

Stamp seals from the Southern Levant: a multi-faceted prism for studying entangled histories in an interdisciplinary perspective

A SINERGIA research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation [CRSIS_La6426]

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	Prof. Dr. Andrea Berlin, Boston University, Archaeology and Religion	
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	Prof. Dr. Tallay Ornan, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Institute of Archaeology	
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The project addresses stamp seals, a common but highly valued and multi-functional artefact class, as a privileged media to study various aspects of ancient Levantine social, economic, cultural and religious history especially in pre-Hellenistic times. Its core aim is to develop an online open-access, collaborative and expandable database entitled *Corpus of Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant (CSSL)* as a sustainable reference tool for future research in several disciplines: archaeology, ancient history, biblical studies, history of religion(s), Mediterranean studies, and others including exact sciences.

Taking its starting-point from groundbreaking research initiated since the 1970s by Othmar Keel, particularly through his *Corpus of Stamp-Seal Amulets from Palestine/Israel (CSSPI)* and the *Corpus of Seal Amulets from Jordan (CSAJ)*, the project will bring that unfinished task to completion while fully engaging the Digital Humanities transition. All relevant data will be translated from a pre-digital format into a digitized research infrastructure. Fulfilling latest Open Access requirements, the new database will allow for active contributions by all interested scholars worldwide. Conceived to be easily updated and expanded, it will remain operative for decades to come.

CSSPI's focus will be extended to wider regional concerns by removing modern borders from historical considerations: While "Southern Levant" designates the territories covered by the territories of present-day Israel, Jordan, and Palestine, CSSL will be so designed that it can easily be enlarged to integrate additional data from sites lying beyond that region, e.g., in the Central and Northern Levant, the Egyptian delta, or the Arabian peninsula.

A particular aim of the project is to increase the value of the data by interdisciplinary cooperation involving the specialized expertise of an international network of scholars and institutions. The full and best currently available documentation will allow senior scholars, postdocs and PhD students of several disciplines (archaeology, biblical studies, history of religion(s) and three universities (Bern, Tel Aviv, Zurich) to conduct a series of innovative studies. The latter will, for example, explore seal designs and their iconography as a resource for religio-historical investigation; questions of social archaeology will be studied alongside matters of political and



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economic history; gender history, social archaeology and biblical studies will intersect in a study of seal use by women. We want to draw on the full potential of the glyptic material to develop new approaches both to the history of ancient Levantine society, culture, and religion, and to the study of biblical texts. Last but not least, a crucial aim is to bring the study of ancient glyptics into conversation with scientists. An overall concern of the project is to transmit established expertise and encourage a new generation of scholars to pursue, consolidate and renew the study of ancient glyptics as a key medium for understanding historical entanglements in the Southern Levant.

PROJECT MODULES

	Research positions and location*	Duration (months)
A Digital Humanities module: creating the CSSL database	Postdocs UBE, UZH	2x48
B Honoring CSSPI, moving forward to CSSL (includes final publication of CSSPI vols. VI–VII)	Computing TAU	
C Exploring production, diffusion, and circulation—with a view on iconography		
C1 – Production and diffusion; group characteristics and workshop issues	Workshops	
C2 – Local and regional profiles and traditions: assessment and comparison	Postdoc TAU/UZH	36
C3 – The distribution of stamp seal motifs in the Southern Levant	Postdoc UBE	24
D Connectivity: CSSL at the crossroads of disciplines		
D1 – Social archaeology: context, function, and consumption	PhD TAU/UZH	48
D2 – Political, social and economic history: stamp seals and interconnections	Postdoc TAU/UBE	36
D3 – Gender history: seals and sealing in gender-historical perspective	PhD UBE/UZH	36
D4 – Biblical studies: evaluating “iconographic exegesis”	Postdoc UBE/UZH	24
D5 – History of religion\\$: new perspectives on the history of ancient Levantine religion\\$ in the second and first millennia BCE	Postdoc UZH	24
D6 – CSSL and exact sciences: exploring a new interface	Workshops	
E Decades of change: contextualizing a long-term research project in its history and interdisciplinary ramifications		

* TAU: Tel Aviv University, UBE: University of Bern, UZH: University of Zurich.

