury Press, 2022: 199-212.
- “Messages, Texts, and Rhetorical Detachment in Contemporary Mahri Poetry.” *Transitional Texts: Drifting between the Oral and the Written*. Edited by S. Gintsburg, J. Ford and A. Barandiaran. Special issue of *RILCE: Revista de Filología Hispánica* 36/4 (2020).
- “Acoustic Spectrum Analysis of Mahri Orature: An empirical approach to Bedouin vernacular poetry.” *Journal of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics* 9/1-2 (2017): 106-118.
- “From Minority to Majority: Inscribing the Mahra and Touareg into the Arab Nation” in *Minorities and the Modern Arab World: New Perspectives*. Edited by Laura Robson. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2016: 140-150.
- “Mahri Oral Poetry and Arabic *Nabaṭi* Poetry: Common core, divergent outcomes.” *Arabian Humanities* 5 (2015): <https://cy.revues.org/2973>
- “Rhetoric, Rite of Passage and the Multilingual Poetics of Arabia: A Thematic Reading of the Mahri Tribal Ode.” *Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures* 16/2 (2013): 118-146.
- “The Ḥumaynī Pulse Moves East: Yemeni Nationalism Meets Mahri Sung Poetry.” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 38/2 (2011): 249-265.
- “Written Mahri, Mahri *Fuṣḥā* and Their Implications for Early Historical Arabic.” *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 40 (2010): 227-232.
- “Rhythm and Beat: Re-evaluating Arabic Prosody in Light of Mahri Oral Poetry.” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 55/1 (2010): 163-182.
- “Al-Shanfarā and ‘The Mountain Poem’ of Ibn Khafāja: Some Observations on Patterns of Intertextuality.” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 34 (2003): 107-121.

Literary Translations:

- *The Dīwān of Ḥājj Dākōn: Introduction and Commentary* by Sam Liebhaber. Ardmore: The American Institute for Yemeni Studies, 2011.

Reviews of *The Dīwān of Ḥājj Dākōn*:

1. Julien Dufour, *Chroniques du manuscrit au Yémen* 15 (2013)
[<http://www.cefas.com.ye/spip.php?article503>]
 2. Miranda Morris, The British-Yemeni Society
[<http://www.albab.com/bys/books/liebhaber12.htm>]
 3. <http://www.friendsofsoqatra.org/Activities/pdfs/Tayf%209%20English%20FINAL.pdf>
- *The Book of Sana’a (Kitāb Ṣan‘ā’)* by Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Maqālīh, trans. Bob Holman and Sam Liebhaber. Ardmore: The American Institute for Yemeni Studies, 2004.

Online publications:

- “Review: The Global Yemen Project.” *Reviews in Digital Humanities* vol. 5 no. 2, published 2/26/2024.
<https://reviewsindh.pubpub.org/pub/global-yemen-project/release/1?readingCollection=ef0d2542>
- “‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Maqālīh: A biographical portrait.” *Yemen Update* #52-E1: 2020.
<https://www.aiys.org/liebhaber>.

- “Sam Liebhaber on the AIYS.” *Yemen Webdate Blog*. March 20, 2018. <http://portal.aiys.org/blog/?p=1521>
- “A Respite from Routine: Eid al-Adha in al-Mahra.” *Postcards from Arabia Felix*. Yemen Cultural Institute for Heritage and the Arts, 2013. <https://www.yciha.org/about>.
- Contributed translation of excerpt of Mahmoud Darwish’s *Haraba ‘l-waqtu minnā* (“Time Fled from Us”) from *On The Road with Bob Holman: Israel and the West Bank*, Episode Three (2012). <https://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/play/11536/On-the-Road-with-Bob-Holman--Episode-3>
- Contributed Mahri verse to the *Khonsay: Poem of Many Tongues*. Produced by Bob Holman, Steve Zeitlin, Lee Eaton and Saul Simon Macwilliams at City Lore, 2012. <http://www.khonsay.com/#intro>
- “South Arabia and the Berber Imaginary” *Tabsir.net*. 2012. <http://tabsir.net/?p=1727>.

