

Lost in Translation:

– Revelations 2:12-17: A Case Study for Idioms in Translation –

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1. Introduction

The appropriate translation of a particular type of «elementary lexical units», that «resist interruption and re-ordering of parts»,¹⁾ in general called idioms, regularly causes enormous difficulties and necessitates additional exegetical efforts.

A native speaker of English knows precisely what this is, a *red tape*; and he knows perfectly well that a red tape means delay, postponement, interruption, and a huge loss of time, before some bureaucratic body will have resolved an important inquiry or a pressing application. But the same English speaker will be at odds, if confronted with a phrase like *office mould*. This expression is not introduced as an elementary lexical unit into the English vernacular, although its single components, *office* and *mould*, are each well known and defined lexical items. Yet the composite lexical unit *office mould* makes sense only in its German representation *Amtsschimmel*, in which it is a perfect translational correspondent, in fact the closest natural equivalent for the English *red tape*.

Each natural language owns an abundance of such idioms and presumably everyone exploits them frequently. New idioms are constantly added to the already established pool of jargon and phraseologies. In short, one may look at idioms «as a lexical complex which is semantically simplex.»²⁾ These lexically complex word clusters are also semantically by no means simple, for the meaning of this compound is not at all disclosed by stringing together the senses of each single lexical element. Therefore one cannot infer from traditional

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1) D. A. Cruse, *Lexical Semantics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), 38.

2) *Ibid.*, 37.

lexeme based dictionaries the meaning or rather the semantical function of idioms. Not infrequently they are the main causes for the exegetical *cruces interpretum*. In modern languages special dictionaries comprising also a wide selection of idioms assist conveniently the translator.

Dictionaries of classical languages such as Latin or Greek contain, if at all, merely scarce hints for an idiomatic use of such phrases. They usually provide glosses as translational equivalents and sometimes add information for selected specific usage.³⁾ Yet idioms existed already in ancient languages. They also occur in the source texts of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Biblical writings. And as far as they are already identified,⁴⁾ modern Bible translators feel fit to render them dynamically in their target language.

The task before us is to employ a method by which one can identify an idiom, retrieve its original and contextual meaning, and deliver it into an appropriate receptor language expression. In this paper I shall approach the problem in a rather practical manner by demonstrating a feasible historical and philological method and testing it on a particular passage from the letter to Pergamum in the book of Revelation (2:12-17). The idiom at stake is an expression in Rev 2:17 traditionally rendered as *white stone*. The whole verse runs like this:⁵⁾

To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.

The Greek source text writes:⁶⁾

Τῶ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῶ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου καὶ δώσω αὐτῶ ψῆφον λευκήν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων.⁷⁾

3) Cf. John A. L. Lee, *A History of New Testament Lexicography* (New York & elsewhere: Peter Lang, 2003), 4ff.

4) E.g. Jean-Marc Babut, *Idiomatic Expressions of the Hebrew Bible. Their Meaning and Translation through Componential Analysis* (BIBAL Diss. ser. 5), North Richland Hills; Texas: BIBAL Press, 1999.

5) New Revised Standard Version. 1993. London: Geoffrey Chapman (NRSV).

6) Eberhard & Erwin Nestle, Barbara & Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, (eds.), 27th rev. ed., 9th corr. imprint 2006. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft (Nestle-Aland²⁷).

This sentence concludes the letter to Pergamum. One therefore is advised to take into account foremost the close context of Rev 2:12-17, i.e. the artificial and fictional letter of the risen and ascended Lord Christ to the leader of the Christian community in the Minor-Asian city of Pergamum, one of seven such epistles to Christian leaders and their congregations in cities of Western Asia, which the Lord revealed and dictated (Rev 1:11) to his servant John (Rev 1:1).

I plan to adopt the perspective and focus of contextual semantics and semasiological investigation in place of a componential analysis of each lexical element in a complex expression that makes an idiom.⁸⁾ Other than a metaphor an idiom commonly receives its meaning and semantic purpose independently from the meaning and function of its single lexical elements and also without the help of their components. If we cannot trace the origin and the history of an idiom, we hardly have a chance to identify its meaning. A survey of as many as possible different contexts to an idiom under investigation will yield clues that ultimately guide to the perception of its semantic substance.