CSSPI’s development over almost 50 years reflects tremendous changes in scholarship, whether in terms of technology, methods, theoretical models, or scholarly paradigms. Adding a self-reflective dimension to the project should allow us to historicize our own research, to critically reflect how historical knowledge is framed by the conditions of its production, and evaluate how much our research is embedded in and impacted by changing concerns of society at large.

Project duration: 4 years (September 2019 – August 2023)

Total grant amount: 2.7 mio. CHF/USD

Six junior research positions are currently open to applications (**deadline: July 1, 2019, 24:00 CET**):

1. *A/B Postdoc 80–100%*: general scientific coordination, editorial work on corpus and database; required background qualification: archaeology, glyptic studies, Levantine history BCE, data processing and management skills (UZH, 2019–2023).
2. *A/B Postdoc 80–100%*: editorial work on corpus and database, data processing and quality management, supervision of student assistants and draftsperson; required background qualification: archaeology, glyptic studies, data processing and management skills (UBE, 2019–2023).
3. *D1 PhD student*: social archaeology, contexts, functions and object biographies; required background: archaeology, Levantine history BCE (TAU 2019–2023, third year at UZH).
4. *D2 Postdoc 80–100%*: stamp seals and interconnections (social, political, and economic history; required background qualification: archaeology, Levantine history BCE (TAU 2019–2022, second year at UBE).
5. *D3 PhD student*: seals and sealing in gender-historical perspective; required background: Hebrew Bible studies, West Semitic epigraphy, archaeology and gender studies (UBE/UZH, 2019–2022).
6. *D4 Postdoc 80%*: evaluating “biblical iconography”; required qualifications: Hebrew Bible studies, Ancient Near Eastern iconography (UBE/UZH, 2019–2022).

Detailed job descriptions, soon to be separately announced, can be requested from the project directors.

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This interdisciplinary, collaborative and multi-site project focuses on ancient stamp seals as a key medium for the study of second-to-first millennia historical entanglements in the Southern Levant (see CSSL factsheet 1.0 for further details). It engages a board of directors and an additional team of postdoc researchers and PhD students, an ICT technician, draftsperson(s) and student assistants.

Job opening – Postdoc 80-100%, University of Zurich, 48 months (Sept. 2019 to Aug. 2023) General scientific coordination, research on corpus and database

Application deadline: July 1, 2019, 24:00 CET

Your responsibilities

General scientific coordination of the project, cataloguing, editing and revising corpus and database entries (c. 10'000 artifacts), based on original research and staff contributions, scheduling of staff meetings, workshops and conferences, reliable progress supervision, scientific reporting, management of project funds in cooperation with the leading house administration.

Your profile

You hold a finished PhD, based on a (preferably published) thesis of exceptional quality in Levantine/Egyptian/Near Eastern archaeology. Well acquainted with glyptic studies as well as Eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern history BCE, you have a qualified interest in contributing to the Digital Humanities transition, talents for efficient and reliable management, and teamwork skills.

We offer

varied and interesting work based at the History of Religions chair, in the inspiring and socially relevant environment of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Zurich. One among the leading European research universities, UZH is an ideal working place for interdisciplinary research. UZH encourages gender equality and diversity and is committed to balance career and personal development. Salary according to cantonal regulations (LK 18/03).

Place of work

Department of Religious Studies, Kantonsschulstrasse 1, CH-8001 Zurich.

Start of employment

01.09.2019.

Application

Please submit your application via e-mail as one PDF document in English (cover letter, curriculum vitae, a copy of relevant degree transcripts, research statement, publications if applicable) to

christoph.uehlinger@uzh.ch

Links

www.uzh.ch (general information) and <https://www.uzh.ch/cmsssl/en/about/work.html#0-0> (working at UZH)

www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch (department)

<https://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/en/seminar/mitarbeitende/alphabetisch/uehlinger.html> (supervisor and coordinating director)



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Job opening – Postdoc 80-100%, University of Bern, 48 months (September 2019 to August 2023)

Application deadline: July 1, 2019, 24:00 CET

Your responsibilities

Cataloguing, editing and revising corpus and database entries (c. 10'000 artifacts), based on own research and staff contributions, data processing and quality management, supervision of student assistants and drafts persons, scientific reporting, management of project funds in cooperation with the local and the leading house administration.

