

The Polysemy of the Lexeme "Stone"

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ABSTRACT: The terms from the sphere of lexeme *piatra* (*stone*) are developing metaphorical meanings. The images based on the term *piatra* (*stone*) are spreading their semantics on different dimensions, from the usual meaning to a plastic representation viewed vertically. To fulfill the proposed purpose, we will stop at a research minicorpus composed on the basis of some phraseology dictionaries, as well as of a series of verses which belong to the biblical text. At the same time, we will emphasize the produced pragmasemantic effect, to force the interlocutor to pay attention in the sight of decoding the messages which contain the lexeme *piatra* (*stone*).

KEYWORDS: stone, semantics, lexical families, polysemy

Introduction

The word *piatra* (*stone*) comes from Latin *petra*, but because the Latin language has come into contact with the native people's languages, borrowed terms have emerged as synonymous which got specialized meanings, instead the Latin term has kept the general sense [„the relationship between the two terms, the Latin and the Traco-Dacian, underwent changes as the new term widened its meaning in the language, in other words, as the distribution of the two synonyms changed in the vocabulary as a whole” (Sala 2005, 29)]. In the Bible, the corresponding terms are Heb. *'eben*, Gr. *lithos* and *akrogoniaios* "corner stone".

The word *piatra* (*stone*) at the Biblical text level is used in various stylistic combinations, which we will classify according to the *Language Sciences Dictionary* (LSD 2005, 213) according to the linguistic level at which it stands, emphasizing the stylistic values of the lexeme.

1. The denotative meanings of the term

As it appears in various contexts, I have noticed that the *piatra* (*stone*) lexeme can have different symbols, because it belongs to both the htonian (terrestrial) space, here referring to the natural stone (*piatra*) (rock, mountain) and the uranian, celestial space, meaning hail. The man-made stone (*piatra*) (columns, menhireles, etc.) transforms the stone (*piatra*) into litomorphic embodiments of gods and mythical ancestors, thus Litolatry appeared which is worshipping the sacred stones - it is one of the archaic religion's form spread across all continents. The Persian God Mitra was born from a rock. The black stone brought by the Romans from Phrygia during the Punic wars represented the Great Goddess-Mother (Cybele). In general, the meteoric stones, also called "rain stones", are symbols of fertility. The mito-symbolic link between stone and birth, sustained in fairy tales and legends through various heroes and heroine transformations into stones (Evseev 2001, 139). The lexeme denotative meaning is given by the translation from the Orthodox Bible as *grindina* (*hail*) (Gr. *χάλαζαι*, Lat. *grindines*), the metaphoric sense being 'horrified, terrified'. The fall of the stone (*piatra*) is hyperbolically amplified by the evocation of the thunder and the fire that killed the unbelievers.

Moses stretched out his rod to heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and *stone* (*piatra*), and fire fell upon the earth. The Lord made the *stone* (*piatra*) fall over the land of Egypt (Exodus 9: 23). Then Moses stretched out his hand to heaven, and the Lord released thunder, *hail* (*grindina*) and fire on the earth; and the Lord rained *hail* (*grindina*) over the land of Egypt.

On the same note, stone and wood were the materials from which the idols were made [The etymon of the word idol is the Greek word *eidolon* which ment "some imagination, material or imaginative", ending in the form of a picture, depicting a divinity to which a cult is brought (sacrifice, libation, incense) as if it were itself that deity. - "Worshipers to the golden / fat bull" (Exodul 32: 1-35; Isaia 40,:19-20; 44: 9-20; Jeremia 10: 1-5). Today, the phrase also designates those who worship money. - "They have eyes, but do not see; they have ears, but do not hear" (Psalm 115: 5-6) - it is used with reference to fanatical followers of ideas, beliefs (Douglas 2015. s.v.)], the term used in Greek for *stone* (*piatra*) is also found in the expresison *piatră fără folos* (*useless stone*) (< Gr. *λίθος αχρηστος*,

Lat. *lapis inutilis*), used to put in antithesis the craftsmanship of the maker of an idol (named *chipped face* in Biblical terms) with its uselessness (referring to the material and to the helplessness of idols to do them), thus pointing out the absurdity of the idolatrous act [the absurdity of idolatric act is suggested by adjectives substantiated with a strong pejorative connotation *goods, power / inanimate, feeble, dead, helpless, incapable*. It insists on the noun vigor (εὐδράνεα, *hapax* in Greek, not translated in VET.LAT.) And the neutral substantive adjective *which has no vigor*. (Bădăliță et al. 2004, 268)].

Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and **stone (piatra)**, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways! (Daniel 5:23)

This practice was found on some rituals, and if the one who was involved did not die he was exonerated of the supposed demonism (Vulcănescu 1979, 205).

In this context, the expression *piatra de var (limestone)* is used only in Isaiah chapter 27: 9 as an illustration of what should be done to the altar of idols, if the people want to be restored to their rights. They should be destroyed as if they were made of gypsum or limestone (*piatra de var*).

On the other hand, as we find written in the Old Testament on the priest's garment, on the breastplate's shoulder (Douglas et al. 2015, 125) were two precious stones, and on the breastplate were twelve stones arranged in four rows (*tetrastih*) on which the deeds of the two tribes were written (Gr. Δόξαι, Lat. *Magnalia*). [In Heb. *hosen*, a term that is translated as 'breastplate' (Exod 28: 4, 15-30), 39: 8-21, cf. LXX, *peristhion*, Exod 28: 4), is however obscure from the etymological point of view. In general, it now recognizes the relationship that the word had with a family of Arabic words that have the meaning of "beauty" and no other word allegedly related inspires confidence. Most of the commentators tend to translate as "sack". Made of the same material as the ephod (Exodus 28:15), the breastplate was a square sack (v. 16), with gold rings on the four corners (v. 26) The bottom rings were fastened with blue ropes with the rings that were above the ephod girdle (v.28). On the breastplate there were placed 12 precious stones, each bearing the name of a tribe of Israel (v. 17-21) and two gold chains were fastened to the ephod's shoulders on the upper part and to the two rings of the breastplate at the bottom (vv. 9-12, 22-25). So symbolically, on the one hand the nation, in the eyes of God, depended on the person and the work of a great priest, and on the other hand, the priest continually presented the people before God as a responsibility he fulfilled out of love (v. 29), and to the same extent, containing the prophecies *Urim and Tumim (verse 30) - where we also have the name of "the breastplate of judgment" (v. 15; cf the usual expression of LXX, (*logion tesriseos, "oracles of judgment"*) - *the breastplate symbolized the role of the priest as herald of the will God has for man (cf. Maleahi 2:6-7).*] The Treaty of Saint Epiphanius (310-403), Bishop of Cyprus, written in the 4th century AD. is a unique work in the form of a letter addressed to Diodorus, bishop of Tira, in which the names and symbolism of the 12 stones on the priest's breastplate are explained. Rich in information extracted from Greek-Roman lapidaries, the work was translated into Armenian, Georgian, Latin. The first Breastplate, described in Exodus, is recognized as Aaron's Breastplate, dating from the Babylonian slavery. The Second Breastplate, also called the Second Temple's Breastplate, was built after the liberation from bondage, with stones whose names were translated correctly only in 1611, in the German version of Luther's Bible. Philon considered that the two precious stones on the shoulders of the breastplate symbolized the moon and the sun, on each being written the six zodiac signs, and the 12 stones on the breastplate were the 12 zodiac signs (Bădăliță et al. 2004, 282).

2. Connotative meanings of the term

The word *piatra (stone)* is also used in Biblical text in a figurative sense in various stylistic combinations, which we will classify according to the typology of style figures with text application.

2.1. Sound figures or metaplasms (based on modifications made on a phonetic level) occur in close connection with the affective state of the speaker: **proper** (alliteration, assonance, paronymosis,

rhyme and inner rhyme), and as **phonetic accidents** - metathesis, syncope, syneresis, apheresis, apocopa.

Alliteration is a figure of speech which consists in "repetition of some consonants (or syllables), usually from the root of words, with euphonic, imitative (onomatopoeic) or expressive (symbolic) effect; the effect is also due to the affective accent that repeated sounds carry". (Dragomirescu 1995, 67)

Then a woman threw a grinder (piatra de râșniță) on Abimelec's head and smashed his head.
(Judges 9:53)

In this context, the sound complex includes the vibration **r**, suggesting death, building a hyperbolic sound-dynamic image, the noise being reproduced by joining the consonants, **ț, ș, t** and **s**.

