

More red ink on the Qumran manuscript 11Q22

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Summary

This article presents a new case of a Qumran fragment, 11Q22 fragment 6, employing red ink, a very rare feature so far. While the word is fragmentary, the red ink was plausibly for a *nomen sacrum*. This find confirms indirectly the hypothesis of the *editio princeps* that fragment 1 of the same scroll, which is lost, also used red ink for a *nomen sacrum*. The rest of the paper contextualizes this finding.

In the Mediterranean world, the use of two ink colours as a layout device is attested extremely early.¹ The first apparition of the red ink can be found in *The Book of the Dead* from Egypt, 18th dynasty (1479–1400 BCE).² Iconography depicts some scribes using several writing tools.³ Egyptian literary and documentary papyri but also texts on statues frequently use red ink in order to distinguish some words or the beginnings of sections to (1) emphasize, (2) divide, (3) isolate, and (4) differentiate.⁴ Posener notes in particular the standard use of red for names and surnames as well as for Seth and the enemies of the gods in the Ptolemaic period.⁵

In Hebrew-Aramaic texts, the first attestation of red next to black ink are the rubrics in the Deir ‘Alla *Balaam* inscription from around the ninth or eighth century BCE that indicate some beginnings.⁶ Red ink is also used in some of the inscriptions in Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, but the purpose is less clear. After this, there are very few attestations of bicoloured Hebrew manuscripts. Tov mentions four Dead Sea Scrolls using red ink: 2Q14 (2QPs), 4Q27 (4QNum^b), 4Q270 (4QD^e), and 4Q481d (4QFragments with Red Ink).⁷ In the first three, the red ink is used for a heading or for the first lines or verses of a new section. The purpose of the use of red ink in 4Q481d fragments 1 i–ii and 2 is unclear. In those small 4Q481d fragments, some words are written in black ink, and others in red ink, but in the present remains there is no line which contains

1 Nicholson and Shaw 2000, 238–239.

2 Posener 1951.

3 Posener 1951, 75.

4 Posener 1951, 77.

5 Posener 1951, 77.

6 Hoftijzer and van der Kooij 1976.

7 Tov 2004. For an analysis of the red ink cf. Nir-El and Broshi 1996.

both black and red ink.⁸ Therefore any evidence for further use of red ink is important, especially if it concerns other practices than beginnings of units.

In addition to the four examples above, the *editio princeps* of 11Q22 suggested that one word indicating God had been written in red ink while the other words had been written in black (DJD 23: 413, 415, לאלהיך towards the end of this second line of fragment 1). As the fragment was already lost during the preparation of the *editio princeps* (it is only found on PAM [Palestine Archaeological Museum] 42.175, and not any more on the subsequent photographs of Cave 11 materials, nor on any of the Cave 11 Museum Plates), an autopsy was impossible. However, on the one existing image the letters לאלהיך and the following word-dividing dot are written in an ink that displays faintly compared to the pitch black of the other words in the infrared photograph PAM 42.175. Because the actual fragment could not be checked, 11Q22 was not included in lists of Dead Sea scrolls manuscripts with red ink.

The remains of this manuscript 11Q22 (11QpaleoUnidentified Text) consist of seven small fragments written in palaeo-Hebrew script, only one of which (fragment 1) has more than two complete words. In the second line of fragment 1 one can read תהיה עדי נגה באהבתך לאלהיך, 'you shall be a shining ornament because of your love for your God', followed by the broken word וילב, possibly to be restored to וילבניש, 'and he will clothe'.

After Tigchelaar alerted Perrot to his hypothesis that 11Q22 fragment 1 had contained red ink, Perrot and Stoekl ben Ezra inspected the new images in the Leon Levy Digital Library of the Israel Antiquities Authority of the still extant fragments of 11Q22, and discovered traces of red ink in the second line of fragment 6, representing the letters יכ followed by a trace of yet another letter or of a word-dividing stroke (see fig. 1ab).

The *editio princeps* had described these traces as very faint on the infrared image and not visible on the fragment itself (DJD 23: 418).⁹ This discovery of red ink on fragment 6 thus corroborates the interpretation of לאלהיך in fragment 1 having been written in red ink. If the red letters יכ in fragment 6 are from the end of a word, then this word might have been אלהיך, just as in fragment 1.¹⁰ The ductus of the letters written in black and red seems to be the same. The additional trace after יכ in fragment 6 is unlike the word-dividing

8 4Q481d fragment 3 should probably be reassigned to 4Q387; cf. Qimron 2003:101 and Davis 2014. For the images see <<http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/manuscript/4Q481-5>>.

9 Compare how red ink sometimes cannot be seen at all on black and white infrared photographs, such as in 4Q481d on PAM 43.550.

10 The new Israel Antiquities Authority images also show clearly that in line 1 of fragment 6 one should read the letter sequence הרבותי instead of הרפתי. This corrected letter sequence הרבותי, perhaps to be restored to הרבותי[הם] or הרבותי[נ] is, however, of no help for the identification of this hitherto unidentified text.

