



Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant

A multi-faceted prism for studying entangled histories in an interdisciplinary perspective

CRSII5_186426

Interim Report 2020–2021

General editor and co-author:

Prof. Dr. Christoph Uehlinger
Department of Religious Studies
University of Zurich (SSSL leading house)

Co-authors:

Dr. Ido Koch (TAU)
Prof. Dr. Stefan Mürger (UBE)
Prof. Dr. Silvia Schroer (UBE)

Dr. Tatjana Beuthe (UBE)
Dr. Nadja Ben-Marzouk (TAU/UZH)
Bruno Biermann M.A. (UBE/UZH)
Dr. Ben Greet (UZH)
Dr. Silas Klein Cardoso (UBE/UZH)
Inbar Meyerson B.A. (TAU)
Noa Ranzer M.A. (TAU/UZH)
Dr. Giulia Tucci (TAU/UBE)

February 28, 2022



Universität
Zürich



Contents

1.	Introduction	2
	1.1. Objectives	2
	1.2. Project organization and modes of operation	3
	1.3. Milestones and Covid-19	4
	1.4. Adaptations.....	4
2.	The core tasks: documentation and databases (Modules A+B)	4
	2.1. Documentation	4
	2.2. Project-internal research tool: the SSSL Filemaker database (CSSL)	5
	2.3. Heading towards the web-based, open-access and collaborative database (CSSL+).....	6
3.	Associated research modules	7
	3.1. Module C2: Local and regional profiles and traditions: assessment and comparison.....	7
	3.2. Module D1: Social archaeology: context, function, and consumption	8
	3.3. Module D2: Political, social and economic history: stamp seals and interconnections	9
	3.4. Module D3: Gender history: seals and sealing in gender-historical perspective	9
	3.5. Module D4: Biblical studies: assessing “iconographic exegesis”.....	10
4.	Networking and outreach	11
	4.1. Digital Humanities workshop	11
	4.2. Conference presentations	12
	4.3. Publications	12
	4.4. Social media	12
5.	Acknowledgments	12
	Figures and appendices	13

1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives

The SSSL project’s core goal is the completion of the *Corpus of Stamp Seal-amulets from Palestine/Israel (CSSPI)* initiated by Othmar Keel in the 1980s, of which 6 volumes and an additional one on seals from Jordan (*CSAJ*) were published in hard-copy between 1995 and 2017. Covering sites from A (Tell Abu Farağ) to K (Tel Kitan), these volumes document ca. 7900 items from more than 220 sites, including Tell el-Ağğūl, Ashkelon, Bet-Shean, Tell Far'a South, Gezer, Jericho, Jerusalem and many others. The overall dataset, however, amounts to ca. 12'000 items. Sites L to Z were documented by Keel in preliminary form but still await publication in the *Corpus*. They include archaeological locations of major regional importance such as Lachish, Megiddo, Rehov, Samaria or Shechem, altogether ca. 150 locations; moreover, additional finds from sites A-K discovered later than the existing volumes of *CSSPI* and *CSAJ* need to be included. The SSSL project will make these available in up-to-date documentation and thus allow future research to be based on a comprehensive dataset. In addition to hard-copy publication in two or three volumes, the full documentation will be transferred to a web-based, open access and collaborative database. As an interdisciplinary project, SSSL also includes a number of associated research modules addressing the glyptic material’s relevance for the study of ancient society, economy, political and cultural relations, gender, religion, and the study of the Hebrew Bible in so-called “iconographic exegesis”. The SSSL has reached half way thanks to the joint commitment of four project leaders, seven postdocs, two PhD candidates, several M.A. student assistants and two draughtspersons (a team representing no less than nine nationalities). This report summarizes the work accomplished during the first two years (which will also be remembered for some time as the “covid years”) and offers a brief outlook on the work that remains to be accomplished during the second half of the project.

1.2 Project organization and modes of operation

When notified by the SNSF about the successful outcome of the application process, co-directors Koch (Tel Aviv), Münger, Schroer (Bern) and Uehlinger (Zurich, leading house) started to have regular online meetings to implement the project. International job advertisements and several rounds of interviews allowed more than 40 international candidates to be interviewed and led to the selection of core staff members Ben Greet (UK, coordinating postdoc UZH) and Tatjana Beuthe (CAN, postdoc UBE), postdoc researchers Giulia Tucci (IT, TAU/UBE) and Silas Klein Cardoso (BR, UBE/UZH), PhD candidate Noa Ranzer (IL, TAU/UZH) and Inbar Meyerson B.A. (IL, TAU), who all took office when the project started in January 2020 (Kick-off meeting in Zurich). Another round of advertisements and interviews allowed for postdoc Nadja Ben-Marzouk (US, TAU/UZH) and PhD candidate Bruno Biermann (DE, UBE/UZH), selected out of 15 candidates, to join the team in fall 2020. With the third and final round, postdocs Eythan Levy (IL/BE, UBE) and Fabio Porzia (IT, UZH) were hired. The team further includes master student assistants Michael Aeschli-mann (CH, UZH) and Renate Fahrni (CH, TAU), as well as draughtspersons Ingrid Berney and Ulrike Zurkinden (CH, UBE). It has reached its fullest in early 2022; we were lucky to enjoy full attendance (in person) already at our all-staff meeting held in Bern in August 2020, and again in early February 2022 (see **Fig. 1**).

Board members meet every first Monday per month to discuss issues of management, supervision and progress of research activities online. All-staff online research seminars are held every third Monday, and the research staff members have their own “workerbees” meeting on a monthly basis or whenever necessary: communication and collaborative support among the team members has proven to be paramount, not least during extended homeoffice periods. As a result, new research questions have been taken up in teams of two or three, most of them generated bottom-up. Moreover, as already laid out in the research proposal, we value staff member mobility in view of personal experience and future career perspectives. Many staff members will thus have experienced two different institutional settings during this project, both in terms of university and disciplinary setting. Finally, despite the pandemic, the project could hold no less than six regional or all-staff meetings, both in presence and hybrid, which allowed to discuss and normalize workflows, to explain and appropriate database developments, to discuss ongoing research and to train the presentation of papers ahead of international conferences.

1.3 Milestones and Covid-19

The pandemic struck beyond Asia since early 2020, that is, since our project’s very beginning. It impacted our second, regional staff meeting held in Tel Aviv in early March, when all of a sudden researchers from Switzerland were forbidden access to TAU campus. Luckily this occurred at the close of our meeting, after we had already visited the storerooms of the Israel Antiquities Authority in Bet-Shemesh (and for one of us, in Jerusalem). As the following months were marked by severe international travel restrictions and homeoffice regulations, it comes as no surprise that some of our milestones could not be reached in time in spite of increased online communication. This applies notably to international conferences, all canceled in 2020 before being held as virtual meetings (early 2021) or returning to hybrid (late 2021). As it proved difficult, often impossible, under such circumstances to organize strategically planned workshops with colleagues from abroad not engaged themselves in the project,¹ our main concern was to keep the “inner circle” going.² Nevertheless, as the project had already been advertised before it even started (e.g., at the ASOR annu-

¹ Most notably, the workshops planned as Modules C1 (“Production and diffusion; group characteristics and workshop issues”) and D6 (CSSL and exact sciences: exploring a new interface). C1 concerns are omnipresent in our research; they require particular attention in modules C2 and D2 (see below, 3.1 and 3.3) and may even affect module D6.

² Note however the Digital Humanities workshop, held online in August 2021 (see below, 4.1).

al meeting 2019), and again on several strategically chosen occasions (e.g., ICAANE 2021 in Bologna [virtual and postponed by a year], ASOR 2021 in Chicago, and SBL 2021 in San Antonio), it is by now rather well-known especially among archaeologists operating in Israel. Members of the TAU component have been entrusted to publish stamp seals excavated by non-TAU archaeological expeditions (e.g., Ashkelon, Khirbet Summeily), UBE staff is currently working on the publication unearthed by Israeli and international expeditions (e.g., Bethsaida, Tel Eton, Lachish, Qubur al-Walayda), which signals recognition by colleagues that SSSL is building new capacity in the field of glyptic studies. Our research seminar, regular supervision and closely supported conference papers and early publications, as well as designated seminars at TAU and UBE all have this role to introduce a new generation of students and junior researchers to the specialized field of glyptic studies, whose leading scholars are almost all well retired.