Assonance consists of "the repetition of the accentuated vowel in two or more words, especially in verse." (Dragomirescu 1995, 104)

2.2. Building figures (syntactic) or **metatax** - structures specifically made at syntactic level: **proper** (syntactic parallelism, enumeration, climax, anticlimax, repetition, anaphora, epiphora, anadiplosis, epanadiplosis, chiasm, chorus), **syntactic constructs** (asindet, polysindet, tmeza, ellipse, zeugma, silepsa, anacoluth, dislocation, hyperbat, hipalaga, inversion), **syntactic-lexical figures**, syntactic figures with semantic implications: (polyptote, parigmenon, antanaclase).

Repetition's role is to emphasize "insensitivity, lack of mercy", the first millstone (piatra de moara) was fixed, unable to be moved.

His heart is hard as a stone (piatra), hard like the millstone (piatra de moara) standing underneath. (Job 41: 24)

2.3. Figures of thought (logic) or metalogisms - are not simple associations of terms, but they have a broad meaning over the wider structure of the text: antiphrase, antithesis, hyperbola, litote, irony, paradox, parable, reticence, allegory, euphemism, pleonasm etc.

Tautology *And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone (piatra) shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down"* (Marc.13: 2)

The rhetoric encoded the main types of repetition: **anaphora** (at the beginning of a verse or a syntactic unit), **epiphora** (at the end of a verse or a syntactic unit), **epanadiplosis** (at the beginning and at the end of a verse or syntactic unit), and the repetition of a word or a group of words at the end of a metric or syntactic unit at the beginning of the next unit is called **anadiplosis** (Gr. *anadiplosis*", Lat. *reduplicatio* "reduplication"): "Who does well, well finds"; "Only the river is eternal: the river is a demiurge".

So there was hail (piatra), and fire mingled with the hail (piatra), the hail (piatra) was so very heavy that there was no hail (piatra) like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation (Exodus 9: 24). The text is circularly linked by anadiplosis epanadiplosis and anadiplosis.

2.4. Semantic figures (sometimes called tropes) or **metasemes**

2.4.1. Realized by mutations to the sense level - **metonymic series**: metonymy, synecdoche

Metonymy is a figure of speech which mechanism is ordered in the representation report "one name used for another: the cause for effect (the name of the cause for the name ...), the effect for the cause, the substance for content, the content for the substance, the sign for the meaningful work, the abstract name for the concrete name, the antecedent for the consequent, the consequent for the antecedent, etc. The term comes from Fr. *meto-rtymie*, Lat., Gr. *metonymia*, "re-naming, replacing a name with another". (Fontanier 1968, 48)

Like one who binds **a stone (piatra)** in a sling. Is he who gives honor to a fool. (Proverbs 26: 8)

Metonymy remains a semiotic process, perhaps even the substitutive phenomenon in the field of signs. Metaphor is a semantic process, perhaps even the genetic phenomenon by excellence in the speech instance plane. (Ricoeur 1984, 310)

Metonymy implies a meaningful transfer of sense by contiguity, the synecdoche being a particular case of metonymy. (Fontanier 1977, 176)

The semantic analysis of *the metonymic series* reveals the existence of common seams in the semantic structure of the two terms, so that the substitution of the stone in the sling by glorifying a

madman is possible because the seams coincide when referring to the rapidity with which a thing passes.

A: / sling /: (+ substance) - (+ natural body) - (+ solid) - (+ wood) - (+ white weapon);

B: / stone /: (+ substance) - (+ earth body) - (- organic) - (+ solid)

This image illustrates the aspiration for magnification, compromised in the case of the madman, configuring an universe insensitive to inner feelings.

2.4.2. Made through mutations in the sense level - metaphorical series: metaphor, comparison, personification, antonomasia, epithet, oximoron, symbol.

2.4.2.1. Metaphor is a "movement and extension of the meaning of words". "When the metaphor is placed within the sentence, it is no longer a deviant name, but a substantive statement". It goes beyond the semiotic sense, acquiring the semantic one. (Ricoeur 1975, 45)

The term comes from Gr. *metaphor* "transport, transfer" = the Greek verb *forein* "to carry, lead" and the *meta-* particle "change, pass beyond".