Invited Presentations:

- “The Roots of Yemen’s Poetic Revolution: ‘Alī Nāṣir al-Qarda’ī” on a panel sponsored by the American Institute for Yemeni Studies: “Revoicing Resistance in Yemen” at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (11/3/2023)
- “Muḥammad al-Zubayrī: Between literary neo-classicism and oral folk poetry”, on a panel sponsored by the American Institute for Yemeni Studies: “Yemeni Poetry in Perspective” at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (12/12/2022)
- “Bin Fāris, Bin Shamāsa, and Bā Dujāna: The sovereign dynasties of western al-Mahra”, Language and Nature in Southern Arabia Remote Workshop, 4/14/2020.
- “Bin Fāris, Bin Shamāsa, and Bā Dujāna: The sovereign dynasties of western al-Mahra.” Prepared for The Symposium on Modern South Arabian Languages and Oral Literatures, Institute of Oriental and Classical Studies at the National Research Institute – Higher School of Economics, Moscow. Scheduled for June 2020 but cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- “Translating Muhammad Mahmud al-Zubayri”, guest speaker at the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival (7/13/2019).
- “Choose Your Own Adventure: A Digital Exploration of Mahri Poetry”, invited lecture hosted by the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Navarra (5/21/2019-5/28/2019).
- “The Metaphoric Significance of the Monsoon Wind in Mahri Poetry”, invited lecture at the symposium “The Symbiotic Relationship Between Language and Nature in Southern and Eastern Arabia”, organized by the Language and Nature in Southern and Eastern Arabia Network hosted at the University of Leeds (4/24/19-4/26/2019).
- Messages, Texts, and Rhetorical Detachment in Contemporary Mahri Poetry”, invited lecture at the International Conference on Transitional Texts at the University of Navarra, Pamplona (10/2/2018-10/3/2018).
- “Orality, Literacy, and the Mahri Poetry of Southeast Yemen”, guest talk at the Otter Creek Poets Workshop held at the Ilsley Public Library (4/12/2018).
- “Choose Your Own Adventure: A Digital Exploration of Mahri Poetry”, invited lecture by the School of International Letters and Cultures at Arizona State University, Tempe (3/22/2018)
- “Poetry, Figurative Language, and Nature in Modern South Arabian Poetry”, invited lecture at the symposium “Language and Nature in Southern and Eastern Arabia” organized by the Center for Humanities and Social Sciences at Qatar University, Doha (2/18/2018)
- “Behind the Scenes: The Mahri Poetry Archive”, invited lecture by the Center for Teaching and Language Resources and the Digital Liberal Arts Initiative, Middlebury College (10/25/2016)
- “The Syntax of Poetic Creation in al-Mahra: Structure, Process, and Product”, invited lecture at the *Quatrieme journee d’etudes sur les langues Sudarabiques Modernes*, organized by *OmanSaM: Projet Agence Nationale de la Recherche*, hosted at the University of Nantes (10/14/2016)

