

Two Lists of Stones: De lapidibus and the Apocalypse — a groundwork note on relations, withholding readings (v0.1)

Sharks, Lee

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Abstract

Two short Greek books three centuries apart catalogue the same stones in nearly the same words, use the same word for a seal, and name the same crimson with the same grain. This note establishes the relations and withholds the readings, in the register of Catalogues and Wills (#1581). Recorded: the overlap of the stone-lists item by item, with Theophrastus ordering by δύναμις (what a stone can do — colours water like the emerald, petrifies, draws, tests gold like the Lydian stone) and John ordering by position (first to twelfth foundation, Rev 21:19-20); the two senses of σφραγίς — the seal carved FROM the red unburnable ἄνθραξ at Miletus, ἐν ᾧ περ καὶ τὰ ἐξάγωνα, against the seal set UPON the book of Rev 5:1, upon persons at 7:3-4 (and then counted), and upon speech as a prohibition against writing at 10:4 — together with the closing counter-instruction μὴ σφραγίσῃς (22:10) and the curse of 22:18 as the seal's replacement technology; κόκκινον as one word at two ends of a supply chain, the pigment ground and settled above Ephesus (ἐν ᾧ περ ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς τέχνης; τὸ μὲν ὑφιστάμενον κάτω κιννάβαρι, τὸ δ' ἐπάνω καὶ πλεῖον πλύσμα) and dated to a named inventor ninety years back, against the same word worn by the woman and the beast and freighted in the merchants' manifest at 18:12; the hexagons in the mineral against the tetragon of the measured cube; and the white ψῆφος of Rev 2:17 bearing a name known only to its receiver, set against stones whose knowledge is public because the test repeats — an instrument, or an address. No dependence asserted, no source proposed, no allegory offered; Exodus 28 and Ezekiel 28 named as John's older relatives and untraced, because tracing them is the reading. Extracted from the notebook The First Draft §34 and §34.1.

Body

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as is the instruction to establish relations and withhold readings. The reading and its errors are Lee Sharks's. axn_schema_version: v2 protocol_version: alexanarch-deposit-protocol/v1 keywords: - Theophrastus - De lapidibus - Revelation - Apocalypse - stones - cinnabar - kermes - crimson - seal - sphragis - hexagon - tetragon - psephos - catalogue - groundwork note - relations *** # Two Lists of Stones: De lapidibus and the Apocalypse — a groundwork note on relations, withholding readings (v0.1)

Two Lists of Stones

***De lapidibus* and the Apocalypse: a groundwork note on relations, withholding readings**

Lee Sharks · v0.1 · 2026-09-07 · relations established, readings withheld · Greek from the seated *De lapidibus* (First1KGreek tlg0093.tlg004, 4,267 tokens whole) and the seated Nestle 1904 (EA-CORPORA-01/04, Rev.txt)

Abstract

Two short Greek books, three centuries apart, catalogue the same stones in nearly the same words, seal a text with the same word, and name the same crimson with the same grain. This note sets the relations between them and withholds the readings. It records: the overlap of the stone-lists, item by item, with what each list is *for*; the two senses of σφραγίς — the seal carved *from* the red stone and the seal set *upon* the book — and the closing instruction not to seal; κόκκινον as the shared word for the crimson grain, made in one book and worn in the other; the hexagons in the ἄνθηραξ at Miletus against the tetragon of the measured city; and the white ψῆφος with the name known only to its receiver. No dependence is asserted, no source proposed, and no allegory offered. What is offered is a table of correspondences at the word, so that any reading built on them can be checked against the bytes.

1. Why relations, and why withheld

The archive's practice distinguishes a groundwork note from a reading. A groundwork note establishes what stands where, in whose words, at which locus, and stops; a reading says what it means and takes the risk. This is the first kind. The correspondences below are strong enough that a reading will come, and precisely for that reason the reading is not made here: a table of shared words between a mineralogy and an apocalypse invites allegory, and allegory is the cheapest thing available on this material. What is set down is what a later reading will have to be true to.