Your profile

You hold a finished PhD, based on a (preferably published) thesis of exceptional quality in Levantine/Egyptian/Near Eastern archaeology. Well acquainted with glyptic studies as well as Eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern history BCE, you have a qualified interest in contributing to the Digital Humanities transition. You have thorough computing skills, talents for efficient and reliable (data-)management, and teamwork skills.

We offer

varied and interesting work based at the Institute of Jewish Studies, both in the stimulating intellectual environment of the University of Bern and in the inspiring cultural atmosphere of the capital of Switzerland, a UNESCO world heritage city.

The University of Bern encourages gender equality and diversity and is committed to balance career and personal development. Salary according to cantonal regulations (Postdoc 20/09).

Place of work

Institute of Jewish Studies, Länggassstrasse 51, CH-3012 Bern.

Start of employment

01.09.2019.

Application

Please submit your application as one PDF document in English (cover letter, curriculum vitae, a copy of relevant degree transcripts, research statement, publications if applicable) via e-mail to

stefan.muenger@theol.unibe.ch

Links

<http://www.unibe.ch/> (general information)

https://www.unibe.ch/studies/mobilitaet/welcome_center/index_eng.html (welcome center)

https://www.judaistik.unibe.ch/index_ger.html (Institute of Jewish Studies)

https://www.judaistik.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/personen/prof_dr_muenger_stefan/index_ger.html (supervisor)



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Job opening – PhD research position, Tel Aviv University and University of Zurich, 48 months (Sept. 2019 to Aug. 2023) – Social archaeology: Contexts and functions of Southern Levantine stamp seals

Application deadline: July 1, 2019, 24:00 CET

Your responsibilities

This PhD research will address seals and sealings in their social-archaeological context (sub-module D1 of the CSSL project). It will both contribute to and draw on the CSSL database project. The compilation of a large set of data regarding the archaeological context of Southern Levantine stamp seals will allow a wide range of analyses of their functions within various social contexts. This research intends to integrate the data within a wider spatial and chronological framework based on meticulous analysis of several case studies of stamp seal assemblages from well-stratified occupational and burial contexts. The collaboration with excavators of the selected sites will ensure a detailed understanding of the archaeological contexts. The PhD student will work under the joint supervision of Dr. Ido Koch (Tel Aviv University) and Prof. Christoph Uehlinger (University of Zurich) in the framework of an international co-tutelle arrangement.

Your profile

You hold an M.A., based on a thesis of exceptional quality, in the field of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology. Previous academic engagement with glyptic studies is required, as is excellent command of English.

We offer

Varied and interesting work based mainly at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University (Dr. Ido Koch), and partly at the History of Religions chair of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Zurich (Prof. Dr. Christoph Uehlinger). Working in two different institutional and intellectual environments will enrich your academic experience and contribute to a characteristic research profile. The appointment is for a fixed period of four years. Salary according to SNSF and local institutional regulations. The successful candidate is expected to settle in Tel Aviv in order to be able to participate in regular staff meetings and project workshops, as well as to participate in relevant doctoral program activities. Year 3 of the research will be conducted in Zurich.

Place of work

Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University (years 1–2, 4)
Department of Religious Studies, Kantonsschulstrasse 1, CH-8001 Zurich (year 3).

Start of employment

01.09.2019 (or slightly later by arrangement).

Application

Please submit your application via e-mail as one PDF document in English (cover letter, curriculum vitae, a copy of relevant degree transcripts, research statement, publications if applicable, and two recommendation letters) to

idokoch@tauex.tau.ac.il / christoph.uehlinger@uzh.ch



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Links

<https://www.tau.ac.il> (general information)

<http://archaeology.tau.ac.il> (institute)

<https://en-humanities.tau.ac.il/profile/idokoch> (supervisor)

www.uzh.ch (general information) and <https://www.uzh.ch/cmsssl/en/about/work.html#0-0> (working at UZH)

www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch (department)

<https://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/en/seminar/mitarbeitende/alphabetisch/uehlinger.html> (supervisor)

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Job opening – Postdoc 80–100%, Tel Aviv University and University of Bern, 36 months (Sept. 2019 to Aug. 2022) – Political, social and economic history: stamp seals and interconnections

Application deadline: July 1, 2019, 24:00 CET

This interdisciplinary, collaborative and multi-site project focuses on ancient stamp seals as a key medium for the study of second-to-first millennia historical entanglements in the Southern Levant (see CSSL factsheet 1.0 for further details). It engages a board of directors and an additional team of postdoc researchers and PhD students, an ICT technician, draftsperson(s) and student assistants.

