37 Gold (*Aurum*)

Gold[[1]](#endnote-1) designates charity because of its preciousness, Apoc. 3[:18]: “I counsel you to buy of me gold fire tried.” Wherefore, note according to the naturalists[[2]](#endnote-2) that golden coverings are good for healing diseases in women, because it does not permit worms to be generated in the wound and it mitigates pain. Thus, a reproof proceeding out of charity admits less of corruption, injures less. In the figure of this thing it is said in Exod. 25[:38], that the snuffers in the tabernacle ought to be golden, because those things which ought to purge the uncleanness of villages ought to proceed from charity. Because of this Jeremias appearing to Judas Maccabeus, [2] Mach. [15:16], said, “Take this holy sword a gift from God, wherewith thou shall overthrow the adversaries.” As a sign that the sword of jurisdiction in the superior ought to be of love, not bronze through wrath, not iron through hardness, not lead through malice, etc. Or the golden sword signifies eloquence in the superior.

Wherefore also John Chrysostom is said to have a golden mouth.[[3]](#endnote-3) Of Babylon, Ezra. 5[:a4], where the slumber of eloquence building toward Gehenna is designated. Wherefore, Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana,* book 4:[[4]](#endnote-4) And it is one of the distinctive features of good intellects not to love words, but the truth in words. For of what service is a golden key, if it cannot open what we want it to open? Or what objection is there to a wooden one if it can open what is shut?

¶ This eloquence is signified by “golden earrings” which the servant gave to Abraham, Gen 24[:22]. Because it serves only for the ears, not for the heart, Prov. 11[:22]: “A golden ring in a swine's snout, a woman fair and foolish.” Wherefore, Augustine, *Epistola* 25,[[5]](#endnote-5) “What good is it for me to have a tongue of gold and a heart of iron?”

1. Conradus Megenbergensis, *Ydonomica* 3.1 p2 69 in *Corpus corporum* “Aurum”: Nam sicut aurum super omnia est metalla nitore atque nobilitate, et ex natura sua cor hominis confortans, sic re vera caritas omnia et singula confortat opera pietatis. www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/advsuchergebnis.php?suchbegriff=AURUM&table=&level2\_name=&from\_year=&to\_year=&mode=SPH\_MATCH\_EXTENDED2&lang=0&corpus=all&verses=&suchenin=&sort\_alpha=&offset=3000 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Bartholomeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* 16.4 (1505, p. 308b): Item vstura facta cum instrumento aureo melior est quam ex alia materia vel metallo, locum enim adustionis custodit immunem a fetore. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Chrysostom, The epithet Χρυσόστομος (Chrysostomos, anglicized as Chrysostom) means "golden-mouthed" in Greek and denotes his celebrated eloquence.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\_Chrysostom#cite\_note-NewAdvent-2 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 4.11.26 (PL 34.100): bonorumque ingeniorum insignis est indoles, in verbis verum amare, non verba. Quid enim prodest clavis aurea, si aperire quod volumus non potest? Aut quid obest lignea, si hoc potest? quando nihil quaerimus nisi patere quod clausum est. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Augustine, *Epistola* 26.4 (PL 33.106): Quo mihi linguam auream et cor ferreum? [↑](#endnote-ref-5)