Regarding the project's core concern (documentation, internal FM database, web database), it proved impossible to reach our milestones as planned, since all relevant museums and collections closed down, and even their usual curatorial services did hardly operate. Photography missions could take place in Israel (Rockefeller Museum, IAA storerooms), but collections in the UK, in the US, in Germany and (hopefully) in Turkey (Istanbul) are only now opening up again to visitors and researchers (with sometimes long waiting lists for their study rooms). Luckily, we could acquire excellent photography equipment (PhD student Bruno Biermann being a semi-professional photographer), which proves to be extremely valuable in the current mission of postdoc Ben Greet to museums in the UK. We still hope to be able to catch up time during 2022 so as to be able to complete the project as planned by December 2023.

Milestones were reached unequally within the individual associated research projects, mostly for reasons related to the pandemic (see the relevant reports in sect. 3).

1.4 Adaptations

The project has been able to spare a considerable amount of funds due to less travel and conference activities, and thanks to the strategic use of overhead money at the leading house. Some expenses, however, are only postponed, most notably those concerning the development of the web database. The board will decide in the course of 2022, after consultation with the SNSF, whether spare money will better be invested to hire additional staff or raise employment levels of existing contracts, or whether it should better be kept in reserve for a few months of project extension to complete the publication program in early 2024.

2. The core tasks: documentation and databases (Modules A+B)³

2.1 Documentation

SSSL inherited from *CSSPI* and *CSAJ*, both funded by the SNSF as part of Othmar Keel's professional activity at the University of Fribourg, the full set of index cards, often with b/w photographs and occasionally provisional drawings attached. These have been fully scanned and entered into the project-internal FM database by student assistants working under the supervision of Stefan Münger (UBE) prior to project start. Moreover, it has been possible thanks to the tenacious support of Leonardo Pajarola and Marie-France Meylan-Krause, from the University of Fribourg's Bible+Orient Museum, to get hold of the *CSSPI* and *CSAJ* data introduced some years ago into the museum's BODO database, to get hold of the relevant data in a digitized form that allowed Münger to a relatively smooth transfer into the project's FM database. In both cases, data are sometimes deficient, whether outdated or poorly copied, and thus require careful editing.

³ Core staff members employed in this module are Dr Ben Greet (coordinating postdoc UZH), Dr Tatjana Beuthe (UBE), and Inbar Neyerson, M.A. (TAU). All staff members are expected to contribute to the database, the level of engagement depending on their specific research topics.

Since January 2020, draughtswomen Ulrike Zurkinden and Ingrid Berney (each hired at 20%) produce new drawings whenever needed of the stamp seals' base, back or side. In many cases, one or two of the three sights need to be done from scratch, especially when only a base drawing has previously been published. Zurkinden is used to draw on paper, delivering her drawings in Bern where they get scanned and uploaded to the FM database. Berney is more autonomous and uses more advanced technology. While she produced less new drawings, her work includes scanning, the technical improvement of scans, and uploading. She is also in charge of preparing old drawings from publications for upload, and occasionally works on photographs, cutting and preparing scans for their upload into the database. Both working from their homeoffice, the two draughtswomen are supervised by Schroer, who has quarterly meetings with them in Bern, and in the more technical aspects by Mürger. Assessing the drawings up to high quality is a demanding task; many drawings need to be corrected once or twice. Often this is due to insufficient quality of the older photographs, which causes uncertainty in interpretation. In total about 3000 new drawings have been produced within the two years, while 700 drawings from publications have been revised.

Constant work on the database especially by Ben Greet (Megiddo and 10 smaller sites, altogether 753 entries), Tatjana Beuthe (Shechem, Ta'anach, Lachish and smaller sites, altogether 341 entries), Noa Ranzer (Lachish, ca. 200 entries) and other staff members demonstrated that existing, generally decades-old b/w photos for materials from these sites (obtained by Keel in the 1980s from dozens of museums worldwide) can hardly be used as such by SSSL due to their small size, poor lighting and contrast, resolution etc. New photography was undertaken first by TAU staff at the Rockefeller Museum (Jerusalem) and in the IAA storerooms at Bet-Shemesh, and since December 2021 by Ben Greet in various museums in the UK, to be followed by missions to the US, Germany (VAM Berlin), and hopefully Turkey (Istanbul). The difference in quality is virtually breathtaking (see **Appendix 1**) and no doubt worth the effort.

Photography for *CSSPI* and *CSAJ* had mostly been obtained from the respective museum services, or was done by Keel himself (or emissaries and assistants, Dr Jürg Egger foremost among them). While many of the paper photographs remain with the physical index cards, and all photographs for sites A–K were published in hard-copy, by far not all of Keel's digitized photos from early 2000s could be recovered. In this regard, SSSL has introduced a different, to some extent innovative mode of operations in its dealing with major museums worldwide: even major museums such as the British Museum, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the VAM Berlin, the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago or the IAA-administered Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem allow project staff to do the photography themselves, and they agree to waive copyright fees for the project, including use in the projected open access database; in turn, they get high quality photographs done for free, which they can upload onto their own digital databases, many of which are currently being developed for open access, too. Securing such agreements may occasionally be time-consuming, but again it is certainly worth the effort.

2.2 Project-internal research tool: the SSSL Filemaker database (CSSL)

Prior to the start of the SSSL project, a technically rather modest web-based database (operating with Claris Filemaker 19) had been developed by Mürger to host the data to be accumulated by SSSL. This database – dubbed CSSL – was initially designed as a 'proof of concept' for SSSL's soon to be developed open-source 'work-database'. However, it became clear once the staff members started to use the tool that numerous conceptual innovations were necessary before the final web-based database could even be conceived, let alone implemented. CSSL had to be drastically improved to meet the requirements of a modern, collaborative digital research and (semi-automated) publication environment.

CSSL is characterized by consistent data normalization, tight data links, the avoidance of any redundancies, extensive management of media files, and many computer-assisted, project-specific

workflows.⁴ Numerous custom-tailored modules for indexing and cross-referencing text information (e.g., comparanda, bibliographic references, royal names etc.), image manipulation and processing, task management, data visualization (comparanda, interactive maps, graphs etc.) and other requirements such as the auditing of changes were developed by Münger during the project's first two years of operation.

While the basic structure of the database still follows the schema of Keel's corpus entries, these were modified and enlarged to enable complex data queries. Changes include the following, among others:

- addition and modification of typologies not only for the stamp seals proper but also for mounting devices, engraving techniques etc.
- standardization of terms, place names, colors, measurements etc.
- enhanced information about manufacture, attribution to established groups or series etc.
- strict separation between description and discussion/interpretation of the base engravings, esp. with regard to iconography
- introduction of iconographic keywords, which in turn raised the issue of a consistent iconographic terminology and taxonomy
- strict adherence to relative dates of the find contexts, with enhanced granulation of the archaeological data (incl. associated finds)
- unrestricted addition of photographs and drawings (i.e., more views).

For a screenshot of the FM database's working surface, accessible to all SSSL staff members, see **Appendix 2**.

The transfer of text and imagery from *CSSPI* and *CSAJ* (7901 entries with ca. 40'000 photographs and drawings) from an unstructured free text to a highly segmented, machine-readable format proved especially challenging. Note that all information—except paragraphs written by external contributors to later volumes, such as Daphna Ben-Tor or Baruch Brandl—had to be translated from German into English. This whole task, which required both glyptological and archaeological expertise, could be completed by the end of 2021, except find context information which without an individual assessment of the existing data cannot be readily translated into a standard format open to automatized query. We expect this last step in the data transfer to be completed in spring 2022.

2.3 Heading towards the web-based, open-access and collaborative database (CSSL+)

Our aim is to develop an online open-access catalogue of ca. 12-15'000 entries that will be expandable for the input of additional entries and serve as a sustainable reference tool for future research. We planned CSSL+ to be grounded on CSSL as developed by Münger. Each entry page should include about 20 fields, including text, links, pictures and maps, and multi-parameters search options producing results that would be presented in tables with sorting and filtering. CSSL+ is designed to be ultimately opened for multiple users' view worldwide without registrations; input of new entries, however, will be possible for registered members only. CSSL+ will thus serve as both an archive and a research tool and join other successful open access projects (such as *The Levantine Ceramics Project* [LCP]) as a new platform for integrating material remains into the scholarly discussion. We set the first year to the development of the online database, an ambitious task that faced various difficulties, predominantly the pandemic that considerably slowed our progress. We expect the Beta version of CSSL to be operative in Summer 2022.