I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone (piatra) and give them a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 11: 19) the expression *heart of stone* (*inima de piatră*) is equivalent to *hardened heart*, which shows a special attribute of the heart.

For the *metaphorical series* the similarity of the two terms is not necessary, the metaphor is not a figure free of contextual, syntagmatic realization. Thus, the *heart of stone* expression comprises the insoles:

A: / heart /: (+ substance) - (+ organ) - (+ human) - (+ life);

B: / stone /: (+ substance) - (+ aspect of physical reality) - (-human) - (+ hardness) - (-life).

It is noted that by combining the two terms *heart* and *stone* the context (called by the μ Group semic intersection) designates the meaning of the expression "steadfast; dumbfounded" but also "insensitive, insensible".

2.4.2.2. Comparison

Fear and dread will fall on them; By the greatness of Your arm; They will be as still as a stone; Till Your people pass over, O Lord; Till the people pass over; Whom You have purchased (Exod.15: 16).

The comparison is introduced by *as* and its synonyms: *how, like, just like, such, alike, similar to, as, the same with, just like that*, etc. Academician Ion Coteanu (Coteanu, 1973, 129) considers that "in fact, the comparison has three terms: the third is the common acquisition of objects, beings or similar actions between them." The third term translates the common factor for compared and comparable, that is the notion approaching these elements, being an action or a state when it comes to verb comparison.

In the expression *as still as a stone (piatra)*, we identify some dimensions that, in objective reality, do not have clearly defined values.

The expressiveness of a comparison is also given by the different character of the domains from which the two terms come (concrete-concrete, concrete-abstract, abstract-concrete, abstract-abstract), in the given context we find an association between human and vegetal in order to revealing new and surprising similar features (mutenia - stone).

2.4.2.3. Epithet

The Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh has a hard heart: he will not let the people go." (Exodus 7:14)

The **hard heart** expression is the meaning of Gr. Καρδία σκληρά with the meaning of "heavy heart", refers to Pharaoh's inability to accept that God is the one who controls everything (the antinomy of the expression being *a listening heart*). The meaning of the *heart* notion is 'mind, reason' (Gr. Καρδία), the heart being the seat of both the passions, the intelligence and the free will of man, so we can say that the source of the hardness is expressed by the lexicalization of the noun *stone (piatra)* that appears as an epithet of "stubborn, proud, wretched man." Pharaoh is insensitive to Israel's desire to be released.

The adjective *hard (impietrit)* is formed by conversion from the participle of the verb *to harden*. The participle has a durable sense, without expressing time ("a kind of general present, generalization"). Pană Dindelegan 2007, 165 considers the participle is characterized by attracting it

to other parts of speech. However, the passage is not a complete one, it retaining traits linked both to the verbal nature and to the class to which it is oriented. It has an intermediate status ranging between the verb and the adjective, sometimes between the verb and the noun or verb and the adverb, but it does not remain an authentic verb but no other type of word.

In this context, we meet one of the two values of the verb: the reflexively transitive aspect 'to become or become insensitive' here referring to God's action that hardens Pharaoh's heart. The intransitive aspect refers to the sense of 'losing the ability to act (due to strong emotions), to harden, to be strong (referring to will)', found in the context in which Pharaoh *hardened his heart* (*But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to Moses and Aaron, as the Lord had said* - Exodus 8:15). At the morpho-syntactic level, the verbal form defines the inner struggles of the being.

In the New Testament we find two occurrences of the expression in the Gospel of Mark:

- *for they had not understood the wonder of the bread, for their heart was hardened.* (Mark 6:52)
- *Jesus understood this and said, "Why do you think you have no bread? Do you still not get it and still do not understand? Do you have your heart hardened?"* (Mark 8:17)

Barclay (1992, 54): asserted that, in this context, "the word *hardened* (*impietrare*) (Gr. *pepōrōmenē*) describes here the blind insensibility, which does not teach any lesson. Sometimes we say that things leave no "impression" on a person. There were Greek thinkers who believed that things literally left an "impression" on the mind. It was as if words, images and ideas were printed on the matter of the mind, soft as wax, and literally left a "footprint". But clearly, if the mind becomes hardened, no print can be printed on its surface. Here the word describes the inability to assimilate the teaching. It describes the man who is enveloped by his little world so much that he can not touch anything from a "different world," the man whose mind is locked up from all ideas, except those which belong to him, the man who is insensitive to the lessons that the events give him".