2. «White Pebble» (Rev 2:17)

In revelation 2:17, Christ promises that he will give a white stone to those who win the victory, and on this stone⁹⁾ will be written a new name,¹⁰⁾ which no

7) There are few variants in ancient Greek manuscripts, which do not affect the translation of verse 17 in a relevant way: Cod. Sinaiticus, Clementine Vulgate, and Syriac Philoxeniana omit the first occurrence of αὐτῷ; some late Minuscules, the commentary of Andrew of Caesarea, few Vetus Latina manuscripts, Harclensis variants, Sahidic translation, and Beatus of Liébana add φαγεῖν after first αὐτῷ: *I will give him to eat*. Very few manuscripts, among them Cod. Sin., add before τοῦ μαννα a preposition, either ἀπο or ἐκ, Cod. Weissenburg (P 024) offers instead of τοῦ μαννα: ἀπο τοῦ ξύλου. Cod. Sin. omits the second occurrence of the phrase δώσω αὐτῷ. None of these variants interferes with the phrase of the λευκή ψήφος, the idiom under scrutiny, in a syntax or semantics altering way.

8) Cf. Jean-Marc Babut, *Idiomatic Expressions of the Hebrew Bible*, 6-10.

9) Heinrich Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (HNT 16a)(Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1974), 66s interprets the stone as an entry ticket to heaven in analogy to the cultic festival meals of king Antiochus of Commagene: «Zu diesem Zweck konnten [!] andernorts weiße Steine mit einem Namen darauf gebraucht werden. In Kommagene wurde als Ausweis etwas anderes gebraucht, ... nämlich ein goldener Kranz.»

10) Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis* (KEK 16)(Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896), 251, thinks this white stone (!) with the unknown name written on it to be an amulet

one knows except the person who receives the stone.¹¹⁾ The phrase «those who win the victory», in Greek the dative masculine singular participle $\nu\kappa\hat{\omega}\nu\tau\iota$,¹²⁾ by virtue of context refers to those, who endure suffering and persecution and in spite of this privation and pain persevere faithfully with Christ and His church. The meaning of $\nu\kappa\hat{\alpha}\nu$ in this context therefore is rather *to prevail, to succeed, to triumph*¹³⁾ and implies that Christ will gain victory and triumph in the eschatological battle against Satan and all evil powers and thus all those, who staunchly endure with Christ, too.

There is an old and firm tradition in English translations, to render Rev 2:17b in such a way that the image of a white stone with a name written on it, known only by the person who receives the stone is to be taken literally as an imprinted object of stone. The interpretations still cover a wide range: amulet,¹⁴⁾ the tablet

with an efficient witchcraft formula: «Der weisse Stein mit dem unbekanntem Namen ist ein Amulett mit einer wirkungskräftigen Zauberformel ... Wenn den Gläubigen in der zukünftigen Zeit der Stein mit dem unbekanntem Namen gegeben wird, so heisst dies, dass sie Herren der zukünftigen Welt sein werden.» I regard it as highly improbable that the Biblical book of Revelation thinks, a believer would enter the world to come merely on account of a witchcraft amulet. This kind of exegetical guesswork without linguistic method and analysis of textual semantics arrives at incredible imagination.