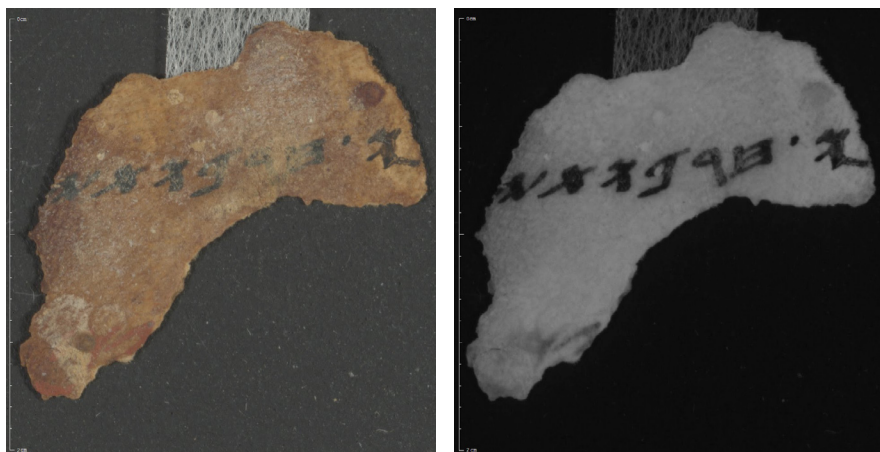


Fig. 1ab. MS 11Q22, fragment 6, recto, photograph July 2013 by Shai Halevi, <<http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-367042>> (colour image); <<http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-367043>> (infrared image).

dot in the writing in black ink, but can better be compared with the word-dividing strokes that are also found in 11Q1.

With the confirmation from fragment 6 that 11Q22 indeed contains red ink, the number of Qumran manuscripts with red ink therefore increases from four to five. The four other manuscripts are all written in the square Hebrew script. 11Q22 is thus unique for being the only palaeo-Hebrew manuscript among the scrolls that contains red ink.¹¹ Also, the use of red ink for a divine name, לאֱלֹהִים in fragment 1, is unmatched in the scrolls.¹²

It is possible that fragment 6 line 2 also contained this word אֱלֹהִים. It is however certain that not all divine names were written in red ink in this manuscript, since fragment 7 preserves the tetragrammaton written in black ink. Although fragment 7 contains only a few letters, the form of its letters seem to be identical to those of the other 11Q22 fragments. One may hypothesize that the use of red ink for לאֱלֹהִים in this palaeo-Hebrew text, served the same purpose as the use of palaeo-Hebrew for divine names in texts written in square

11 For red ink used for this older kind of Hebrew-Aramaic script, cf. the red ink for rubrics in the Deir 'Alla *Balaam* inscription.

12 Fitzmyer 1979, 127, mistakenly refers to the writing of the tetragrammaton in Qumran literature 'in square characters, but in red ink' but refers in a footnote to Cross' description of 4QNum^b— this misunderstanding has been quoted by many subsequent scholars! Cf. also Tov 2004, 220, 'only recognizable instance of the special treatment of a divine name in a text completely written in paleo-Hebrew characters'.

Hebrew: through a different way of writing (a different colour or a different script) the divine name is highlighted. Whereas the use of palaeo-Hebrew letters for the divine name in texts written in square characters might suggest a sacred character of the palaeo-Hebrew letters, the use here of a different colour rather suggests the need to mark the divine name.

The use of red ink for divine names

The occasional use of red ink for divine names in Hebrew manuscripts may be suggested by a rabbinic reference to an Alexandrian Torah in which divine names were written in gold letters (*Sof.* 1.8): ‘One is not allowed to write in gold [as can be shown from the] story about the Torah of Alexander/the Alexandrians in which all occurrences of Him were written in gold. When this tale came before the sages, they said ‘[The Torah] has to be hidden’.¹³

Among Greek manuscripts, we are acquainted only with one example with a *nomen sacrum* written in red ink, the letters ΠΙΕΤ in the Fayyum Gospel (*P. Vindob.* G. 2325), which would of course be quite an exceptional *nomen sacrum*.¹⁴ On the other hand, most later Latin purple Gospel codices write nomina sacra in gold with the remaining text in silver.¹⁵ All these are of course considerably later than the Egyptian texts and statues. Posener notes in particular the standard use of red for names and surnames as well as for Seth and especially for the enemies of the gods in the Ptolemaic period.¹⁶ Explaining the use of red ink for nomina sacra in the palaeo-Hebrew text 11Q22 on the background of Egyptian custom seems therefore the most probable hypothesis until further evidence is found.

13 Reference found in Tov 2004, 54. שהיו כל אזכרותיה כתובות בזהב, ובא מעשה לפני חכמים. ואמררו תיגנו, אין כותבין בזהב, מעשה בתורתו של אלכסנדרוס Alexandrian, rather than Alexander, e.g. Efrón 1987, 205–206; Arist. 176 refers more in general to a Torah written in letters of gold in Jewish characters.

14 In the *Sinaiticus* (MS London, British Library, Add. 43725 plus fragments in Sinai, St Catherine’s Monastery, Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. gr. 1, and St Petersburg, Rossijskaja Nacionalnaja Biblioteka, gr. 2, gr. 259, gr. 843, OLD.P.O.156) and *Alexandrinus* (MS London, British Library, Royal 1. D. V-VIII), Greek manuscripts dating from the fourth and fifth century CE, some titles or beginnings of chapters are written in red. For example, Psalms superscriptions are sometimes written in red ink like the Ps 103.1 in 2Q14 at Qumran. Later, several Greek medieval manuscripts contain indications in red. In Syriac, many headers are written in red in the *Codex Ambrosianus* of the Peshitta (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B. 21 inf.).

15 VL [Vetus Latina] 2 (fifth century, CLA 437), VL 4 (fifth century, CLA 481), VL 15 (eighth century, CLA 1642), VL 17 (fifth century, CLA 399), but not VL 10 (CLA 281) and possibly in VL 22 (sixth century, CLA IV 436a), cf. Jerome, *Praefatio in librum Job*, PL 28:1142 ‘Habeant qui volunt veteres libros, vel in membranibus purpureis auro argenteoque descriptos’.

16 Posener 1951, 77.

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