⁴ The database is currently hosted on Claris FileMaker Server V. 19.4.2.204 (cssl.unibe.ch [password protected]) with frequent backups to local hard drives and remote raids plus cloud based services. At the time of writing this report, the data managed by CSSL includes around 300 GB of image data in addition to text data. It is to be expected that this data volume will increase significantly. Note that Filemaker does natively support many of the features offered by CSSL. The non-native modules extensively use Filemaker's data API (via FMRestor) in combination with Javascript and HTML components (e.g. TrixEditor, Leaflet etc.) as well as the third-party plugins MBS (for calcs) and xmChart (for rendering of composite imagery, graphs).

Inbar Meyerson, an M.A. student at TAU and ICT expert, was entrusted with researching existing databases, locating possible developers, contacting them for price estimates, and coordinating the work with the developer chosen by the project. During the first six months, she worked on specifying the ideal requirements of CSSL to inform developers of our needs. Work on the specifications was done in constant dialogue with Münger, who continued to develop the CSSL database serving the project internally. Meyerson and Koch also consulted with the head of the TAU Central Library and her team, the leading agent in encouraging the development of Digital Humanities projects at TAU. After some months (including delay due to the pandemic), we decided to turn down their offer to develop CSSL+ based on an Ex Libris solution, which had too many limitations that did not fit our needs.

Meyerson then searched for local companies to provide alternative solutions. Ten companies were approached, four offered work plans with price estimates. This stage was again interrupted by the second wave of the pandemic, followed by a lockdown in September–October 2020. Having chosen the best proposal, we approached the TAU financial and accounting administration, who informed us that the scope of our project and the high cost required us to open a public call for tenders, a search that could take over a year. We learned in several meetings during October–December 2020 that to avoid these regulations, we better searched for an already existing solution to be adapted for our needs.

Two measures were taken at this stage: Koch asked the TAU Research Authority to improve their consultancy support to projects like ours. Moreover, after consulting with the SSSL board, he approached the developers of *Numishare*, an open-source suite of applications for digitally managing cultural heritage artefacts. One of the websites using Numishare, belonging to the *American Numismatic Society* (ANS), had been among the inspirations for our original plan of CSSL+. In February 2021, Meyerson and Koch met with Ethan Gruber, the developer of Numishare, and Dr Ute Wartenberg Kagan, President of ANS, who provided much information about the database. They conveyed us to Seth Kaufman, owner of *CollectiveAccess* who had developed ANS digital databases. After several successful meetings, Koch could present a work plan to the board, who decided to opt for this solution.

Gruber started in July 2021 to adapt Numishare to the needs of CSSL+, while Kaufman began working on the database specification in November 2021. Both are in regular contact with Meyerson, and Kaufman, Meyerson, Münger and Koch have met several times to solve specific issues. According to the modified schedule, CSSL+ thus should be operative on a Beta version in summer 2022.

3. Associated research modules⁵

3.1 Module C2: Local and regional profiles and traditions: assessment and comparison

Dr Nadia Ben-Marzouk (TAU/UZH, since 01.01.2021)

The primary research objective of the C2 module is to compare and assess local and regional stamp seal profiles and tradition histories, with emphasis on iconography and a chronological focus on the Iron Age. While I officially started the project in January 2021, I contracted Covid prior to my departure to Israel. By the time I recovered, Israel closed its borders resulting in what would become a four-month delay and my official arrival to Tel Aviv on April 21, 2021.

As such, the beginning of the year was spent familiarizing myself with the scholarship on two groups of seals dated to the Iron Age, the Early Iron Age Mass-Produced Stamp Seals (EIAMPS) and the so-called “Iron Age II bone seals”, as well as evaluating the traditional criteria by which groups are established with an eye toward engaging those criteria in a new way. I then began my own ongoing study of the EIAMPS group, exploring the traditional scholarship and argumentation around this group more broadly, and tracking motifs across different seal forms to begin identifying points of continuity and potential contact between production communities. My preliminary analysis revealed one motif

⁵ Edited by Uehlinger, this section is based on short reports by SSSL staff members, who describe what is after all *their* research in first person singular.

variously referred to as “geometric” in the literature appears on EIAMP seals at many coastal sites and locales arguably connected to exchange networks wherein agents connected to the Amun temple(s) were active. I hypothesize the motif reflects an embellished version of the Egyptian hieroglyph used to classify Egyptian conceptions of city (O49 in Gardiner’s sign list) and reflects a shift in Egyptian scribal practices during Dynasties 21/22, wherein established conceptions of Egyptian space shift to include parts of the Levantine coast, where Amun temple agents are known to have travelled.

Within this context, I also began investigating continuity and divergence in stamp seal production/consumption in the aftermath of Egyptian withdrawal, selecting a local case study in the Beth Shean Valley given the region’s strategic importance for the Egyptian empire and the polity centered at Tel Rehov. As a result, I have identified a new group of locally produced non-enstatite scarabs whose spatial distribution appears to be connected to the political center at Tel Rehov. Related to this research, I have added 56 entries for Tel Rehov into the CSSL database. Becoming familiar with the database took some time and I am still in the process of mastering entries. Nevertheless, I have no doubt I will be more proficient moving forward and look forward to contributing additional sites in 2022.

My research—couched within a broader discussion of new approaches to establishing groups—was presented at the ASOR 2021 annual meeting in both the in person and virtual components. Results will be published in two articles: the first, to be submitted to the journal *Tel Aviv*, will focus on the social context and significance of this new group of scarabs, whereas the second article will be a dedicated discussion on the traditional criteria to establish groups and new ways to engage those criteria. The latter article will be submitted to the SSSL-edited volume *Studies on Stamp-Seals from the Southern Levant* (in the *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* series).

My preliminary results on community continuity and innovation in the Beth Shean valley were also presented at the Society of Biblical Literature and will be submitted to the same edited volume.

Module C3: The distribution of stamp seal motifs in the Southern Levant

Dr. Eythan Levy (UBE, started 01.01.2022)

3.2 Module D1: Social archaeology: context, function, and consumption

Noa Ranzer (TAU/UZH, since 01.01.2020)

During the first months of 2020, I completed my M.A. thesis, *Object’s Biography: Production and Function of Middle and Late Bronze Age Scarabs in the Ayalon and Yarkon Basin*, written under the supervision of Prof. Yuval Gadot and Dr. Ido Koch at Tel Aviv University. The main results of the thesis are currently under review with the *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interrelations*. I then engaged in the initial stages of my PhD thesis, which will examine the various functions of stamp-seals found in secured Iron Age archaeological contexts in the southern Levant. This research is conducted under the supervision of Koch, Gadot and Prof. Christoph Uehlinger (UZH); since August 2021 and for a year, my workplace is located at UZH.

Preliminary work on the PhD thesis included tracing the most detailed publications of archaeological contexts yielding stamp seals. These contexts serve as the primary dataset from which I interpret the functions of stamp-seals. The next phase was to define the types of contexts and to review research previously conducted on this topic. I studied the archaeological and historical background of the Iron Age southern Levant, as well as published interpretations of stamp seals functions. Once acquainted with the materials, I developed a methodological framework which should enable me to give a systematic interpretation for various types of test cases. I integrated all of the above into my PhD proposal. According to TAU regulations, the first months of a PhD project are spent on a substantial proposal, which requires the supervisors’ consent and is then submitted to external reviewers. Currently, I am writing the first chapter of the dissertation, dedicated to the theoretical framework and methodology.

All SSSL staff members are expected to contribute entries to the CSSL database. I was in charge of writing the entries on stamp-seals found at Lachish. With time, my responsibility was restricted to those found in the 1930s and published in two volumes of the final report. Thus far, I have entered 121 items into the database and submitted them to review; 40 entries were completed and will be entered into the database soon, while ca. 60 items await examination.

During the past year, I also began studying unpublished items from Ashkelon, Jerusalem, Ramat Razim, Nahal Zipori (all with I. Koch), and Qubur al-Walayida (together with S. Münger). Their entries are already updated in the database. The items from Ashkelon and Jerusalem—sites already published by Keel in vols. I and V—will be published in the volume of addenda to *CSSPI*.

