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The species known to have been employed in Phoenician purple dying are Murex trunculus, Murex brandaris and Purpura haemastoma. There can be no question about the identification of the sekelet species... Murex trunculus is the only possible solution out of the three...
During the Middle Ages dyeing with purple became increasingly rare. In addition to the dyeworks of Byzantium, the dyers of Palermo remained active, first under the Saracens and then under the Normans. When the empire was reestablished with the Palaeologan Dynasty in Byzantium in 1261, a resurgence took place there. Then a decline began ending in the complete disappearance of purple at the time of the victorious entry of Sultan Mohammed II in the city and the sacking of it by Turkish soldiers in 1453.

Nevertheless, up until the XIV century, purple was not unknown in other places. It was used, however, only for dyeing parchment for the most precious books or for adorning titles.

Justinian has ruled the entire silk market to an imperial treasure, Peter Baratunis, a Syrian. The dyers and weavers work for him only and he is the only one from whom you can acquire silk. As soon as he was appointed to the post, Baratunis increased the price of silk. An ounce of silk dyed an ordinary colour costs six gold pieces. Material died imperial purple costs 24 gold denarii or more. The Emperor profits immensely from this monopoly, but Baratunis enriches himself even more. The silk merchants are ruined. The silk workers of Tyre and Beirunt as well as the weavers and dyers are reduced to poverty, many of them have now emigrated to Persia.