- 11) Also Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (HNT IV,4) (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr [Paul Siebeck] [= HNT 16, 3rd ed., 1970], 1926), 25, interprets this stone as an amulet: «Das Bild vom weissen Stein, mit aufgeschriebenem unbekanntem Namen, führt in die weitere Sphäre des Amulett- und Namenglaubens ... Durch den neuen Namen werden die $\psi\hat{\eta}\rho\omicron\tau$ unüberwindliche Beschützer gegen alle dämonischen Angriffe. Der Name ist natürlich der Christi; er ist neu, wenn er in der Form bisher unbekannter, nur dem Empfänger verständlicher Zeichen und Zahlen auf dem Stein eingeschrieben ist ... Namen und Zeichen bilden auch bei den Mandäern den Schutz der Seele auf ihrer Wanderung zum Ort des Lebens ...» Cf. also Johannes Behm, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (NTD 11), 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), 21; Eduard Lohse, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (NTD IV,4)(Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 28; Hubert Ritt, *Offenbarung des Johannes* (NEB 21) (Würzburg: Echter, 1986), 28s. Recently this interpretation has been repeated by Heinz Giesen, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (RNT)(Regensburg: Pustet, 1997), 115s.
- 12) The singular is to be seen as collective in number, and the masculine as gender-inclusive.
- 13) Cf. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978=91940 [11843]), 1176; Friedrich Palm, *Passow II/1*, 350f; Otto Bauernfeind in *ThWNT IV*, 941-945. —WB s.v. und Traugott Holtz, *EWNT II* cols. 1148-1150, fail to realize that context and register deserve due consideration when establishing meaning and significance of a word.
- 14) Placidus Häring, *Die Botschaft der Offenbarung des heiligen Johannes* (München: J. Pfeiffer, 1953), 69; Jürgen Roloff, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (ZBK NT 18) (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1984 [3rd ed., 2001]), 55.

of someone victorious in sports competitions,¹⁵⁾ an entry ticket for a festival banquet.¹⁶⁾

The Greek word underlying the translation «stone» is ψῆφος. In Greek ψῆφος refers to a little stone or, more precise on the level of referential semantics, to a pebble, which can be found at river banks and sea shores.¹⁷⁾ Such pebbles were used for board games and as dice,¹⁸⁾ casting lots,¹⁹⁾ and also for calculations.²⁰⁾

A further and the most prominent use of ψῆφος in Ancient Greece was in the process of secret voting, either in the city assembly or, more often in court by juries. The following two classical texts show that the court juries in Athens put their voting pebbles initially into two different vessels, one for the verdict of guilty, the other one for the verdict of not guilty. It was the container (κάδισκος) then, not the colour of the pebble, that was significant for the resulting verdict.

Ἄγαμέμνων δικας γάρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γλώσσης θεοὶ κλύοντες ἀνδροθνήτας Ἴλιοφθόρους	Agamemnon: Not mortal voice, but gods himself decreed revenge on Troy detested
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15) Cf. Placidus Häring, *Die Botschaft der Offenbarung des heiligen Johannes*, 69f.

16) Heinrich Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 217f.

17) Cf. Theophrastos, *causa plant.* III.6.3; Strabo, *geogr.* 17.1.34; Cassius Dio *Hist.*; Pausanias I.4.9.6 and Naumachius Epicus: *πολυψηφίδι θαλάσσης*.

18) Cf. Suetonius, *Περὶ τῶν παρ' Ἑλλήσι παιδίων* 1.70ff: Ἐγίνετο δὲ αὕτη κυβεῖας οὐσα εἶδος διὰ τῶν ἐν πλινθίοις ψήφων ἐξήκοντα λευκῶν τε ἅμα καὶ μελαινῶν. Χρήσις τοῦ παιγνίου τοῦδε παρὰ Φιλήμονι ἐν τῷ μεθύει, διαγραμμίζει, κυβεύει.

19) Phylarchus (according to Zenobius Sophista, *Proverbs* I.6.13) tells that the Skyths put every night, when they lay down to sleep, a pebble into their quiver, a white one, if the day was without trouble, a black one, if the day was troublesome. When they got killed in action the quiver was emptied and the pebbles were counted: if the white pebbles outnumbered the black ones, it was said, that the fallen had had a good fate. Cf. also Diogenianus *Gramm.*, *Proverbs* 6.9: Λευκὴ ψῆφος: ἐπὶ τῶν εὐδαιμόνως βιούντων. and Vettius Valens *Astrol.*, *anthologia* I 245.34-246.4: Παραπλησίαν δὲ ἂν τις εἰκάσειεν ταύτην τὴν ἀγωγὴν τῇ διὰ λευκῶν καὶ μελαινῶν ψήφων μαρτυρία: παίγνιον γὰρ ὁ βίος καὶ πλάνη καὶ πανήγυρις. καὶ γὰρ φιλόνηκοί τινες ἄνδρες δόλον πανούργον ἀλλήλοισι μηχανώμενοι κινδύντες τὰς ψήφους διὰ πολλῶν εὐθειῶν κατατίθενται εἰς τινὰς χώρας προμαχεῖν προκαλούμενοι.

