

Why the Codex Leningradensis and the Codex Aleppo agree about the sedarim in Isaiah after all

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If you compare the sedarim of the Codex Leningradensis (CL) and the Codex Aleppo (CA)¹ you may find and think that they do not agree about the sedarim of Isaiah in two cases especially if you follow the CL as it is represented in the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS).²

According to the masorah Isaiah has 26 sedarim. The BHS represents the sedarim of the codex Leningradensis and places the first sign for the sedarim at 3,18 (p. 680). So the first seder would be 1,1 to 3,17 and the second 3,18 to 6,2. The third starts in 6,3 etc. The BHS puts the 24th sign for a seder at 61,1 so that the 25th seder begins in 61,1 and lasts to 65,8 so that the last and twenty-sixth seder begins at 65,9 and leads to the end in 66,24.

The Codex of Aleppo lets the second seder start at 4,3 and the 25th seder at 61,9.³

The pictures below are taken from the Codex Leningradensis.⁴

When I recently had a look at the sedarim of Isaiah according to the masorah of the Leningradensis, I was stunned to see that the second seder is placed at

והיה הנשאר

wohāyāh hanniš'ār (see figure 1).

And I thought, "This is not 3,18, but this is 4,3! Exactly as in the CA."

Immediately I checked all the sedarim and found another stunning thing: According to the masorah of Codex Leningradensis the twenty-fifth seder starts at

ונודע בנויים

wonōda' bagōyim (see figure 2).

This again is not in Isaiah 61,1, as noted in the BHS, but this is exactly where the CA has it at the beginning of 61,9! I thought, "How is this impossible? What happened?"

And then a suspicion came to my mind. I thought, let's check the columns of the CL. Is it possible that they have combined the sign for the seder with the wrong column in the CL. And lo and behold. This is exactly what happened.

As far as I have seen in the Codex Leningradensis in all twenty-five cases the ס sāmek as the the sign for the transition point of the one seder to the next is placed at the right side of the column. This means that you have to look to the left for the point where the seder starts.

And my suspicion proved to be correct in both cases where the CL seemed to disagree with the CA.

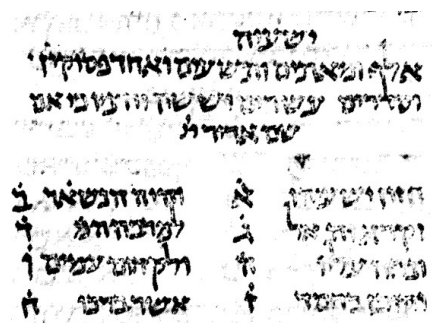


Figure 1: Sedarim 1 to 8 of Isaiah according to the CL, p. 656.

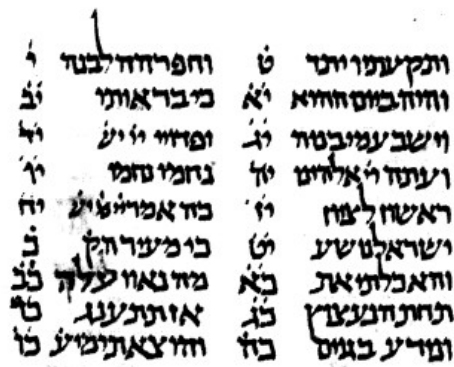


Figure 2: Sedarim 9 to 26 of Isaiah according to the CL, p. 657.

1. Aaron ben Asher, "The Aleppo Codex," 1976, accessed August 27, 2020, https://www.libraryofalexandria.org/e2/Aleppo-fascimile_FULL.pdf.

2. K. Elliger, W. Rudolph, and et al., Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, Fifth (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1997), 1574 pp.

3. Asher, "The Aleppo Codex", on p. 215 of the pdf-file the sign is at the right side of the column where 4,3 starts and on p. 259 the sign is at the left side of the column where 61,9 starts.

4. Samuel ben Jacob, "The Leningrad Codex (Codex Leningradensis)," 1008, accessed August 27, 2020, https://archive.org/download/Leningrad_Codex/Leningrad.pdf.

Looking at the evidence the Codex Leningradensis and the Codex of Aleppo totally agree with regard to the sedarim of the book of Isaiah.