Referring to the *hardened heart* as the headquarters of interiority, we can extrapolate by saying that *stone* (*piatra*) can be the word, the language symbolizing the outside man who has the decisional capacity. Thus, we can speak of a redoubling from the perspective of human attributes, either of the heart or of the tongue (Rotaru 2014, 5).

3. Other phrases

Unlike free jointing of words, the phraseological ones already exist in the language, are consecrated in use and are perceived as distinct units, precisely because it realized "to a greater or lesser extent, the structure of the elements that make them" (Hristea 1984a, 134). In relation to the free syntactic groups: *sharp stone*, *large stone*, *small stone*, etc., the lexical connection "test stone" (Isaiah, 8.14) in the sense of "probation".

Sharpening stone / top stone

In the Book of Judges chapter 9: 4 *So they gave him seventy pieces of silver from the temple of Baal-berith. Abimelech used it to hire worthless and reckless men, and they followed him*, we meet the expression "worthless men" in the sense of 'naked men (without meaning and without reputation) and reckless.'

Grindstone

Then a woman threw a grinder at Abimelec's head and smashed his head. (Judges 9:53)

Grindstone is used in the literal sense of "spinning stone", referring to the upper half of the mossy stone, which was spinning during the grind, unlike the lower stone, which remained motionless. The stone above was weighing between 2-4 kilograms.

No one shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for that would be taking a life in pledge. (Deuteronomy 24: 6)

It is believed that getting *the two grindstones as collateral* is equivalent to *crushing, ruining* someone's life.

The grinder or hand mill was made up of two stones of different hardness: a soft one, called *catillus* (a mobile stone that was centered on a wooden deck or a metal rod), and a hard, fixed - *meta* (had a hole in its center for the central shaft) [DEX: RASNITA, rasnite, s. f. 1. The rudimentary

machine for grinding salt, corn, etc., consisting of two superimposed stones, one of which is rotated by a handle. ◇ Expr. Getting from the mill to the cave = getting out of a good situation in a bad one; to escape. One's mouth runs as a mill = to speak a great deal; to speak continuously; to not shut up. ♦ Primitive mill moved by traction animals. 2. Kitchen appliance that grinds coffee beans, pepper, etc. - From Bg. *rasnica* (DEX 98)].

The stumbling stone signifies an obstacle, a weight you are struggling with, or a test where you can fail. In Romans 11: 9 (Gr. *Skandalon* translates the Hebrew word *miksol*, but also *moqes*; "trap", "lace"), it meant the stick that closed a trap.

The Stone of the Serpent ("The Stone of Zohelet", AV) ('*eben hazzohélet'*) A stone near En-Roguel, in the SE of Jerusalem, the place where Adonia sacrificed animals (1 Kings 1: 9). It is not known precisely what *zohélet* means, but it is usually associated with *zahal*, "to retreat, to crawl backwards". Starting from this association, some translate the phrase with "stone of slip" and connect with a steep and slippery rocky slope called *zahweileh* by the Arabs, or with a certain place around, near Siloam. The translation "serpent stone" can be explained by a possible identification of the *En-Roguel spring with the Jackal Fountain (Nehemiah 2:13) (Douglas et al. 2015, s.v.)

The testing stone (Gr. *λίθος δοκιμασίας*), expression is based on the use of a tough black stone to test the value of jewelry. The figurative meaning is used when it comes to overcoming a very difficult test. The unwise man sees wisdom as a burden, as an attempt that is difficult to overcome.

Conclusions

Further research is to complement this material from cultural semantic interdisciplinary and phraseological perspectives.

Our goal was to try to understand the significance of the term *stone* (*piatra*) in different contexts of Scripture, the Biblical terminology being encircled by more or less widespread elements, some even synonyms. The metaphor, the comparison, and the other figures of speech started from all walks of life, show us once again the beauty of the context and the imagination of the person who disambiguates the sign. For now, we signal a concordance between the Biblical text we analyze from the point of view of the expressivity and the Latin correspondent of the lexeme *stone* (*piatra*).

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