20) The English word *calculation* derives from *calculus*, the Latin equivalent for Greek ψῆφος (cf. Ovid, *metamorph.* XV 44).

<p>εἰς αἵματηρὸν τεύχος οὐ διχορρόπως ψήφους ἔθεντο: τῷ δ' ἐναντίῳ κύτει ἐλπίς προσήει χειρὸς οὐ πληρουμένῳ.</p>	<p>and cast decidedly their votes into the lethal urn, the other jug barely received a glimpse of hope. <i>Aeschylus, Agamemnon 813-817</i></p>
<p>Ἄθῆνη ἐμὸν τόδ' ἔργον, λοισθίαν κρίναι δίκην: ψήφον δ' Ὀρέστη τήνδ' ἐγὼ προσθή- σομαι. ... νικᾶ δ' Ὀρέστης, κἄν ἰσόψηφος κριθῆ. ἐκβάλλεθ' ὡς τάχιστα τευχέων πάλους, ὄσοις δικαστῶν τοῦτ' ἐπέσταλται τέλος.</p>	<p>Athene: Now it's my turn to pass a crucial verdict: I place my pebble for Orest into the jug ... Yet equal count of votes acquits. You jurors, who received this charge, out of the jugs now pour the votes. <i>Aeschylus, Eumenides 734f, 741ff</i></p>

These two passages from the trilogy *Oresty* by Aeschylus (put on stage in 458 B.C.) reflect a court procedure in the time of Pericles, mid 5th century B.C. This routine was to ensure the secrecy and unmanipulable independence of court decisions. For this reason the ballot urns were jointly covered by a κημῶς, a funnel-shaped top from wickerwork, allowing a juror to place the voting pebble unseen into one of the two urns, either into the condemning or into the acquitting one. But it seems that these devices were not sufficiently efficient for the purpose of keeping the vote concealed from intruding observation, be it that the movement of the upper arm or the noise of the falling pebble disclosed the verdict. A speech from the orator Lysias (450-380 B.C.), which he delivered after 403 B.C., highlights the importance and necessity of secret ballot and how this was violated by unscrupulous or anti-democratic politicians as for instance the Thirty, i.e. oligarchical tyrants, who rather oppressed than governed Athens for half a year in 404/ 403 B.C.

<p>οἱ μὲν γὰρ τριάκοντα ἐκάθηντο ἐπὶ τῶν βῆθρων, οὗ νῦν οἱ πρυτάνεις καθέζονται: δύο δὲ τράπεζαι ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν τῶν τριάκοντα ἐκείσθην: τὴν δὲ ψήφον οὐκ εἰς καδίσκουσ ἀλλὰ φανερὰν ἐπὶ τὰς τραπέζας ταύτας ἔδει</p>	<p>The Thirty (tyrants) sat on those benches, where now the officials sit; in front of the Thirty stood two tables. And the pebbles were to be placed openly on these tables instead of in ballot boxes; the pebble for the verdict of guilty had to be placed on the table closer to the tyrants; how could there anybody be acquitted?</p>
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τίθεσθαι, τὴν μὲν καθαιρούσαν ἐπὶ τὴν ὑστέραν, ὥστε ἐκ τίνος τρόπου ἔμελλέ τις αὐτῶν σωθήσεσθαι;	<i>Lysias oratio XIII,37</i>
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Because the system of one kind of pebbles and two receiving containers under a cover did not satisfactorily guarantee the desired and required secrecy, two as regards colour different pebbles were introduced, a black one for the verdict of guilty and a white one for the verdict of not guilty. The atticist Pausanias (2nd century A.D.) quotes from a non extant comedy, named Cheirones, of the famous Kratinos (5th cent. B.C.), a contemporary of Aristophanes (445-386 B.C.), which illustrates the greed of corrupt jurors, who in addition to their legal remuneration of 3 oboles tend to accept bribes.