- “The Arabian Nights and the Arabic Literary Tradition”, invited lecture for RELI1038: The Arabian Nights (1/28/2016)
- “A New Era for Language Diversity in Yemen: Mahri and Soqotri in the New Yemeni Constitution” on panel sponsored by the American Institute for Yemeni Studies: “Tolerance and Turmoil: Unpacking the Current Crisis in Yemen” at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (11/22/2015)
- Panelist, “Born Digital Publishing: New Technology and Scholarly Communication”, Clifford Symposium: Transforming the Academy in the Digital Era, Middlebury College (9/19/2014).
- “Intersections of Mahri Oral Poetry and Arabic Nabati Poetry: The Case for Shared Cultural Inheritance,” Seminar for Arabian Studies, special session on the Ancient and Modern Languages of Southern Arabia, British Museum (7/27/2013).
- “Minority Sociolinguistics of the Middle East,” invited lecture for ARBC277: Arabic Sociolinguistics, Middlebury College (7/5/2013).
- “When Ideology and History Intersect: The Mahra of Yemen and the Touareg of Libya,” Minorities of the Modern Middle East Workshop, Portland State University (4/26/2013).
- “The Himyarite Kings of North Africa: How the Touareg Became Arabs,” International and Global Studies Colloquium, Middlebury College (10/19/2012).
- “South Arabia and the Amazigh Imaginary,” Berber Symposium: Language, Society and Culture in Tunisia and Beyond at the Centre d’Etudes Maghrébines à Tunis, Tunisia (3/6/2012).
- Invited to present three lectures at “The Mehri Language Workshop,” organized by the Centre for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at the University of Salford (5/27/2011):
 - History of the Mehri-speaking Region
 - Mehri Oral Literature: Poetry, Songs and Folklore
 - The Dialectology and Sociolinguistics of Mehri
- “Disappearing Act: The Mahri Language of Southern Arabic,” Language Works Faculty Speaker Series, Middlebury College (11/11/2010).
- “A String of Pearls: Narrative Structure and The Pre-Islamic *Qasida*,” Talking About Literature Series, Middlebury College (3/19/2009).

Other Scholarly Presentations:

- “The *Mahri* Camel: The Case for South Arabian and North African Contact,” The Camel Conference, The School for Oriental and African Studies, London (5/10/2015)
- “Rhetoric, Rite of Passage and the Mahri Tribal Ode,” Seminar for Arabian Studies, British Museum (7/14/2012).
- “Written Mahri, Mahri *Fuṣṣḥā* and Their Implications for Early Historical Arabic,” Seminar for Arabian Studies, British Museum (2009)
- “Rhythm and Beat: Re-evaluating Arabic Prosody in Light of Mahri Oral Poetry,” Middle East Studies Association Conference, Washington D.C. (2008).
- *Organized Panel*: “Revisiting al-Hamdānī: New Perspectives on the Indigenous Language Communities of the South Arabian Periphery,” Middle East Studies Association Conference, Montréal (2007).
- “Ḥumaynī Poetry in al-Mahra?” Middle East Studies Association Conference, Montréal (2007).
- “Oral Traditions and the New School of Poetry and Song in the Mahri Language of Southeast Yemen,” Middle East Studies Association Conference, Washington D.C. (2005).
- “The Mahri Language, Mahri Poetry and Indigenous Expressions in Southeast Arabia,” Crossing Over: Learning to Navigate the Borderlands of Intercultural Encounters, Cleveland State University (2005).
- “The Lyric Poetry of Ḥājī bir ‘Alī Dākōn, a Contemporary Poet of al-Mahra,” Fifth International Conference on Yemeni Civilization, Sana’a (2004).

- “Oral Traditions and ‘The New School’ of Mahri Verse,” American Institute for Yemeni Studies, Sana’a (2004).
- “Oral Traditions and The New School of Mahri Verse: An Analysis of Contemporary Poetry in the Mahri Language of SE Yemen,” Centre Français d’Archeologie et de Sciences Sociales de Sana’a (2004).
- “Adapting Arabian Motifs into the Poetic Idiom of al-Andalus: The Case of “The Mountain Poem” of Ibn Khafāja,” Arabic, Hebrew & Spanish Literature in the Iberian Peninsula: A Symposium in Memory of Américo Castro, University of California, Berkeley (2003).
- “Representations of Epigraphy and Writing in the *Nasīb*: An Historical Examination of a pre-Islamic Motif,” Middle East Studies Association Conference, Washington D.C. (2002).