On p. 447 of the CL the sāmek is to be linked to the left with Isa 4,3 (see figure 3).

On p. 491 of the CL the sāmek is to be linked to the left with Isa 61,9 (see figure 4). This teaches us a lesson. We need good reproductions of original manuscripts on-line. Students and professors of theology should have access to photographs or facsimiles of the more important manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

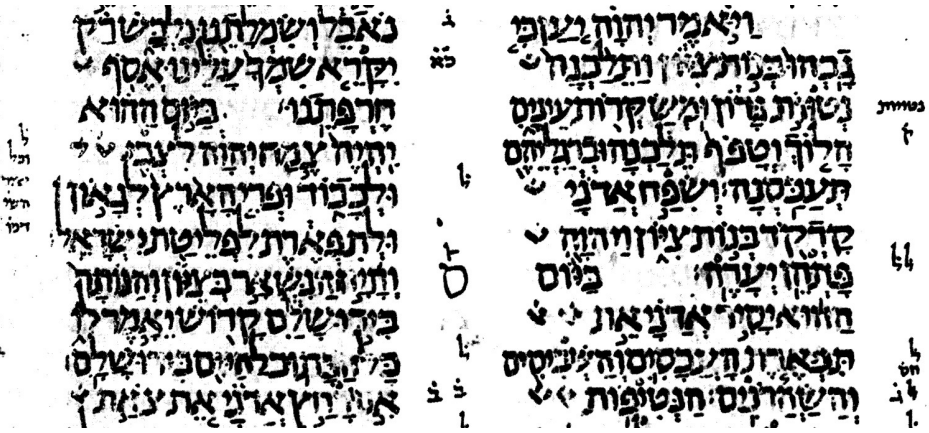


Figure 3: From the p. 447 of the CL.

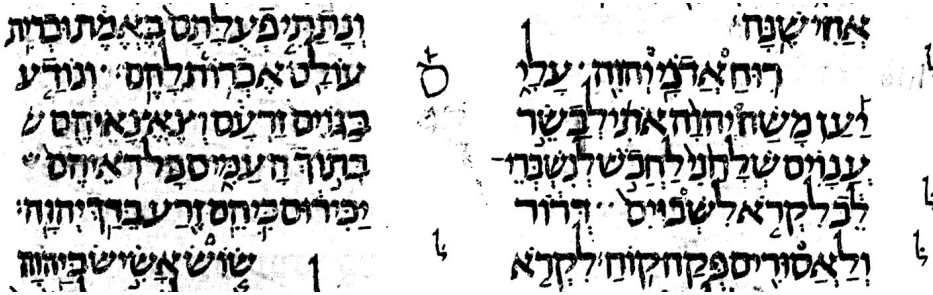


Figure 4: From the p. 491 of the Codex Leningradensis.

Finally let us have a look at the "united" sederim of the Codex Leningradensis and the Codex Aleppo.

Seder	Verses	סדרים
1	1,1-4,2	חזון ישעיהו
2	4,3-6,2	והנה הנשאר
3	6,3-9,5	וקרא זה אל
4	9,6-11,1	למרה המשה
5	11,2-14,1	ונחה עליו
6	14,2-16,4	ולקחום עמים
7	16,5-19,24	והוכן בחסד
8	19,25-22,22	אשר ברכו
9	22,23-24,22	ותקעתיו יתד
10	24,23-27,12	והפרה הלונה
11	27,13-29,22	והנה פיום ההוא
12	29,23-32,17	כי בראתו
13	32,18-35,9	וישב עמי בגנה
14	35,10-37,19	ופדוני יהודה ישבון
15	37,20-39,8	ועתה יהנה אל חינו
16	40,1-41,26	נחמו נחמו
17	41,27-44,5	ראשון לציון
18	44,6-45,16	כה אמר יהנה מלך ישראל
19	45,17-48,1	ישראל נושע
20	48,2-49,25	כי מעיר הקדש
21	49,26-52,6	והאכלתי את
22	52,7-55,12	מה נאוו על התרים
23	55,13-58,13	תחת הנעצוץ
24	58,14-61,8	אז תתענג
25	61,9-65,8	ונודע בגוים
26	65,9-66,24	והוצאתי מעקב