<p>«ΑΙΞ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑ»: τὰ τοῦ λευκοῦ κυάμου γένη, ᾧ ἐψηφίζον καὶ ἐχειροτό-νουν. Κρατίνος ἐν Χείρωνσιν καὶ παροιμία τὸ "αἰξ οὐρανια" ὁμοία τῷ "λευκὴ ψήφος": ὡς γὰρ Ἀμάλθεια τροφὸς ἦν τοῦ Διός, οὕτω καὶ ἡ τοιαύτη ψήφος ἔτρεφε τοὺς δωροδοκοῦντας δικαστάς.</p>	<p>«Celestial Goats»: The seed of the white bean, with which one votes in assemblies. Kratinos comments ironically in his comedy named Cheirones: «The Celestial Goat is similar to the white ballot pebble. In the same way as the goat Amaltheia fed the baby Zeus this pebble fed the corrupt jurors.»</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Pausanias Atticus (2nd cent. A.D.) Atticon onomaton synagoge Alpha.48</i></p>
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Of course, the atticist Pausanias lived some 600 years later. But we can trust his reference to Kratinos. The general information that jurors were greedy we also find with Aristophanes in his famous extant comedy *The Wasps*. This means, we may safely infer that the use of white and black pebbles in arriving at court decisions began somewhere in the second half of the 5th cent. B.C.

The Athenian jurisdiction in ancient time did not know an independent professional judge. Furthermore, experience had led to the assumption that human beings are generally subject to the temptation of corruption. Therefore the Athenian court system tried to prevent dishonesty and bribery by huge juries of more than 200 members. The benches, *δικαστήρια*, not seldom had more than 500 members and it is mentioned that once all 6000 annually elected jurors jointly decided one single case.²¹⁾ These jurors had to listen silently to the

21) Cf. Gerhard Thür, "Das Gerichtswesen Athens im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.", Leonhard Burckhardt and Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg, eds., *Große Prozesse im antiken Athen* (München:

speeches delivered by prosecutor, who was a private person, and by defendant, who had to defend himself without the assistance of a lawyer. Only the help of an orator, who prepared the speech, was permitted. Defendant and prosecutor were given an equal amount of time for their speeches, measured by a water-clock, κλεψύδρα.²²⁾ A speech could last about 15 to 30 minutes. Immediately after the speeches the jurors received the pebbles and cast their vote into a bronze urn. Discussion and consultation were prohibited. This also aimed at the preclusion of external influence. A second jug from wood received the unused pebble so that secrecy of vote was secured and manipulation of further cases was averted.²³⁾ The white pebble was cast in favour of the defendant, the black one supported the case of the complainant.

Plutarchus in his biography of Alcibiades provides us with the following anecdote, which offers not only a good understanding of the unpredictability of Athenian court juries but also of the functioning of black and white pebbles.

<p>ἐν δὲ Θουρίοις γενόμενος καὶ ἀποβάς τῆς τριήρους, ἔκρυπεν ἑαυτὸν καὶ διέφυγε τοὺς ζητούντας. ἐπιγνόντος δὲ τινος καὶ εἰπόντος: "οὐ πιστεύεις ὧ Ἄλκιβιάδῃ τῇ πατρίδι;" "τὰ μὲν ἄλλ'" ἔφη "πάντα: περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς οὐδὲ τῇ μητρὶ, μήπως ἀγνοήσασα τὴν μέλαιναν ἀντὶ τῆς λευκῆς ἐπενέγκῃ ψῆφον." ὕστερον δ' ἀκούσας ὅτι θάνατον αὐτοῦ κατέγνω κεν ἡ πόλις: "ἀλλ' ἐγὼ" εἶπε "θεῖξω αὐτοῖς ὅτι ζῶ."</p>	<p>He [Alcibiades] arrived in Thurioi, disembarked the triere, hid, and escaped the bailiffs. Someone recognized him and asked him: «O Alcibiades, don't you trust your own country, do you?» «In general I do», he answered; «but concerning my very life I do not even trust my mother, for she might unwittingly cast the black pebble instead of the white one (into the ballot box)» When he later learned that the city had passed a death sentence, he said: «I will show them that I still live!» <i>Plutarchus (46-122 A.D.), Alcibiades 22</i></p>
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Since the time of Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.) and Aeschines (389-314 B.C.) we find repeatedly the phrase «to give a pebble» with the clear meaning «to cast a vote»²⁴⁾. Another frequent meaning of the phrase διδόναι τινὶ ψῆφον is, to