Media

- Interview with BBC Arabic (7/23/2019): <https://republicanyemen.net/archives/19815> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nLuLeVCHTA>
- “Research in Era 2.0: A personalized digital adventure for learning about nearly extinct linguistic traditions”. Interview published by the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Navarra (5/30/2019). <https://www.unav.edu/en/web/instituto-cultura-y-sociedad/detalle-noticia-pestana?articleId=21808068>
- “Mahri: A language or dialect?” Interview with the *Yemen Times* (10/2/14). <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Mahri%3A+A+language+or+dialect%3F-a0384454710>
- “This Year’s Muse.” Interview with *The National* (2.13.2009). <https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/this-year-s-muse-1.485702?videoId=5754807360001>

Fellowships and Grants:

- The American Institute for Yemeni Studies Research Fellowship: “Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Zubayrī’s *A Prayer in Hell*: Translation and Commentary” (2018-2019)
- British Academy Sustainable Development Program Grant as a contributing participant: “Yemen in Conflict: Popular literary heritage as expression of conflict and tool for conflict resolution” (2019-2020).
- One Middlebury Fund to develop Moroccan vernacular course materials at the C.V. Starr School Abroad in Rabat, Morocco (2018-2019)
- Digital Liberal Arts Grant (Middlebury College): “From Digital Archive to Digital Exhibit: The Mahri Poetry Project”, 2016
- National Endowment for the Humanities Research Fellowship, 2011-2012
- Fulbright Fellowship, Middle East and North Africa Research Program, 2011-2012 (not activated)
- American Institute for Yemeni Studies Research Grant (awarded in 2009; deferred due to State Dept. travel ban on Yemen; activated in January 2012 for fieldwork in Salalah, Oman)
- American Institute for Yemeni Studies Research Grant (2007)
- Chancellor’s Dissertation-Year Fellowship (2006 – 2007)
- Sultan Abd al-Aziz Graduate Fellowship, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, UC Berkeley (2005 – 2006)
- American Institute for Yemeni Studies Fellowship (2004 – 2005)
- Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship (2002 – 2003)
- Hewlett Fellowship for Graduate Work in Near Eastern Studies, UC Berkeley (1998 – 2000)
- Mellon Fellowship for Graduate Work in Near Eastern Studies, UC Berkeley (1997 – 1998)
- Josephine de Kármán Fellowship (not activated) (2006 – 2007)

- CASA Fellowship for the Full-Year Program, including award from the Starr Foundation (not activated) (2004 – 2005)
- Mellon Research Grant for research in Yemen (2002 – 2003)
- Humanities Research Grant for research in Yemen, UC Berkeley (2002 – 2003)
- Graduate Division Summer Grant, UC Berkeley (2002)
- FLAS Summer Award for Arabic studies in Yemen (1998)
- Goheen Prize for research in Yemen, UC Berkeley (1998)

Service to Profession:

- Elected Vice-President of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies, 2020-2023 & 2023-2026
- Editorial Board, De Gruyter Academic Publishing: Studies on Modern Yemen
- Articles refereed for *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Journal of Arabic Literature*, *Archiv Orientalni*, *Revista de Filología Hispánica*, *Cambridge Prisms: Extinction, History and Memory*, *Reviews in the Digital Humanities*, *Bloomsbury Academic*
- NEH Peer Review Panelist, Tier II Fellowship Program: Comparative Literature, Literary Theory, Middle Eastern Studies & Migration Studies (2021)
- Book Award Selection Committee, American Institute for Yemeni Studies (2020)
- Middle East Studies Association, Program Committee for Annual Meeting (2019)
- Member of Scientific Committee, The Modern South Arabian Languages, University of Leeds, http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125219/modern_south_arabian_languages/2367/participants
- Elected Delegate-at-Large, Board of the Directors to the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (2008-2011)
- Elected Delegate-at-Large, Board of the Directors to the American Institute for Yemeni Studies (2012-15)
- American Institute for Yemeni Studies, Yemeni Research Fellowship Committee (2010-2019)
- Faculty Advisor, Critical Languages Scholarship Program, CAORC (2013)
- First-Round Application Reviewer for the Critical Languages Scholarship, CAORC (2010, 2011, 2012)
- Member of the Selection Committee: “Women in Technology – Yemen” sponsored by the Middle East Partnership Initiative and the United States Department of State, San Francisco (2006)

