

קרנות שן

אבנר רמו



We read in the Book o Kings:

כי אני תרשיש למלך בים, עם אני חירם; אחת לשלש שנים תבוא אני תרשיש, נשאת זהב וכסף, שנהבים וקפים ותכיים.

“For the king had Tarshish ship with the ships of Hiram; once every three years the Tarshish ship would come, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks” (1 Ki 10:22; see also: 2 Ch 9:21).

The English word “ivory” comes from the Latin “ebur” which apparently was derived from the ancient Egyptian word: “**bw**” meaning an elephant. Therefore, the Hebrew word: **שנהבים** appears to be a vowel letter deletion and mis-division to words of: **שני הבים** - “teeth of elephants” (or elephants’ tusks).

In the Book of Ezekiel we find:

בני דדן רכליך, [] איים רבים סחרת ידך; [] קרנות שן והובנים (והבנים),
“The men of Dedan were your dealers; [] many isles were the merchants of your hand;
[they brought you as tribute] horns of ivory and ebony” (Eze 27:15).

However, the logic of this verse suggests that here the words:

בני דדן רכליך איים רבים סחרת ידך are a letter insertion, a deletion and mis-division to words of: **בני דדן רכליך באיים רבים, סחריך** - **“The Dedanians are your dealers in many isles, your merchants.”**

The Hebrew syntax, and the comparison between these verses also suggest that here the words: **בקרנות שן הבים** are a letter insertion and a letter deletion error of: **שן והובנים (והבנים)** - **“in horned teeth of elephants.”** It seems that the absence of a Hebrew word for “tusks” forced the writer to employ the descriptive **שן קרנות** - **“horned teeth”**