3.3 Module D2: Political, social, economic history: stamp seals and interconnections

Dr Giulia Tucci (TAU/UBE, since 01.01.2020)

My postdoctoral research the interconnections between the southern Levant, Egypt, the Northern Levant, Cyprus, and the Aegean area but also Mesopotamia and Anatolia, during the second and first millennium B.C.E. I am convinced that the archaeological material at our disposal offers most relevant data for interpreting the movement of people, materials and ideas.

As I pointed out in my contribution to the ASOR 2021 Annual Meeting (virtual), “Methodological Approaches and Research Perspectives on Southern Levant Stamp Seal: a Focus on Signet-Rings,” there is scarcity and confusion in the study of this particular class of materials. My analysis of these objects has focused on a typology coupled with geographical and chronological connections. These led to questions concerning materials and working techniques that allowed me to extend my research to the greater Mediterranean basin during the second and first millennia B.C.E. The origin of materials and the choice of one over another can be vital for drawing commercial lines. The use of different technologies and typologies may allow to trace the presence and interaction of ‘locals’ and ‘foreigners’ in seal production.

Regarding my contribution to the database, I have catalogued so far ca. 250 items from the following sites: Tel Abel Beth Macaah, Tel Mevorakh, Tel Michal, Tel Mor, Nahariya, Tel Nami, Palmahim, Tel Qasile, Tel Ridan, Rishon le-Zyon, Ruqesh, Shiqmona. The location of most sites in the southern Levantine coastal plain allows me to analyze patterns of distribution and consumption within a specific geographical setting. The work in the coming months will therefore be focused on completing for publication the presentations made so far at international conferences. To this I shall add collaboration with other members of the SSSL project on topics of common interest, and I shall further refine my database entries once the review process completed.

The pandemic certainly constituted an element of difficulty. The spring 2020 lockdown saw me stranded in my home town Rome, and although I continued to work and stay in touch with the team via virtual tools, the work inevitably slowed down with the difficulties of not having resources easily available and the interruption of a personal working relationship. The latter problem also hampered the second year, where most of the time restrictions and limited access to workplaces did not allow working together in presence.

3.4 Module D3: Gender history: seals and sealing in gender-historical perspective

Bruno Biermann M.A. (UBE/UZH, since 01.10.2020)

My research within the SSSL project started with the initial mapping of my research module, the development of the research questions, and thesis outline. Moreover, I developed the theoretical and methodological framework of my research. I gathered data from several sites relevant to my study: Rishon le-Zion, Deir el-Balah, Ashkelon, Jerusalem, Tyre al-Bass, and Tell es-Sa'idiyeh. The database provided help in some of these cases, particularly for Rishon le-Zion.

The second half of 2021 was dominated by presentations at international conferences. These offered me the first chance to present research conducted within the project to a broader academic audience.

The paper presented at the European Association of Biblical Studies (EABS) annual conference in Wuppertal (August 2021) was entitled “Wearing a Seal as Conceptual Metaphor and Embodied Experience.” The paper reconstructed the sensory aspects of seal wear and sealing through the intersection of material culture and the seal metaphor in Song 8:6a–b. It is part of my approach to relating glyptics and the body as a whole. The paper was awarded the annual EABS student prize for Hebrew Bible and cognate studies.

In November 2021, I presented papers at two international conferences in the USA. At the ASOR annual meeting in Chicago, I read the paper “Intersecting Stamp Seals and Gendered Bodies,” in which I discussed one of my case studies from the Rishon le-Zion MB II cemetery. The intersection of scarabs with bioarchaeological data provided a novel outlook on the role osteological sex has in the distribution and practices related to scarabs in funerary contexts. Another paper, “Seals from the Southern Levant and Gender Archaeology: Theoretical and Practical Considerations,” was presented at the SBL annual meeting in San Antonio. I elaborated on the challenges and biases in contemporary scholarship concerned with gender and glyptics, and discussed the theoretical and methodological foundations of my PhD thesis.

The EABS paper and a combined paper from ASOR and SBL will be published in 2022/2023. The remaining time of the project will be dedicated to additional data collection and analysis. My main concern is an adequate selection of sites to be able to finish the thesis in time. The cemeteries of Rishon le-Zion, Ashkelon, and Tyre al-Bass provide sufficient data for a systematic study of osteological data. In addition, Jerusalem offers the greatest number of inscribed seals with personal names.

3.5 Module D4: Biblical studies: assessing “iconographic exegesis”

Dr Silas Klein Cardoso (UBE/UZH, since 01.01.2020)

The D4 project addresses biblical-exegetical approaches that use visual artifacts, such as “Bible and Iconography,” “Biblical Iconography,” and “Iconographic Exegesis.” The project thus aims at reviewing the state of the art of “Iconographic Exegesis” as a perspective, pointing to how the study of ancient iconography and biblical studies can be most productively brought together. To meet these expectations, three research axes were devised at an early stage, each with its main points of concern, and conceived to result in several papers and articles, the ultimate qualification aim being a cumulative habilitation in the University of Bern.

The first axis, called “Iconographic Exegesis, a perspective story,” was carried out in 2020 and reviewed the history of scholarship. At the outset, a decision was made not to approach the topic just as an intellectual effort within a classical *status quaestionis* approach, but to consider the social and material aspects of knowledge production. Previous accounts rightly emphasized the interdisciplinary character and the role of Othmar Keel and the “Fribourg School” in constructing the perspective. However, tools, institutions, and the politics and negotiations of knowledge were not adequately described, making these descriptions unapt to a burgeoning international academic enterprise. For example, institutional caps and possibilities, access to research materials, religious views, and localized epistemologies were decisive in creating the field’s current diversity around the globe. The social-material lense of my approach offered a renewed look at the perspective’s development and enabled the creation of hypotheses concerning the variegated practices. The outputs for this axis are twofold: A first type comprises larger pieces addressing the different approaches in articles and papers that either introduce the perspective, narrate its history, or create a typology of approaches. A second type addresses the social-material history of the practice, showing how stamp seals and cataloging tools altered epistemic regimes of the practitioners within the fields of Biblical Studies and History of Religion. The latter topic also offered opportunities for public communication with Brazilian media, making room for two interviews and a roundtable.

The second axis, “arts, artifacts, and facts in context,” on which I currently focus, deals with the conceptual and methodological foundations for the practice and provides further insights into it. As an

interdisciplinary, intermodal and interartistic endeavor, correlating ancient visual artifacts and biblical texts requires looking at many factors, such as the chronological, geographical, logical, and mediatic correspondence between the comparands. The axis thus evaluates the tenets and assumptions made by researchers, such as how the image-text opposition/commonality are construed, which historical-comparative methods are applied, and which theories of/for material culture and texts are employed. Towards this end, contemporary studies in multimodality and communicology were integrated to make sense of the data, improve the critical vocabulary in the analyses, and suggest other conceptual frameworks. In terms of output, studies were produced addressing assumptions made in selecting comparands (the “pre-comparative” tertium), in the interpretation of material and dealing with the use of specific classes of artifacts, such as stamp seals. The latter benefitted from an award received from the Brazilian Ministry of Education (Capes Foundation, Brazil), which enabled me to extend my stay at the project for five months and further study different classes of artifacts. As a result, since September 2021, I also started to produce studies focusing on the history of religion, following both the interests of the researcher and the historical development of the field from Biblical Exegesis to History of Religion since the 1990s. Another topic yet to be developed within this axis is the relation of the so-called *Interpretação Bíblica Latino-Americana* and Iconographic Exegesis, which will be created in conversation with Ibero- and Latin-American scholars and epistemologies of the South. The last axis, to be developed between June 2022 and May 2023, will consist of case studies.

Module D5: History of religion\': new perspectives on the history of ancient Levantine religion\': in the second and first millennia BCE

Dr Fabio Porzia (UZH, started 01.01.2021)

4. Networking and outreach

As mentioned earlier, the two years of pandemic were detrimental to all kinds of scientific gatherings, face-to-face interaction, cooperation and the exchange of ideas in a physically shared space. Several workshop activities could not take place as planned, nor could we attend international scholarly meetings as initially planned. Some of them were simply postponed or moved to online or hybrid formats, but several venues where we had planned to present and promote our project were simply canceled: No ICAANE, ASOR or SBL annual meetings took place in 2020. We were all the more motivated to be present at such venues in 2021.