C.H.Beck, 2000), 207f.

22) Cf. Ibid., 40, 46f.

23) Ibid., 47f.

24) Aeschines, Ktesiphon 16.11: τῷ τοῦ νόμου δικαίῳ χρηὶ διδόναι τὴν ψῆφον, Timarchus 77.4, 179.5; Xenophon Athenaios, hell. 7.3.2; Aristotle, Ath. pol. 55.4; Flav. Josephus, ant. 19.268; Arcestratos Siculus I.15; Appianus, hist. Rom. 150.7; Aelius Aristides Rhet 46.129, 49.381: τῷ πολέμῳ τὴν ψῆφον δίδωσι; Cassius Dio, hist. 38.17.2: τὴν γὰρ σφύρουσάν σφας ψῆφον δεδωκώς ἦν; idem, hist. 40.55.2: καὶ ὁ μὲν οὐκέτι

hand out the voting pebbles or, more often, simply, to request s.o. to make his vote.²⁵⁾ The verb ψηφίζεσθαι deriving from the noun ψῆφος means «to vote». But even where the voting was done by raising the hand it was called ψηφίζεσθαι. Moreover, the judgement or a public decision was usually called ψῆφισμα irrespective of method, technique, and procedure. This shows the following quotation from Aristotle.

<p>οὕτω δίδωσιν ἐν μὲν τῇ βουλῇ τὴν ἐπιχειροτονίαν, ἐν δὲ τῷ δικαστηρίῳ τὴν ψῆφον: εἰ δὲ μηδεὶς βούληται καταγορεῖν, εὐθὺς δίδωσι τὴν ψῆφον:</p>	<p>So he makes them vote in city council by raising hands, in court by means of the pebble; If no one wants to accuse, he makes them vote right away; <i>Aristoteles (384-322 B.C.) Constitution of the Athenians 55</i></p>
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In the 4th century B.C. disc-shape bronze medals were in use for voting in Athens, as we learn from Aristotle.²⁶⁾ Even these bronze tokens were called ψῆφοι. Recent excavations in Athens brought six such bronze «pebbles» to light.²⁷⁾ They were fit with a little tube protruding from the centre of the disc on either side. These bronze-ψηφοι existed in two different versions, one with a hollow tube, the other with a massive tube. The disc with the massive tube was used in place of the white pebble, i.e. voting in favour of the person accused and freeing her from the charge. The hollow tube disc replaced the black pebble in favour of the suitor. The judge took the voting disc (still called pebble!), while giving it into the bronze urn in such a way that thumb and pointing finger covered the tube and no one was able to observe, which vote he was about to cast. Yet everyone present could see, that the juror cast exactly one vote. Neither cumulation nor abstention were permitted.

<p>[ψηφοι δέ] εἰσιν [χ]αλκαῖ, ἀλίσκον [ἔχουσαι ἐν τῷ μέσῳ, αἱ μ]ῆ[ν] ἡμίσειαι τετρῶπημέναι, αἱ δὲ ἡμίσειαι πλ]ήρει[ς:]</p>	<p>Ballot pebbles come as bronze disks with a grip on each side formed by an axis, half of these axes remain hollow, half of them are filled.</p>
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τὴν ψῆφον ἔδωκεν; Claudius Ptolemaios Mathematicus 7.4.4.1: διδόντας τῷ κατ' ἐπικράτησιν πλείους ἔχοντι ψήφους οἰκοδεσποτείας; Alexander Rhet. 2.29.1; Dionys. Hal. antiqu. Rom. 6.66.4.