Two books. Theophrastus, *De lapidibus*, some 4,300 words entire — the smallest complete work under the name, a catalogue of what forms in the earth, with a theory of formation, a taxonomy by behaviour under fire and tool, and two workshop passages of unusual concreteness. And the Apocalypse of John, twenty-two chapters, whose furniture is stones, seals, colours, measures and a book.

2. The stone-lists

Theophrastus opens by dividing what is constituted in the earth: Τῶν ἐν τῇ γῇ συνισταμένων τὰ μὲν ἔστιν ὕδατος τὰ δὲ γῆς — some of water, some of earth; the mined things (silver, gold) of water, stone of earth. The stones are then sorted by what they *do*: meltable and unmeltable, burnable and unburnable, some that colour water like the emerald, some that petrify what is put into them, some that draw, some that test gold and silver like the Heracleian and the Lydian stone. It is a list ordered by δύναμις — power, what a thing can do.

John's list is ordered by position. οἱ θεμέλιοι τοῦ τείχους τῆς πόλεως παντὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ κεκοσμημένοι· ὁ θεμέλιος ὁ πρῶτος ἱάσπις, ὁ δεῦτερος σάπφειρος, ὁ τρίτος χαλκηδών, ὁ τέταρτος σμάραγδος, ὁ πέμπτος σαρδόνυξ, ὁ ἕκτος σάρδιον, ὁ ἑβδομος χρυσόλιθος, ὁ ὄγδοος βήρυλλος, ὁ ἔνατος τοπάζιον, ὁ δέκατος χρυσόπρασος, ὁ ἐνδέκατος ὑάκινθος, ὁ δωδέκατος ἀμέθυστος (21:19–20). First to twelfth, each stone a course of wall.

The shared items, with each book's treatment:

stone	<i>De lapidibus</i>	Revelation
σμάραγδος	colours water like itself (a δύναμις)	fourth foundation (21:19)
σάρδιον	sexed: the transparent redder one <i>female</i> , the darker <i>male</i> ; found when certain rocks are cut open	sixth foundation (21:20); and the one on the throne like ἱάσπις and σάρδιον (4:3)
σαρδόνυξ / ὀνύχιον	ὀνύχιον, mixed white and grey side by side	fifth foundation (21:20)
ἀμέθυσον / ἀμέθυστος	wine-faced in colour, transparent	twelfth foundation (21:20)
ὑάκινθος (λυγγούριον)	λυγγούρια also sexed, the female clearer and yellower	eleventh foundation (21:20)
ἱάσπις	— (not in the seated text)	the light of the city, <i>as jasper crystallizing</i> (21:11); the wall's structure (21:18); the throne (4:3)
κρύσταλλος	transparent, found when rocks are cut	the sea like crystal (4:6); the river λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον (22:1)
ἄνθραξ	red, unburnable, seals carved from it, hexagons at Miletus	—
μαργαρίτης	—	twelve gates, each of one pearl (21:21)

Two catalogues of the same cabinet. Theophrastus asks how each comes to be and what it can do; John asks where each stands. Neither explains. **The list is the form both reach for when the object is the world's furniture** — and the note records that as a relation between two operations, not as a borrowing.

3. σφραγίς, twice

In Theophrastus the seal is a *product of the stone*. Ἄλλο δέ τι γένος ἐστὶ λίθων ὥσπερ ἐξ ἐναντίων πεφυκός, ἄκαυστον ὅλως, ἄνθραξ καλούμενος, **ἐξ οὗ καὶ τὰ σφραγίδια γλύφουσιν**, ἐρυθρὸν μὲν τῷ χρώματι, πρὸς δὲ τὸν ἥλιον τιθέμενον ἄνθρακος καιομένου ποιεῖ χροάν — another kind of stone, grown as if from opposites, wholly unburnable, called *coal*, from which they also carve the little seals, red in colour, and set to the sun it makes the colour of burning coal. It is the most valuable, forty gold pieces for a very small one, brought from Carthage and Massalia; and οὐ καίεται δὲ ὁ περὶ Μίλητον **γωνιοειδὴς ὢν ἐν ᾧ περ καὶ τὰ ἐξάγωνα** — the one about Miletus does not burn, being angular, in which also are the hexagons.