4.1 Digital Humanities workshop

Luckily, though, the first all-staff meeting after 18 months of physical separation also allowed us to organize and host a special online workshop bringing together scholars from Germany (Berlin, Heidelberg, Munich, Würzburg), Israel (TAU), the UK (Oxford), the US (Boston, Los Angeles, New Haven) to exchange about major Digital Humanities projects on various materials from ancient Western Asia and the ancient Mediterranean. In addition to SSSL, the following projects were represented by senior scholars and staff members:

- ACAWAI-CS (Annotated Digital Corpus of Ancient West Asian Imagery: Cylinder Seals): www.acawai-cs.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/
- CDLI (Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative): cdli.ucla.edu/
- CMS (Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel): www.uni-heidelberg.de/fakultaeten/philosophie/zaw/cms/
- Levantine Ceramics Project: www.levantineceramics.org/
- YBC (Yale Babylonian Collection): babylonian-collection.yale.edu/

The workshop fostered exchange on numerous theoretical, methodological, technical, and organizational aspects of how to design digital databases to the service of cutting-edge research. It also helped

to establish new contacts with colleagues from museums and collections which are directly relevant to SSSL, such as the Oriental Institute at Chicago.

4.2 Conference presentations

The most important international conferences attended by SSSL board and staff members during the last two years (more precisely, in 2021) were ICAANE (Bologna, April 2021, online), EABS (Wuppertal, August 2021), ASOR annual meeting (Chicago, November 2021, in presence and online) and the SBL annual meeting (San Antonio, November 2021, in presence, hybrid, and online). Special SSSL panels could be presented at ASOR and SBL. These and other conference presentations are listed in **Appendix 4** (and output data on *mysnf*).

A tight series of international conference appearances is scheduled for 2022 (ASOR, EABS, IOSOT, SBL) and 2023.

4.3 Publications

16 SSSL-related scientific articles, book chapters etc. have been published in 2020/2021; 15 others are currently in press or under review, and 20+ in an advanced stage of preparation. SSSL will revive the *Studies on Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant* sub-series within the OBO series with a volume based on conference presentations by staff members and additional colleagues. Most importantly, the whole team is strongly committed to bring to publication its first corpus volume (*CSSPI* vol. 6) by the end of 2022. For further details, see **Appendix 3** (and output data on *mysnf*).

4.4 Social media

Activities of the SSSL project can be followed on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter:

- www.facebook.com/LevantineSeals
- www.instagram.com/levantineseals
- twitter.com/levantineseals

Staff members developed a concept for appropriate social media engagement, considering aims and audience and to ensure that it would not become too time-consuming.

5. Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation, and appreciate the swift and gentle communication and cooperation with its staff in the central offices (Michelle Ackermann, Laura Binz, Tim Buchholz, Richell Mata, Joshua Neuenschwander). We are grateful for the support extended to the project by our home institutions: University of Bern, Faculty of Theology; Tel Aviv University: Institute of Archaeology (Prof. Oded Lipschits, Nirit Kedem, Sasha Flit); University of Zurich: Rectorate, Vice-President Research (for a special research leave granted to Chr. Uehlinger), Central Financial Services, Faculty of Theology (Dr Ulvi Doguoglu, Mirjam Wyrsh), and Department of Religious Studies (Marcia Bodenmann, Michelle Däpp, Dr Farida Stickel, Prof. Rafael Walthert).

Figures and appendices



Fig. 1: The SSSL research team visiting Prof. Othmar Keel at the Bible+Orient Museum of the University of Fribourg, February 9, 2022. From left to right: Bruno Biermann, Renate Fahrni, Eythan Levy, Silvia Schroer, Nadia Ben-Marzouk, Inbar Meyerson, Christoph Uehlinger, Othmar Keel, Ido Koch, Noa Ranzer, Tatjana Beuthe, Michael Aeschlimann, Silas Klein Cardoso, Ben Greet, Fabio Porzia, Giulia Tucci, Stefan Münger.

Appendix 1

SSSL Photography Update, January 2022 (Dr Ben Greet)

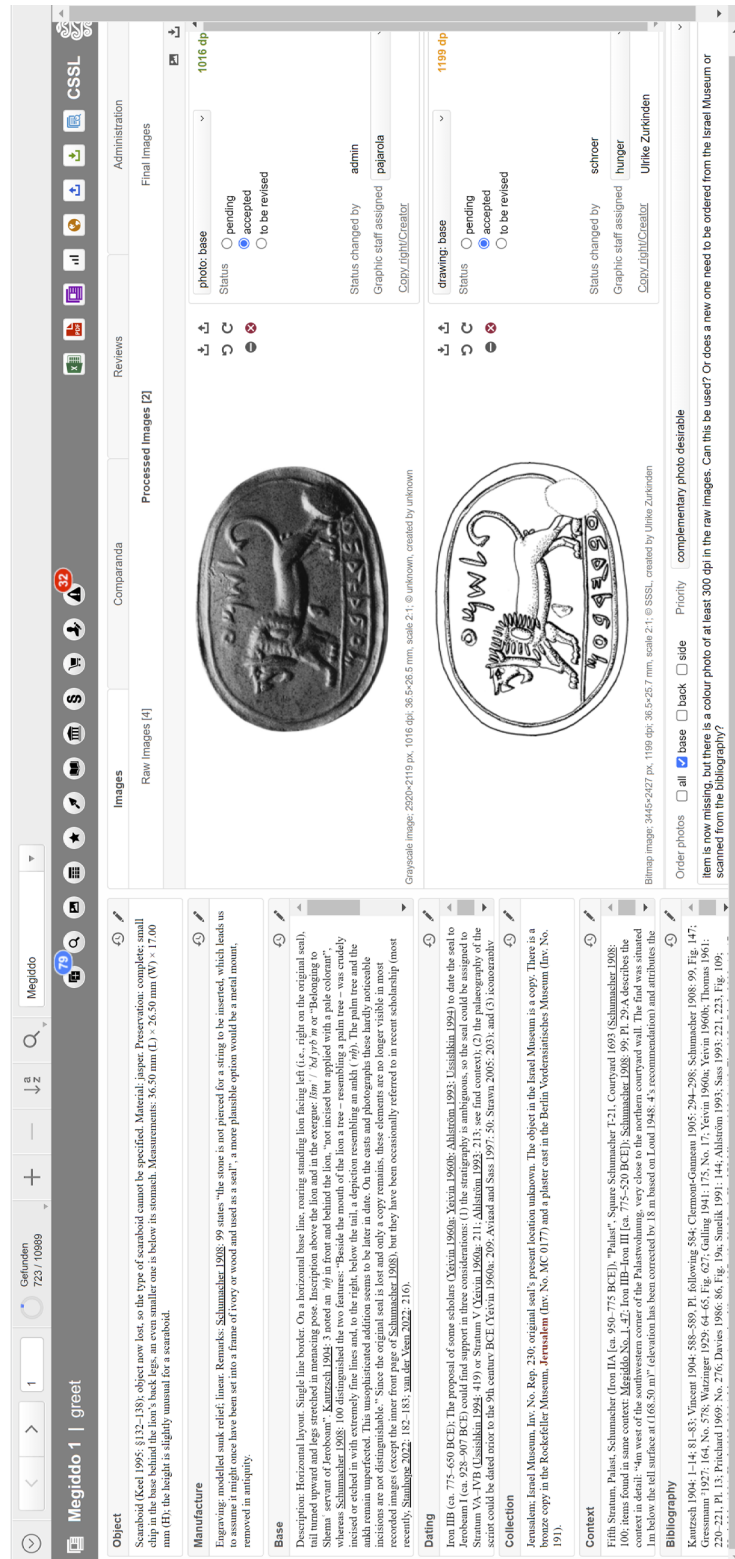
The project's photography has now been completed in several museums in the UK (in Cambridge, Durham, Liverpool, Manchester, and the Palestine Exploration Fund in London) and is ongoing and planned for the British Museum and Ashmolean Museum, as well as institutions outside of the UK (in Berkeley, Berlin, Boston, Chicago, Dublin, and Istanbul). This photography has granted several benefits to the project's data: (1) the high resolution allows all photographed objects to be studied in minute detail (a feature that is replicable within the eventual CSSL+ web database); (2) this new level of detail, coupled with the colour photographs, allows for a re-examination of the object's material; (3) previously unknown aspects of the object (for example, an alternate orientation of the base iconography compared to the back, or traces of glazing) have been highlighted by physical handling of the objects and are now reflected in the photographs; (4) all photographed objects have been re-measured and their images re-scaled accordingly; (5) some objects whose location was previous unknown have been discovered within the mentioned museums; (6) additionally, objects previously unknown in the database but attributed to excavated sites within the Southern Levant have also been discovered in these museums.