25) Demosthenes, or. 59.109; Aristotle, Ath. pol. 68.2; Plutarchos, Numa 7.1, Poplicola 7.5, Titus Flamininus 2.2; Dionysios Hal. antiqu. Rom. 4.12.3, 7.59.7, 7.61.5, 7.64.6; Harpocration, lex. 79; 288; Aelius Aristides 46.246.

	<i>Aristoteles, Constitution of the Athenians 68.2</i>
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The reason for this change from real pebbles to bronze discs lay most probably in the fact that judges (at all times) tend to become corrupt²⁸⁾ and to manipulate the interpretation of laws to the benefit of persons, who are willing to pay them to this purpose.²⁹⁾

For dating the change from real black and white pebbles to bronze discs two scholia to Aeschines (389-314 B.C.) may be helpful:³⁰⁾

ἔψηφίζοντο οἱ δικασταὶ διὰ λευκῆς καὶ μελαίνης ψήφου· καὶ ἦν ἡ μὲν μέλαινα ἡ καταψηφισομένη, ἡ δὲ λευκὴ ἡ σώζουσα.	The jury voted with a white and a black pebble, the black one condemning, the white one pardoning.
τετρυπημένη δὲ ψήφος ἦν ἡ καταδικάζουσα, πλήρης δὲ ἡ ἀπολύουσα.	The hollow pebble condemned and the filled one released.

If these scholia are correctly based on utterances of Aeschines, we are to assume that during the active time of Demosthenes' fierce foe Aeschines the bronze discs began to replace the pebbles, i.e. in the middle of the 4th century B.C. If we further take into account that the Macedonian conquest of Athens at

26) Aristotle, Ath. pol. 68. According to Photius, Lex. Seg. 51.8.44.464.8ss: «τετρυπημένη ψήφος: τῶν ψήφων οὐσῶν χαλκῶν καὶ ἀλίσκων ἔχουσῶν αἱ μὲν ἦσαν τετρυπημέναι ὅσαι καὶ κατεψηφίσαντο, αἱ δὲ πλήρεις ἀτρυπητοὶ ὅσαι ἠφίεσαν τοὺς κρινομένους.» Cf. Harpocration, lex. 288: Ἄριστοτέλης ἐν Ἀθηναίων πολιτείᾳ γράφει ταυτὶ "ψῆφοι δὲ εἰσι χαλκαῖ, ἀλίσκων ἔχουσαι ἐν τῷ μέσῳ, αἱ μὲν ἡμίσειαι τετρυπημέναι, αἱ δὲ ἡμίσειαι πλήρεις, οἱ δὲ λαχόντες ἐπὶ τὰς ψήφους, ἐπειδὴν εἰρημένοι ὄσιν οἱ λόγοι, παραδιδόασιν ἑκάστῳ τῶν δικαστῶν β' ψήφους, τετρυπημένην καὶ πλήρη, φανεράς ὄρᾶν τοῖς ἀντιδίκοις ἵνα μῆτε πλήρεις μῆτε πάντα τετρυπημένας λαμβάνωσιν." Pausanias, hist. I.48. 2, writes that even white beans were used in place of a voting pebble. But this may well be sharp irony. Until the discovery of the writing ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑ in 1879 (now in Berlin) only these fragments were known. Ten years later another papyrus of this writing was published (London 1888/9)

27) Cf. John McKesson Camp, *The Athenian Agora. Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 1986), 107-113 with illustrations and photographs Nos. 80-86 and map 129.

28) Cf. William Tarn, *Die Kultur der hellenistischen Welt* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), 101f.

29) Luke 18:2-5 is also an example. For this context cf. Aristotle, AthPol 68 and 69.

30) Scholia in Aeschinem 1.79 (Vat. Laur).

the end of the 4th cent. B.C. saw the closing stages of autonomous and independent Athenian jurisdiction, we may deduce that the bronze discs, which were exclusively used in the city of Athens, were so for merely a few decades.

