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Fragment Containing Ancient Techeiles Dye Discovered Near Yam Hamelach

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The first definitive proof of production of the ancient blue dye techeiles in Israel was revealed during an Israel Antiquities Authority presentation at a Yerushalayim conference.

Derived from shellfish, techeiles is mentioned in the Torah as the dye used in the clothing of the kohein gadol, as well as being mixed in with white in the fringes of tzitzis. But the origins of techeiles were lost after the Roman exile, and most tzitzis today are colored exclusively white. Over the past century, experts - including the late Chief Rabbi Rav Yitzchok Halevi Herzog - have attempted to rediscover the origins of the dye, tracing it to the chillazon snail.

"Until now, our most important discovery had been the piles and piles of murex trunculus (chillazon snail) shells from the area, which served as a silent testimony to the presence of an ancient dyeing industry in Israel," said Dr. Naama Sukenik, a researcher at the Israel Antiquities Authority.

"But this newest finding from the times of Bar Kochva-sky blue fabric from the Dead Sea region-is definitive proof of both a colored fabrics trade and strict adherence to the biblical commandment of techeiles in ancient Israel," Sukenik said.

The new evidence was presented at the "100 Years to Techeiles Research" conference sponsored by Ptil Tekhelet, which was attended by more than 350 scientists, academics, and rabbinic scholars.

[JNS.ORG](#) [1]

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[1] JNS.ORG: <http://www.jns.org/news-briefs/2013/12/31/first-definitive-proof-of-ancient-blue-dye-tekhelet-revealed-in-israel>

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