In John the seal is *applied*, and in three registers. On a book: βιβλίον γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὀπισθεν, **κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγίσιν ἑπτὰ** (5:1), whose opening, one seal at a time, is the action of 6:1–8:1, each seal releasing not a text but an event, and the seventh releasing silence in heaven for half an hour. On persons: ἄχρι **σφραγίσωμεν** τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν (7:3), and then the sealed are *counted* — ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐσφραγισμένων (7:4). And on speech, as a prohibition against writing: **Σφράγισον** ἃ ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτὰ βρονταί, **καὶ μὴ αὐτὰ γράψῃς** (10:4) — seal what the seven thunders said, and do not write them.

Against which stands the closing instruction: **Μὴ σφραγίσῃς** τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν (22:10). *Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near*. One book is sealed and must be opened by another; one utterance is sealed and must not be written; this book must not be sealed at all. And in the same closing paragraph, the seal's replacement: a curse on adding to or taking from the words (22:18–19) — the text protected not by closure but by a stated penalty for alteration, which is a different technology.

The relation, stated and no further: **Theophrastus's seal is cut from the material; John's is set upon the object**. In the one, the impression's authority is that it is of the same substance as the stone. In the other, the authority is the sealer's, and the last word of the book is that this text is to remain unsealed.

4. κόκκινον

Theophrastus, on the worked cinnabar above Ephesus: ἔστι δ' ἄμμος ἣν συλλέγουσι **λαμπυρίζουσιν καθάπερ ὁ κόκκος** — a sand they collect that glitters like the *kermes-grain*. The grain is the scarlet dye-insect of the oak; its name travels through Arabic *qirmiz* to *kermes* and to English *crimson*. In Theophrastus the word is a simile for the ore's glitter, in a passage that then describes the making: grinding in stone vessels, washing in bronze, taking what settles and grinding again — ἐν ᾧ περ ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς τέχνης, *in which is the art* — with the result that from equal material some workers get much and others little or nothing; **τὸ μὲν ὑφιστάμενον κάτω κιννάβαρι, τὸ δ' ἐπάνω καὶ πλεῖον πλύσμα**, what settles below is the cinnabar, what is above, and is more, is the wash. The art is dated and attributed: one Callias, an Athenian from the silver mines, who thought the sand held gold because it glittered, and when it did not, wondered at its beauty for the colour and so came to this working; οὐ παλαιὸν δ' ἐστίν — not ancient, about ninety years.

In John κόκκινον is never made and always worn or carried. θηρίον **κόκκινον** (17:3); ἡ γυνὴ ἦν περιβεβλημένη πορφυροῦν καὶ **κόκκινον**, καὶ κεχρυσωμένη χρυσίῳ καὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ καὶ μαργαρίταις (17:4); the city mourned in βύσσινον καὶ πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον (18:16); and in the merchants' manifest the word stands in a cargo list — γόμον χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου καὶ λίθου τιμίου καὶ μαργαριτῶν καὶ βυσσίνου καὶ πορφύρας καὶ σιρικοῦ καὶ **κοκκίνου** (18:12) — between silk and citron-wood, among the goods no one buys any more.

The relation: **one word, two ends of a supply chain.** The τέχνη at Ephesus that makes the pigment, ninety years old and credited to a named man; and the freight of it in the hold, in a list of what a city loses. Both books know the grain. One knows how it is ground; the other knows what it costs.