Your responsibilities

This postdoctoral research (sub-module D2 of the CSSL project) will address stamp seals as reflecting the Levant's interconnectedness with Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Cyprus, and the Aegean that allowed transmission of ideas and appropriation of innovations, including: the mechanisms behind the importation of new media, their entanglement with local practices, and the final integration into local chains of production. Studying the diffusion of particular artifact classes holds great potential for the historical analysis and explanation of societal trajectories and interregional connectivity. This research will elaborate on such approaches, focusing on stamp seals and using CSSL in mapping distributions of various elements that might be understood to reflect interregional interactions and that will be discussed in light of additional indications of interregional entanglements. Research will include the identification of key assemblages from each period, each of which will be studied based on its context, material and iconography. Research will also incorporate additional information derived from other sub-projects. The reconstructed series of case studies will then be compared to other kinds of evidence that attest to Levantine interregional connections. The three-year fellowship (Sept. 2019–Aug. 2022) will be co-supervised by Koch, Schroer and Munger; based at TAU, it will include a one-year stay at the University of Bern.

Your profile

You hold a finished PhD, based on a (preferably published) thesis of exceptional quality in Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology. Previous academic engagement with glyptic studies (or another class of artefacts) is required, as is excellent command of English.

We offer

Varied and interesting work based mainly at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University (Dr. Ido Koch), and partly at the Institute of Old Testament Studies, University of Bern (Prof. Dr. Silvia Schroer and Prof. Dr. Stefan Munger). Experiencing two different institutional and intellectual environments will enrich your academic experience and contribute to a characteristic research profile.

Both universities encourage gender equality and diversity and are committed to balance career and personal development. Salary according to SNSF and local regulations.

Place of work

Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University (years 1 and 3)
Institute of Old Testament Studies, Langgassstrasse 51, 3000 Bern 9 (year 2)

Start of employment

01.09.2019 (or slightly later by arrangement).



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idokoch@tauex.tau.ac.il / silvia.schroer@theol.unibe.ch / stefan.muenger@theol.unibe.ch

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<https://en-humanities.tau.ac.il/profile/idokoch> (supervisor)

www.unibe.ch (general information)

https://www.altestestament.unibe.ch/index_eng.html (department)

https://www.altestestament.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/personen/prof_dr_schroer_silvia/index_ger.html (supervisor)

https://www.judaistik.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/personen/prof_dr_muenger_stefan/index_ger.html (supervisor)

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This interdisciplinary, collaborative and multi-site project focuses on ancient stamp seals as a key medium for the study of second-to-first millennia historical entanglements in the Southern Levant (see CSSL factsheet 1.0 for further details). It engages a board of directors and an additional team of postdoc researchers and PhD students, an ICT technician, draftsperson(s) and student assistants.

Job opening – PhD research position, Universities of Bern and Zurich, 36 months (Sept. 2019 to Aug. 2022): Seals and sealings in gender-historical perspective

Application deadline: July 1, 2019, 24:00 CET

Your responsibilities

This PhD research will address seals and sealings in gender-historical perspective (sub-module D3 of the CSSL project). It will both contribute to and draw on the CSSL database project. The PhD student will work under the joint supervision of Profs Silvia Schroer (University of Bern) and Christoph Uehlinger (University of Zurich).

Your profile

You hold an M.A., based on a thesis of exceptional quality, in any of the following fields: Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology, Northwest Semitic Epigraphy, Gender History (antiquity), Hebrew Bible studies, Theology or Religious Studies (with a specialization in Biblical Studies and/or ancient religion). Previous academic engagement with gender studies is required, as is excellent command of English and good (reading) knowledge of German language.

We offer

varied and interesting work based partly at the Institute of Old Testament Studies, University of Bern, and partly at the History of Religions chair of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Zurich. Working in two different institutional and intellectual environments will enrich your academic experience and contribute to a characteristic research profile. The appointment is for a fixed period of three years.