Fig. 2: Lachish 608 (compare Tufnell et al. 1958: 97.126, Pl. 39/40,379, Pl. 41,17 [side type]).

Appendix 2

Screenshot of CSSL Filemaker database (the SSSL project's main tool for documentation and research)



Object
 Scaraboid (Kee1 1995: 132–138); object now lost, so the type of scaraboid cannot be specified. Material: Jasper. Preservation: complete; small chip in the base behind the lion's back legs, an even smaller one is below its stomach. Measurements: 36.50 mm (L) × 26.50 mm (W) × 17.00 mm (H); the height is slightly unusual for a scaraboid.

Manufacture
 Engraving; modelled sunk relief. Linear. Remarks: Schumacher 1908: 99 states "the stone is not pierced for a string to be inserted, which leads us to assume it might once have been set into a frame of ivory or wood and used as a seal", a more plausible option would be a metal mount, removed in antiquity.

Base
 Description: Horizontal layout. Single line border. On a horizontal base line, roving standing lion facing left (i.e., right on the original seal), tail turned upward and legs stretched in menacing pose. Inscription above the lion and in the exergue: *l'm / b'yw m* or "Belonging to Shema servant of Jeroboam". Kanitzsch 1904: 3 noted an *ay* in front and behind the lion, "not incised but applied with a pale colorant", whereas Schumacher 1908: 100 distinguished the two designs: "Beside the mouth of the lion a tree – resembling a palm tree – was crudely engraved, and the impression of the tree is not incised but applied with a pale colorant". The tree is not visible in the photograph and remains unperfected. This unperfected addition seems to be later in date. On the seal and photographs these hardly noticeable incisions are not distinguishable. Since the original seal is lost and only a copy remains, these elements are no longer visible in most recorded images (except the inner front page of Schumacher 1908), but they have been occasionally referred to in recent scholarship (most recently, Shalhoub 2022: 182–183; van den Veen 2022: 216).

Dating
 Iron IIIb (ca. 775–660 BCE). The proposal of some scholars (Okun 1960a; Nishi 1960b; Ahlström 1993; Kasabkin 1993) is to date the seal to Iron IIIc (ca. 628–597 BCE) and find the inscription (1) before the destruction of the Temple (ca. 586 BCE) and (2) after the destruction of the Temple (ca. 586–520 BCE). The seal could be dated prior to the 9th century BCE (Yévim 1960a: 209; Aviad and Sass 1997: 56; Strawn 2005: 203); and (3) iconomanih.

Collection
 Jerusalem: Israel Museum, Inv. No. Rep. 290; original seal's present location unknown. The object in the Israel Museum is a copy. There is a plaster cast in the Rockefeller Museum. Jerusalem (Inv. No. SAC 0177) and a plaster cast in the Berlin Vorderasiatisches Museum (Inv. No. 191).

Context
 Fifth Stratum, Palace, Schumacher (Iron IIIa [ca. 750–735 BCE]), "Palace", Square Schumacher T21, Courtyard 1093 (Schumacher 1908: 106; however, some sources refer to the site as the "Palace of the King"). The seal was found in the "Palace of the King" (Schumacher 1908: 106). The seal is located on the floor of the palace, below the red surface at (168.50 m) (elevation has been corrected by 18 m based on Leod 1948: 43; recommendation) and attributes the seal to the 9th century BCE.

Bibliography
 Kanitzsch 1904: 1–14; 81–83; Vincent 1904: 588–590. Pl. following 584; Clermont-Ganneau 1905: 294–298; Schumacher 1908: 99; Fig. 147; Gressmann 1927: 164; No. 598; Watzinger 1927: 64–66; Fig. 627; Galling 1941: 175; No. 17; Yévim 1960a; Yévim 1960b; Thomas 1961: 20–21; Pl. 13; Friedman 1969: No. 276; Davies 1966: 86; Fig. 19a; Susskind 1971: 144; Ahlström 1993: 203; Sass 1993: 221; 223; Fig. 109; Shalhoub 2022: 182–183; van den Veen 2022: 216.

Appendix 3: publications (SSSL-related only)

(A) SSSL-related publications 2020–2021

1. Greet, Ben. 2021. "Waterfowl Imagery in the Material Culture of the Late Second Millennium BC Southern Levant." In: Recht, Laerke & Tsouparopoulou, Christina (eds). *Fierce Lions, Angry Mice and Fat-tailed Sheep: Animal Encounters in the Ancient Near East*. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 207–220. DOI:10.17863/CAM.76179.
2. Klein Cardoso, Silas. 2020. "Culturas materiais e visuais das religiões do livro: o caso do 'Antigo Israel,'" in *Religião e Cultura Visual no Brasil: desafios e métodos*, eds Kátia Marly Leite Mendonça, Helmut Renders, and Etienne Alfred Higuët (Ciências da Religião 1). Belém: EDUEPA, 23–51.
3. Klein Cardoso, Silas. 2020. "Amuletos como mídia: poder estampado em ossos e o 'antigo Israel,'" *Caminhando* 25, no. 1: 141–61. DOI:10.15603/2176-3828/caminhando.v25n1p141-161.
4. Klein Cardoso, Silas. 2020. "Templos da Casa de Saul? Dissonâncias entre o registro bíblico e material," *Caminhando* 25, no. 2: 55–76. DOI:10.15603/2176-3828/caminhando.v25n2p55-76.
5. Klein Cardoso, Silas. 2020. "The Goddesses and Gods of Saul," *Revista Pistis Praxis* 12, no. 2: 352–70.
6. Klein Cardoso, Silas. 2020. "Rock, Papyrus, Scissors: Antidisciplinarity and Exegesis," *Teocomunicação (Online)* 50, no. 2 (December 2020): 1–13. DOI:10.15448/0103-314X.2020.2.39481.
7. Klein Cardoso, Silas. 2021. "Exegese Iconográfica: uma brevíssima introdução," *Caminhando* 26: 1–26. DOI:10.15603/2176-3828/caminhando.v26ne021008.
8. Klein Cardoso, Silas. 2021. "Sotaques do poder: recombinações visuais e os fundamentos do imaginário régio judaíta," *Caminhando* 26: 1–21. DOI:10.15603/2176-3828/caminhando.v26ne021025.
9. Klein Cardoso, Silas. 2021. "Para desvendar o mundo bíblico: entre linhas e pressupostos," in *Para estudar a Bíblia: abordagens e métodos*, eds João Leonel and Marcelo da Silva Carneiro. São Paulo: Recriar, 83–111.
10. Klein Cardoso, Silas. 2021. "A casa de Saul e suas divindades," *Estudos Bíblicos* 37, no. 144: 289–30. DOI: 10.54260/eb.v37i144.202.
11. Koch, Ido. 2020. "Southern Levantine Temples during the Iron Age II: Towards a Multivocal Narrative." *Judaïsme ancien / Ancient Judaism* 8: 325–344.
12. Koch, Ido. 2021. *Colonial Encounters in Southwest Canaan during the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East, 119). Leiden: Brill.
13. Koch, Ido (with Oded Lipschits). 2021. "Stamped-Jars from Judah: Official Pictorial and Textual Language." *Judaïsme ancien / Ancient Judaism* 9: 287–312.
14. Münger, Stefan. 2022. "Judäo-israelitische Knochensiegel der Eisenzeit II: Ägyptische Ikonographie und kanaanäisches Erbe." In: *Ägypten und Altes Testament. Fachtagung „40 Jahre ÄAT“, München, 6.–7. Dez. 2019*. Eds. Stefan Wimmer and Wolfgang Zwickel (Ägypten und Altes Testament 100). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 45–58.
15. Schroer, Silvia. 2021. "The Continuity of the Canaanite Glyptic Tradition into the Iron Age I–IIA." *Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology* 1: 482–502 [http://www.tinyurl.com/yje9lbhy].
16. Tucci, Giulia. 2020. "Dynamics and internationalism during the Late Bronze Age: circulation of raw materials and production between the Western Basin of the Indian Ocean and the southern Levant." In: I. Zych and M. Gawlikowski (eds.), *REDSEAVIII: Coveted Treasure. The economy of natural resources: extraction, processing and trade. Special Studies. Red Sea trade in resources and other studies. Proceedings of the Red Sea 8 Conference in Warsaw, 4–9 July 2017* (Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean 29). Warsaw: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw.