Middlebury Service – Department/Program level:

- Chair of the Department of Arabic (AY 2016-17, 2017-2018, 2020-2021, 2023-2024)
- Chair of the Arabic Search Committee, three-year position (2017)
- Member of the Arabic Search Committee, tenure-track position (2015)
- Member of the Arabic Search Committee, tenure-track position (2013)
- Director of the Arabic Program (AY 2010-2011)
- Member of Arabic Search Committee, tenure-track position (2008)
- Faculty Advisor for the Arabic House (2008-present)
- Member of Arabic Search Committee, three-year position (2007)

Middlebury Service – College-wide Level:

- Educational Affairs Committee (2023-2024)
- Admissions Advisory Committee (2021-2023)
- Member of the Humanities Steering Committee (AY2020-2021)
- International Travel and Research Fund Selection Committee (AY2019-2020)
- Member of the Community Judicial Board (AY2019-2020)

- Director of the Program of Modern Hebrew Program (Fall 2016 and Winter 2017)
- Director of Middle East Studies Program (AY 2014-15, AY 2015-16, Spring 2017, AY17-18)
- Curriculum Committee (AY 2012-13, 2013-2014, 2014-15, 2015-16)
- Member of the Registrar Search Committee (2015)
- Member of Spring Symposium Committee (2015)
- Member of NEH Summer Stipend Internal Review Committee (2015)
- Member of Alfred P. Sloan Award Steering Committee (AY 2009-10)
- Member of the Search Committee for the Director of the Arabic School Abroad in Morocco (2015)
- Member of the Search Committee for the Director of the Arabic School Abroad in Jordan (2011)
- Faculty Advisory Board for Middlebury College's Arabic and Hebrew Language Schools Abroad (2008-2018, 2023-2024), including site visits to Alexandria (2008), Amman (2015), and Rabat (2024)
- Member of Hebrew Search Committee (2012)
- Member of Hebrew Search Committee (2008)

Courses Taught:

- ARBC101, ARBC102, ARBC103 – First Year, Introductory Arabic Sequence (Fall-January Term-Spring)
- ARBC201, ARBC202 – Second Year, Intermediate Arabic (Fall and Spring)
- ARBC301 & ARBC302 – Third Year, Advanced Arabic Sequence (Fall-Spring): [301 Course Website](#), [302 Course Website](#)
- ARBC210 – Arabia: A Literary Approach: [Course Website](#)
- ARBC212 – The Modern Arabic Novel: [Course Website](#)
- ARBC221 – Modern Arabic Literature: [Course Website](#)
- ARBC401 – Fourth Year, Advanced Arabic Seminar: History of the *Qaṣīda*
- ARBC402 – Fourth Year, Advanced Arabic Seminar: The Modern Arabic Novel - [Course Website](#)
- ARBC410 - Fourth Year, Advanced Arabic Seminar: Classical Arabic Prose - [Course Website](#)
- ARBC414 - Fourth Year, Advanced Arabic Seminar: Modern Arabic Literature
- LITP101 – Introduction to World Literature

Professional Development:

- Attended Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC): Distinguished/Professional Level Arabic at San Diego State University (Summer 2007)
- Took Advanced Arabic Coursework at the Center for the Arabic Language and Eastern Studies, Sana'a (Summer 2008)
- Completed Advanced Arabic Literature Tutorial (125 hours total) at the *Institut Bourguiba des Langues Vivantes*, Tunis (Sept. 2011-Dec. 2011)
- Completed Advanced Arabic Literature Course at the Sidi Bou Said Language Center, Tunis (Feb.–May 2012)
- Completed Intensive Advanced Moroccan *dārīja* course, Qalam wa-Lawh Language Center, Rabat (Sept.-Dec. 2018)