Primary institutional affiliation will be decided according to previous background, target degree and admission regulations of the two universities. Both universities offer programs related to gender studies, encourage gender equality and diversity and are committed to balance career and personal development. Salary according to SNSF and local institutional regulations.

The successful candidate is expected to settle in or nearby Bern or Zurich in order to be able to participate in regular staff meetings and project workshops and to participate in relevant doctoral program activities.

Place of work

Institute of Old Testament Studies, Länggassstrasse 51, 3000 Bern 9 (years 1 and 3)
Department of Religious Studies, Kantonsschulstrasse 1, CH-8001 Zurich (year 2).

Start of employment

01.09.2019 (or slightly later by arrangement).

Application

Please submit your application via e-mail as one PDF document in English (cover letter, curriculum vitae, a copy of relevant degree transcripts, research statement, publications if applicable, and two recommendation letters) to

silvia.schroer@theol.unibe.ch / christoph.uehlinger@uzh.ch



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https://www.altestestament.unibe.ch/index_eng.html (department)

https://www.altestestament.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/personen/prof_dr_schroer_silvia/index_ger.html (supervisor)

www.uzh.ch (general information) and <https://www.uzh.ch/cmsssl/en/about/work.html#0-0> (working at UZH)

www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch (department)

<https://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/en/seminar/mitarbeitende/alphabetisch/uehlinger.html> (supervisor)

http://www.izfg.unibe.ch/index_eng.html (Gender Studies UBE)

<https://www.aoi.uzh.ch/de/genderstudies.html> (Gender Studies UZH)

<https://www.aoi.uzh.ch/en/genderstudies/doktoratsprogramm.html> (inter-university doctoral program)

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Job opening – Postdoc 80%, Universities of Bern and Zurich, 36 months (Sept. 2019 to Aug. 2022) Hebrew Bible studies: evaluating “iconographic exegesis”

Application deadline: July 1, 2019, 24:00 CET

Your responsibilities

“Iconographic exegesis”, a field significantly shaped by the work of Othmar Keel and thus closely related to the study of ancient stamp seals from the Southern Levant, has today spread into various directions representing different research interests and methodologies. The successful applicant will conduct original research on the development, achievements and failures, current state and prospects of “iconographic exegesis”. She or he is expected to author a number of articles in peer-reviewed journals, and the project as a whole will typically result in a habilitation thesis or a major second book.

Your profile

You hold a finished PhD, based on a (preferably published) thesis of exceptional quality in Hebrew Bible studies, engaging explicitly with ancient Near Eastern iconography and one or several approaches to “iconographical exegesis”. Being focused on your contribution to Biblical Studies, your research will draw on the CSSL database project and evaluate how the study of ancient stamp seals can intersect with the critical study of the Hebrew Bible.

We offer

varied and interesting work based partly at the Institute of Old Testament Studies, University of Bern (Prof. Dr. Silvia Schroer), and partly at the History of Religions chair of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Zurich (Prof. Dr. Christoph Uehlinger). Working in two different institutional and intellectual environments will enrich your academic experience and contribute to a characteristic research profile. Beyond the project proper, you will benefit from interaction with internationally renowned scholars in Hebrew Bible studies.

Both universities encourage gender equality and diversity and are committed to balance career and personal development. Salary according to cantonal regulations.

Place of work

Institute of Old Testament Studies, Länggassstrasse 51, 3000 Bern 9 (years 1 and 3)
Department of Religious Studies, Kantonsschulstrasse 1, CH-8001 Zurich (year 2).

Start of employment

01.09.2019 (or slightly later by arrangement).

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Please submit your application via e-mail as one PDF document in English (cover letter, curriculum vitae, a copy of relevant degree transcripts, research statement, publications if applicable) to

silvia.schroer@theol.unibe.ch / christoph.uehlinger@uzh.ch



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https://www.altestestament.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/personen/prof_dr_schroer_silvia/index_ger.html (supervisor)

www.uzh.ch (general information) and <https://www.uzh.ch/cmsssl/en/about/work.html#0-0> (working at UZH)

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<https://www.religionswissenschaft.uzh.ch/en/seminar/mitarbeitende/alphabetisch/uehlinger.html> (supervisor)