(B) SSSL-related publications in press/forthcoming

17. Ben-Marzouk, Nadia (with Danielle Candelora and Kathlyn M. Cooney, co-eds). *Ancient Egyptian Society: Challenging Assumptions, Exploring Approaches*. Routledge.
18. Klein Cardoso, Silas. "O exegeta como texto: per/mutações do conceito de religião na história da religião do sul do Levante a partir da Escola de Friburgo," in *Perspectivas epistemológicas das Ciências da Religião: conferências da XXIV Semana de Estudos da Religião*, ed. Sandra Duarte Souza. São Bernardo do Campo: Universidade Metodista de São Paulo.

19. Klein Cardoso, Silas. "The Opening of the Seals in Biblical Studies" (accepted for publication in an edited, peer-reviewed volume).
20. Koch, Ido. "A New-Kingdom Scarab from Tel Azekah, Israel, Depicting a Nursing Gazelle" (to be published in forthcoming Festschrift).
21. Koch, Ido. "Canaanite in Egyptian Style." In: *Beyond Attribution: Style and Communication in Visual Media of the Late Bronze and Iron Age Near East: Proceedings of a Conference held on 12–14 April 2021*. Eds. V. Herrmann and E. Wagner-Durand (ResourceCultures). Tübingen.
22. Münger, Stefan. "A Seal Impression from 'Ain el-Hilu/Migdal ha-'Emeq." In: Karen Covello-Paran, *'En el-Hilu, Final Report*. Jerusalem.
23. Münger, Stefan and Ben-Dor Evian, Shirly. "Scarabs." In: *Megiddo VI, The 2010–2012 Seasons*. Eds. Israel Finkelstein et al. (Sonja and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology. Monograph Series). Tel Aviv and University Park, PA.
24. Ranzer, Noa and Koch, Ido. "Stamp-seals." In I. Koch and E. Brand, *Hadid I: Excavations during the Years 1995–1997* (Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University). Tel Aviv and University Park, PA.
25. Tucci, Giulia. "Religious syncretism and control over the territory: Pharaohs in Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age." In *Power and (op)position*. Eds M. Köiv, U. Nömmik, V. Sazonov and I. Volt. (Oriens et Occidens).
26. Tucci, Giulia. "The look of things vs the function: to embellish and protect themselves in the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age." In *The Look of Things in the Ancient Near East. Moving from Surface toward Depth and Back Again*. Ed. S. Di Paolo (Reading Ancient Near Eastern Artefacts). Cambridge: Cambridge Publishing.
27. Uehlinger, Christoph. „Soziomorphie der Götterwelt: Überlegungen im Anschluss an ein altsyrisches Zylindersiegel.“ In: *Leben in Weisheit und Freiheit. Festschrift für Thomas Krüger*. Eds Veronika Bachmann, Annette Schellenberg and Frank Ueberschaer (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 296). Leuven: Peeters, 2022, 411–439.
28. Uehlinger, Christoph (with Jürg Egger). "Seals (and sealings)." In: *Encyclopedia of the Material Culture of the Biblical World*. Eds Angelika Berlejung, Michelle Daviau, Jens Kamlah and Gunnar Lehmann. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

(C) SSSL-related publications under review

29. Klein Cardoso, Silas. "The Genesis of Iconographic Exegesis" (submitted).
30. Ranzer, Noa (with Yuval Gadot and Ido Koch). "Steatite Scarabs from the Second Millennium BCE: A *Chaîne Opératoire*." *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*.

(D) SSSL-related publications in preparation (provisional selection)

31. Ben-Marzouk, Nadia. "Crafting Communities into Contact: Exploring the Nature of Interaction between Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean through Stamp Seals and Amulets during the Third Millennium BCE." *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*.
32. Ben-Marzouk, Nadia. "A New Group of Early Iron Age Scarabs and Their Potential Significance for Local Identity and Interaction in the Beth Shean Valley." *Tel Aviv*.
33. Ben-Marzouk, Nadia. "Investigating Community Continuity and Innovation during the Early Iron Age: A Case Study on Stamp Seals and Amulets in the Beth Shean Valley." In: *Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant*. Eds S. Münger and I. Koch (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis). Leuven: Peeters.
34. Ben-Marzouk, Nadia. "A Critical Discussion on 'Groups' in the Southern Levantine Stamp Seal Production." In *Studies on Stamp-Seals from the Southern Levant*, eds Ido Koch and Stefan Münger (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis). Leuven: Peeters.
35. Greet, Ben. "The Megiddo Fibula: A Possible Assyrian Reproduction Amulet." In: *Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant*. Eds S. Münger and I. Koch (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis). Leuven: Peeters.
36. Klein Cardoso, Silas. "Iconographic Approaches to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament" (to be submitted in the 1st quarter of 2022).
37. Klein Cardoso, Silas. "The missing text: on the pre-comparative tertium of Iconographic Exegesis" (to be submitted in the 2nd quarter of 2022).

38. Klein Cardoso, Silas. "A Latin-American Iconographic Exegesis?" (to be submitted in the 3rd quarter of 2022, for an edited, peer-reviewed volume).
39. Klein Cardoso, Silas. "A tale of twelve thousand index cards: the historical shift of the Fribourg School in social-material perspective" (to be submitted in the 3rd quarter of 2022).
40. Klein Cardoso, Silas. "Classes of Artifacts, Iconography and Biblical Exegesis: a communicological out-take" (to be submitted in the 4th quarter of 2022).
41. Koch, Ido and Münger, Stefan (eds). *Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant*. (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis). Leuven: Peeters.
42. Koch, Ido and Ranzer, Noa. "The Iron Age Seals from Tel Arad: A Reevaluation." (to be published in forthcoming Festschrift).
43. Koch, Ido and Ranzer, Noa. "Stamp-seals, a Cylinder-seal, and Seal-impressions." In Z. Herzog, L. Singer-Avitz and I. Koch, *Tel Arad: Yohanan Aharoni's Excavations* (Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University). Tel Aviv and University Park, PA.
44. Ranzer, Noa. "The Object in its Archeological Context: A Preliminary Account on the Functions of Iron Age Stamp-Seals from the Southern Levant." In: *Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant*. Eds S. Münger and I. Koch (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis). Leuven: Peeters.
45. Ranzer, Noa (with Ido Koch and Karen Covello-Paran). "A Scarab from Ramat Razim, Israel."
46. Ranzer, Noa (with Ido Koch and Karen Covello-Paran). "A scarab from Nahal Zipori, Israel."
47. Ranzer, Noa (with Ido Koch, J. Weizel and Omer Sergi). "An Antique Scarab from a Mamluk-period Tomb at Ḥorbat Tevet, Israel."
48. Tucci, Giulia (with Amir Golani). "Praise the Negative. The Diffusion of Late Bronze Age Syro-Canaanite Jewellery according to Two-part Stone Molds." *Proceedings of 12th ICAANE 2021*.
49. Tucci, Giulia. "Methodological Approaches and Research Perspectives on Southern Levant Stamp Seals: a Focus on Signet-Rings." In: *Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant*. Eds S. Münger and I. Koch (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis). Leuven: Peeters.
50. Tucci, Giulia. "The Appeal of Subjugation: Artistic Evidence of Propaganda Action of the Pharaoh in the Southern Levant."
51. Tucci, Giulia. "A portata di mano: gli Anelli con Sigillo tra Tipologia e Significazione."
52. Tucci, Giulia. "Mediation and Transformation within a Contact-Transition zone. Deir el-Balah and Other Sites along the Via Maris: Uniformity or Heterogeneity of Connection?"
53. Uehlinger, Christoph. "Does *Habitus* Communicate? Style, technique, *habitus* and other aspects." In: *Beyond Attribution: Style and Communication in Visual Media of the Late Bronze and Iron Age Near East: Proceedings of a Conference held on 12–14 April 2021*. Eds. V. Herrmann and E. Wagner-Durand (ResourceCultures). Tübingen.

