194 Stone (*Lapis*)

In a stone, there are three matters: weight, coldness, and hardness which happen in the heart of the infidel and the impenitent. Therefore, such a heart can be compared to a stone, Ezech. [11:19]: “I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh.” On the other hand, square stone are strong for constructing foundations and because they lie solidly, as is evident in Solomon, 3 Kings 5[:17]. So, virtuous men about whom the Philosopher speaks, *Ethicorum*, first book,[[1]](#endnote-1) the four-square virtuous one. The four cardinal[[2]](#endnote-2) virtues are like the tetragrammaton, without disgrace. And just like a city is not built well nor securely unless you assemble it out of stones, and united and joined with cement. So, neither does a college stand well unless the persons have been united through concord and love according to Chrysostom, *Super Mattheo*, homilia 7.[[3]](#endnote-3) On the contrary says Lamen. 4[:1]: “The stones of the sanctuary are scattered in the top of every street.” But against this Jacob and Laban by making a “league” of peace “they gather stones together, made a heap,” that is, into a “hillock,” Gen. 31[:44-47].

¶ Again, a stone is hard like unto pride, Job 41[:15]: “His heart shall be as hard as a stone.”

Again, a stone is heavy like iron, Prov. [18:14]: “A spirit that is easily angered, who can bear.” [Prov. 27:3]: “A stone is heavy, and sand weighty: but the anger of a fool is heavier than them both.” But because it is weighty therefore one draws it easily into a tenon, Exod. 15[:5]: “They are sunk to the bottom like a stone.”

¶ Again, a stone is offensive like unto envy because the envious one to some good of his neighbor offends like a stone, [Eccli. 27:29]. Eccli. 21[:11]: “The way of sinners is made plain with stones.”

Again, it is cold as sloth, Eccli. 43[:22]: “The water is congealed into crystal.”

Sixth, it is as sterile as gluttony, Luke 8[5-6]: “The seed” which “fell upon a rock withered away.”

Seventh, it is dirty like lust, Eccli. 22[:2]: “The sluggard is pelted with the dung of oxen,” that is, with unclean thoughts.

¶ Again, stones are for throwing, John 8[:59]: “They took up stones therefore to cast at Jesus.”

Again, stones are for circumcising, Exod. 4[:25]: “Sephora took a very sharp stone.”

Again, for punishing, Ezech. 38[:22]: “And I will judge him with pestilence, and vast hailstones.”

Again, for ornamenting, Isai. 54[:11]: “I will lay your stones in order.”

Again, for building, 1 Pet. 2[:5]: “Be you also as living stones built up.”

1. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 1.10 1100b11-21 (Barnes 2:1739): The question we have now discussed confirms our definition. For no function of man has so much permanence as virtuous activities (these are thought to be more durable even than knowledge of the sciences), and of these themselves the most valuable are more durable because those who are happy spend their life most readily and most continuously in these; for this seems to be the reason why we do not forget them. The attribute in question, then, will belong to the happy man, and he will be happy throughout his life; for always, or by preference to everything else, he will be engaged in virtuous action and contemplation, and he will bear the chances of life most nobly and altogether decorously, if he is 'truly good' and 'foursquare beyond reproach'. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1-2 q. 61 a.1 Resp.: I answer that, When we speak of virtue simply, we are understood to speak of human virtue. Now human virtue, as stated above ([1565] Q [56], A [3]), is one that answers to the perfect idea of virtue, which requires rectitude of the appetite: for such like virtue not only confers the faculty of doing well, but also causes the good deed done. On the other hand, the name virtue is applied to one that answers imperfectly to the idea of virtue, and does not require rectitude of the appetite: because it merely confers the faculty of doing well without causing the good deed to be done. Now it is evident that the perfect is principal as compared to the imperfect: and so those virtues which imply rectitude of the appetite are called principal virtues. Such are the moral virtues, and prudence alone, of the intellectual virtues, for it is also something of a moral virtue, as was clearly shown above ([1566] Q [57], A [4]). Consequently, those virtues which are called principal or cardinal are fittingly placed among the moral virtues. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. (Pseudo)Chrysostomus, *Opus imperfectum* homilia 7 ex capit. 4 (PG 56:675-676): Sicut enim in corporali aedificio lapis ad lapidem caemento mediante constringitur, sic in aedificio Ecclesiae Christianus ad Christinaum caritate mediante connectitur. Ideo super fraternitatem caritatis Ecclesiae composuit fundamenta, ut radicibus caritatis exuberans quasi humor ascendat in ramos. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)