5. Hexagon, tetragon

ἐν ᾧ περ καὶ τὰ ἐξάγωνα — *in which also are the hexagons* — of the unburnable red stone at Miletus, whose angularity is what distinguishes it. And: ἡ πόλις **τετράγωνος** κεῖται, καὶ τὸ μῆκος αὐτῆς ὅσον τὸ πλάτος· καὶ ἐμέτρησεν τὴν πόλιν τῷ καλάμῳ ἐπὶ σταδίων δώδεκα χιλιάδων· τὸ μῆκος καὶ τὸ πλάτος καὶ τὸ ὕψος αὐτῆς **ἴσα** ἐστίν (21:16) — the city lies four-square, and its length, breadth and height are equal; a cube of twelve thousand stadia, of gold like clear glass, with twelve gates of one pearl each, on the twelve stone foundations.

In both, a geometrical figure is what makes the material legible: the hexagon is how the stone is formed and how it is told from the burnable kind; the tetragon is how the city is measured and known to be finished. The note records the pair and stops. (That Borges's crimson hexagon is a *volume in a hexagonal library* — the shelf's geometry becoming the book's — is a third term, and its relation to these two is a reading, not a relation.)

6. The white ψῆφος

δώσω αὐτῷ **ψῆφον λευκήν**, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον **ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον**, ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων (2:17) — I will give him a white pebble, and on the pebble a new name written, which no one knows except the one receiving.

ψῆφος is the stone in its third sense, neither the mineral nor the gem: the counting-pebble and the voting-pebble, the stone by which a verdict is cast and a sum reckoned. On it is written a name that exists only in its reception. Theophrastus's stones are known by what they do under fire and tool, and their names are common; this stone's whole content is a name that no one can read but its receiver.

The relation, set down without a reading: **the two books' stones are legible in opposite directions.** Theophrastus's are legible to anyone who applies the test — the Lydian stone tries gold, the emerald colours water, the ἄνθραξ will not burn — and the knowledge is public because the test is repeatable. John's white ψῆφος carries a knowledge that is complete only at the point of reception and nowhere else. One stone is an instrument; the other is an address.

7. What is not claimed

No dependence: nothing here suggests John read Theophrastus, or that a mineralogical tradition stands behind the foundation-list. The stone-names are the common property of Greek lapidary vocabulary, and both lists have older relatives — the high priest’s breastplate of Exodus 28 and Ezekiel 28 for John’s, the Near Eastern stone-lists for Theophrastus’s — which this note does not trace, because tracing them is the reading. No allegory: the correspondences are not being read as a hidden concordance, and the fact that a mineralogy and an apocalypse share a cabinet of stones is not by itself remarkable. What is set down is narrower and checkable: **the same stones, the same crimson grain, the same word for a seal, and two opposed constructions of what a stone is for** — an instrument to be tested, or a token to be received.

Whoever builds a reading on these relations will have to take the whole set: the list that orders by δύναμις beside the list that orders by position; the seal cut from the stone beside the seal set upon the book, and the instruction not to seal; the pigment ground beside the pigment worn; the hexagon in the mineral beside the tetragon in the vision; and the public test beside the private name. The relations are here. The readings are withheld.

Texts

Theophrastus, *De lapidibus*: OpenGreekAndLatin First1KGreek, tlg0093.tlg004, seated whole (4,267 tokens), read at chapters I-III (formation and the unburnable stones), the gem list (σάρδιον, λυγγούριον, κύανος, ὀνύχιον, ἀμέθυσσον, ἀχάτης), and the pigment chapters (ψιμύθιον, ἰός, κιννάβαρι, with the Callias notice). The Attic archon’s name at the close of the Callias notice is cut off in the seated text and is flagged for collation against Eichholz.

Revelation: Nestle 1904, EA-CORPORA-01/04 (Rev.txt), read at 1:11, 1:19, 2:17, 4:3, 4:6, 5:1-9, 6:1-8:1, 7:2-8, 9:4, 10:4, 17:3-4, 18:12, 18:16, 18:21, 21:2, 21:11, 21:16, 21:18-21, 22:1, 22:10, 22:18.

Companion: *The First Draft* §34 and §34.1, from which this note is extracted; the archive’s stamp doctrine (a seal derived from the sealed) at EA-MPAI-AXN and the AXN resolver.

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