Appendix 4: conference presentations 2020–2021 (only SSSL-related)

- (A) **SBL Annual Meeting – Session “Egyptology and Ancient Israel”, December 1, 2020 (online).**
1. Münger, Stefan. “Judeo-Israelite Bone Seals—Egyptian Iconography or Vernacular Pictorial Tradition?”
- (B) **Aegyptiaca Outside of Egypt – A Minerva RIAB Center Workshop, April 7–8, 2021 (online).**
2. Münger, Stefan. “Egyptian Stamp-seal Amulets from Bronze and Iron Age Transjordan – Overview and Selected ‘Highlights’”
- (C) **International Congress for Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE), Bologna, April 6–10, 2021 (online).**
3. Münger, Stefan and Koch, Ido: “Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant: A multi-faceted prism for studying entangled histories in an interdisciplinary perspective.”
 4. Ranzer, Noa. “Steatite Scarabs from the Second Millennium BCE: A *Chaîne Opératoire*.”
 5. Tucci, Giulia. “Praise the Negative: The Diffusion of Late Bronze Age Syro-Canaanite Jewelry According to Two-part Stone Molds” (with Amir Golani, IAA).
- (D) **Egypt and the Mediterranean World from the Late Fourth through Third Millennium BCE, June 2, 2021 (online).**
6. Ben-Marzouk, Nadia. 2021. “Crafting Communities into Contact: Investigating the Production and Uses of Stamp Seals in Egypt and Crete during the Third Millennium BCE.”
- (E) **European Society for Biblical Studies (EABS), Wuppertal, August 3, 2021 (online).**
7. Biermann, Bruno. “Wearing a Seal as Conceptual Metaphor and Embodied Experience” (Research Unit: Iconography and Biblical Studies, Wuppertal, August 3, 2021; Best student paper award).
 8. Klein Cardoso, Silas. “The Missing Text: Communicological Insights into Iconographic Exegesis” (Research Unit: Iconography and Biblical Studies, Wuppertal, August 3, 2021).
- (F) **Digital Databases in Glyptic Research Workshop, September 2–3, 2021 (online, organized and hosted by SSSL).**
9. Koch, Ido, Münger, Stefan and Uehlinger, Christoph. “Stamp seals from the Southern Levant: a multifaceted prism for studying entangled histories in interdisciplinary perspective” (SSSL project presentation).
- (G) **American Society for Overseas Research (ASOR) annual meeting, 17–20 November, 2021 (in person, plus virtual session on December 9–12, 2021). SSSL Panel “Stamp-seals from the Southern Levant”**
10. Ben-Marzouk, Nadia. “A Critical Discussion on ‘Groups’ in Stamp Seal Production in the Southern Levant.”
 11. Biermann, Bruno. “Intersecting Stamp Seals and Gendered Bodies.”
 12. Greet, Ben. “The Megiddo Fibula 298: A Neo-Assyrian reproduction amulet.”
 13. Ranzer, Noa. “Steatite Scarabs from the Second Millennium BCE: A *Chaîne Opératoire*.”
 14. Tucci, Giulia. “Methodological approaches and research perspectives on Late Bronze Age – early Iron Age Southern Levantine stamp seals: a focus on signet-rings.”

- (H) Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) annual meeting, November 20–23, 2021 (in person). SSSL Panel “Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant”** (Research Unit: Hebrew Bible, History and Archaeology)
15. Ben-Marzouk, Nadia. “Investigating Community Continuity and Innovation during the Early Iron Age: A Case Study on Stamp Seals in the Beth Shean Valley.”
 16. Biermann, Bruno. “Seals from the Southern Levant and Gender Archaeology: Theoretical and Practical Considerations.”
 17. Klein Cardoso, Silas. “The Opening of the Seals in Biblical Studies.”
 18. Ranzer, Noa. “Function and Context of Iron Age Stamp-Seals from the Southern Levant.”
 19. Uehlinger, Christoph. “Framing the study of Iron age seals and seal impressions from the Southern Levant, with an eye toward the Bible”.
- Additional paper**
20. Klein Cardoso, Silas. “The Historical Shift of the Fribourg School in Social-Material Perspective” (Research Unit: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Bible).
- (I) Other SSSL-related presentations (selection)**
21. Ben-Marzouk, Nadia. “Crafting Communities into Contact: Investigating the Production and Uses of Stamp Seals in Egypt and the Aegean World during the Third Millennium BCE.” *Egypt and the Mediterranean World from the Late Fourth through Third Millennium BCE*. June 2, 2021. Virtual.
 22. Klein Cardoso, Silas. “O Exegeta Como Texto.” (Paper, XXIV Semana de Estudos da Religião, Universidade Metodista de São Paulo (Umesp)—Research Unit: Religião como Texto, São Bernardo do Campo (online), November 19, 2020).
 23. Klein Cardoso, Silas. “As deusas da antiga Palestina/Israel: provocações e apontamentos sobre a relação entre exegese bíblica e arqueologia do Sul do Levante” (Invited Lecture, Círculos Exegéticos—Profa. Dra. Lília Dias Marianno, Eagle Gestão de Ensino, April 29, 2021).
 24. Klein Cardoso, Silas. “Uma história visual da Exegese Iconográfica” (Paper, VIII Congresso da Associação de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa em Teologia e Ciências da Religião (Anptecre)—Research Unit: Pesquisa Bíblica, Online, September 28, 2021).
 25. Klein Cardoso, Silas. “A Bíblia além do texto: o papel da arte sul-levantina na exegese” (Keynote, III Estudos Bíblicos em Foco, Hebraizando, Instituto de Letras/Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), November 26, 2021).
 26. Ranzer, Noa. “*Chaîne Opératoire* of Scarabs from the Second Millennium BCE.” Guest lecture at the research colloquium of the Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Vorderasiatische Archäologie, Heidelberg (Prof. Joseph Maran). November 2020.
- (J) Public outreach (selection)**
27. Klein Cardoso, Silas. “Exegese Iconográfica do Antigo Testamento.” Interview by Marcelo da Silva Carneiro. Diálogos com o Prof. Carneiro, August 22, 2020. youtu.be/yzVsYXxn6c.
 28. Klein Cardoso, Silas (with Élcio V. S. Mendonça). “Além do templo e palácio: epigrafia e iconografia na História de Israel.” Roundtable coordinated by Sue’Hellen Monteiro de Mattos. Diálogos Bíblicos na Abib, October 9, 2020. youtu.be/ya3Vx7X2Brw.
 29. Klein Cardoso, Silas. “Religião no alvorecer de Israel.” Interview by Flávio Senra. Religare—Conhecimento e Religião (TV Horizonte; Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, PPG Ciências da Religião), March 30, 2021. youtu.be/oVEFB6ftuo.
 30. Ranzer, Noa. “The Production of Scarabs in the Second Millennium BCE: Egypt and the Southern Levant.” Guest lecture at the International Women’s Club (Tel Aviv University, online). June 2021.

Appendix 5: SSSL meetings 2020–2021

1. Kick-off meeting, Zurich and Bern, 15–17 January, 2020.
Beuthe, Greet, Klein Cardoso, Koch, Meyerson, Münger, Ranzer, Schroer, Tucci, Uehlinger.
2. First database consultation, Tel Aviv, 2–4 March, 2020.
Beuthe, Greet, Koch, Meyerson, Münger, Ranzer, Uehlinger.
3. Six-months intermediate consultation, Bern, 26–28 August, 2020.
Beuthe, Biermann, Greet, Klein Cardoso, Koch, Meyerson, Münger, Ranzer, Schroer, Tucci, Uehlinger.
4. One-year regional assessment meeting, Bern, 7 December, 2020.
Beuthe, Biermann, Greet, Klein Cardoso, Münger, Schroer, Uehlinger; online: Koch, Meyerson, Ranzer, Tucci.
5. 20-months plenary consultation and progress assessment, Bern, 27 August – 2 September, 2021.
Beuthe, Biermann, Greet, Klein Cardoso, Koch, Levy, Münger, Porzia, Ranzer, Schroer, Tucci, Uehlinger; online: Ben-Marzouk, Meyerson.