

קדם - קדמה, קדים - קדימה

אבנר רמו

In the Book of Genesis we read:

ויתן אברהם את-כל-אשר-לו ליצחק.
ולבני הפילגשים אשר לאברהם, נתן אברהם מתנת; וישלחם מעל יצחק בנו בעודנו חי קדמה,
אל-ארץ קדם.

“And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.

And to the sons of the concubines, that Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts; and he sent them away from Isaac his son, while he was still alive, eastward, to [the] east country” (Gen 25:5-6).

The understanding here of the Greek (and the English) translators indicate that **קדם** (*qedem*) means “east” (see also: Gen 2:8; 10:30; 11:2; 12:8; 13:11; 29:1; Num 23:7; 34:11; Jud 6:3, 33; 7:12; 8:10, 11; Zec 14:4; Ps 68:34; Job 1:3) , and **קדמה** (*qedmah*) means: “eastward” or “toward the east” (see also: Gen 13:14; Lev 16:14; Num 35:5; 1 Ki 7:39; 17:3; 2 Ki 13:17; Eze 48:4, 5, 27; 2 Ch 4:10).

Unlike other parts of the Bible, in the Book of Ezekiel the word **קדם** (*qedem*) was never understood by the Greek translators as: “east”, yet they understood that in this book the word **קדים** (*qadim*) means “east” (e.g. Eze 43:17; 44:1; 46:1, 12; 47:1, 2). It is therefore suggested that in the Book of Ezekiel the word **קדים** (*qadim*) is a letter-insertion error of **קדם** (*qedem*) - “east.”

In the Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel **קדם** (*qedem*) was just transliterated to Greek as: “Kedem” (Jer 49:28; Eze 25:4, 10).

In the Book of Isaiah **קדם** (*qedem*) was also translated to Greek as: “the Rising sun” (Is 9:11; 11:14), and this is the translation of another biblical term for “east”: **מזרח שמש** - “sunrising” (e.g. Num 21:11; Deu 4:47; Jos 1:15; 13:5; 19:12, 27, 34; Jud 11:8; 20:43; 2 Ki 10:33; Is 41:25; 45:6; 59:19; Mal 1:11; Ps 50:1; 113:3).

It appears that some attempts were made to derive from **מזרח שמש** - “sunrising” - “east”, a term that would mean “eastward.” We find such an attempt in the Book of Deuteronomy: **מזרחה שמש בעבר הירדן**, - “beyond the Jordan toward [the] sunrising” (Deu 4:41).

Another attempt appears in the Book of Judges: **מזרחה השמש למסלה העלה מבית-אל שכמה** - “eastward the sun to the highway that goes up from Beth-el to Shechem” (Jud 21:19).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that here **מזרחה השמש** is a letter insertion error of: **מזרחה שמש** - “toward sunrising” which means “eastward.”

In the Book of Ezekiel we find:

ויבא אתי אל-חצר בית-יהוה הפנימית, והנה-פתח היכל יהוה בין האולם ובין המזבח, כעשרים וחמשה איש; אחריהם אל-היכל יהוה ופניהם קדמה, והמה משתחויתם קדמה לשמש.

“And He brought me into the inner court of *YHWH*’s house, and, behold, [at] the entrance of the temple of *YHWH*, between the porch and the altar, [were] about and twenty and five men, [with] their backs toward the temple of *YHWH*, and their faces toward the east; and they knelt toward the east to the sun” (Eze 8:16).

The Greek translator omitted here the word קדמה (*qedmah*), but the comparison between these verses suggests that here קדמה לשמש is a letter-insertion and a word erroneous deletion of קדמה מזרחה שמש - “eastward, toward sunrising”, which probably represents another insertion by a late scribe attempting to explain the word קדמה (*qedmah*).

It seems that some of late scribes assumed that in some verses (e.g. Ex 27:13; 38:13; Num 2:3; 34:15; Jos 19:13) the meaning of קדמה (*qedmah*) as “eastward” would not be comprehended by the readers, and they inserted after this word the word מזרחה (*mizrakhah*). Although the reading of קדמה מזרחה now literally mean “eastward eastward”, the Greek translators understood that here is a correcting insertion and they did not duplicate this word.

In the Book of Numbers we reads: והחנים קדמה מזרחה - “And those that are encamping eastward eastward” (Num 2:3). The Greek translator wrote here: “toward the east.”

Yet in the next chapter we find:

והחנים לפני המשכן קדמה לפני אהל-מועד מזרחה

“And those that are encamping before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting eastward” (Num 3:38). The Greek translator ignored here the word קדמה (*qedmah*).

However, the comparison between these verses and the understanding of the Greek (but not the English) translators suggests that here the word מזרחה was misplaced and we should therefore read: והחנים לפני המשכן קדמה מזרחה לפני אהל-מועד - “And those that are encamping before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting.” If this understanding is correct then we have here another late scribe insertion of the word מזרחה for explaining the word קדמה (*qedmah*) as “eastward.”

It also seems that in one attempt to explain קדמה (*qedmah*) as “eastward” a late scribe wrote: ושב משריד קדמה מזרח השמש על-גבול כסלת תבר [toward] the sunrising on the border of Chisloth-tabor” (Jos 19:12). However, it is suggested that here מזרח השמש is a mis-division to words of: מזרחה שמש - “toward sunrising” which means “eastward.”

In the Book of Ezekiel we also Find:

וישבני אל-פתח הבית, והנה-מים יצאים מתחת מפתן הבית קדימה, כי-פני הבית קדים;

“And He brought me back to the entrance of the house; and, behold, waters were coming out from under the threshold of the house eastward, for the forefront of the house [looked] toward the east” (Eze 47:1; see also: Eze 47:18; 48:1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 16).

However, the logic of this verse and the understanding of the English (but not the Greek) translators suggest that here the last word **קְדִים** is a letter-insertion and a letter-deletion error of **קְדִמָּה** - "eastward." In addition, it should be noted that this verse indicates that the translators understood that here **קְדִימָה** (*qadimah*) is a letter-insertion error of **קְדִמָּה** (*qedmah*), which is the regular biblical word meaning: "eastward" or "toward the east."

In the Book of Ezekiel we also Find:

אל-פני תרומת-הקדש ואל-פני אחזת העיר, מפאת-ים ימה, ומפאת-קדמה קדימה ;
"for the holy offering and for the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward" (Eze 45:7; see also: Eze 47:18; 48:3. 8, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 32).

However, the comparison between these verses, the understanding of the English (but not the Greek), and the structure of this verse suggest that here **קְדִימָה קְדִמָּה** is a letter insertion error of **קְדִמָּה קְדִים** - "and from the east side eastward."

We may also conclude that in the Book of Ezekiel the words **קְדִים** and **קְדִימָה** are a letter insertion error of: **קְדִים** (*qedem*) - "east", and of: **קְדִמָּה** (*qedmah*) - "eastward", respectively.