Further tools to prevent corruption were random choice generating allotting machines, so that no juror was able to choose his case, and water-clocks,³¹⁾ which measured the time allocated for the speeches in court. The time measured by *choes* of water (1 *chous* [χοῦς] roughly equivalent to an American gallon) literally «ran out» at a pace of some three minutes per gallon.

The white pebble or rather the acquitting filled bronze disc also was called σῶζουσα ψῆφος³²⁾ and the black pebble or rather the condemning hollow bronze disc was also addressed as καταδικάζουσα ψῆφος.³³⁾ This indicates that in court the verb σῶζειν has a specific meaning, namely the meaning of declaring someone as innocent, passing the verdict of not guilty, pardoning somebody. The Suda-lexicon adds the explanation ψῆφος μέλαινα ἢ καταδικάζουσα, λευκή δὲ ἡ δικαιόουσα.³⁴⁾



Bronze voting discs, found above left in Piraeus, above right on the Agora in Athens

31) Illustrations are to be found in Thür, “Das Gerichtswesen Athens im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr”, 40.

32) Cf. Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.), *De falsa legatione* 66.6; Cassius Dio (150-235 A.D.), *Historiae Romanae* 38.17.2.

33) Cf. Lucian of Samosata.(120-180 A.D.), *Phalaris* 2.5.6.

34) Suda, Psi 85.2: «The black pebble is the condemning, the white one is the discharging.»

An official judgment passed in court and published could have the following very short form, reduced to the absolute necessary amount of information:

<p>οὗτος ἀπέφυγεν παρῶν καὶ ἀπολογού-μενος· τὸ δικαστήριον ἢ στοὰ ἢ ποικίλη. τῶν ψήφων αἰ τετρυπημέναι: 100. αἰ δὲ πλήρεις: 399.</p>	<p>This one was summoned, was prosecuted and defended himself. Jury: Stoa Poikile. Hollow pebbles [guilty]: 100; Filled [not guilty]: 399. <i>Inscriptiones Graecae II² 1641 lines 25-33 (mid-4th cent. BC)</i></p>
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It is informative that according to this inscription, found on a stele with records of the Delian confederates (amphiktyones) at Athens, the plaintiff received hardly 20% of the votes possible in favour of his proposal. This was the required minimum.

<p>Ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ μεταλάβῃ τὸ πέμπτον μέρος τῶν ψήφων καὶ ἀτιμωθῇ ὁ ἐνδείξας ἐμὲ Κηφισίος οὐτοσί, οὐκ ἔξεστιν αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τοῖν θεοῖν εἰσιέναι, ἢ ἀποθανεῖται.</p>	<p>For if this Cephisius, who reported me to the authorities, does not receive one fifth of the votes, he will be dishonoured and must not enter the holy shrine, or he will die. <i>Andokides (* 440 B.C.), De Mysteriori 33</i></p>
<p>Μέλητρον μὲν οὖν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκῶ, καὶ νῦν ἀποπέφευγα, καὶ οὐ μόνον ἀποπέφευγα, ἀλλὰ παντὶ δῆλον τοῦτό γε, ὅτι εἰ μὴ ἀνέβῃ Ἄνυτος καὶ Λύκων κατηγορήσον-τες ἐμοῦ, κἄν ᾧφλε χιλίας δραχμάς, οὐ μεταλαβὼν τὸ πέμπτον μέρος τῶν ψήφων.</p>	<p>I seem to have again escaped Meletus, and not only escaped, for it is obvious for everyone that he would have to pay 1000 Drachmas for not receiving one fifth of the votes, if Anytos and Lycon had not come up to sue me. <i>Platon (427-347 vChr.), Apologia 36a</i></p>
<p>ὅσοι δ' ἂν γράφονται γραφᾶς ἰδίας κατὰ τὸν νόμον, ἐάν τις μὴ ἐπεξέλθῃ ἢ ἐπεξίων μὴ μεταλάβῃ τὸ πέμπτον μέρος τῶν ψήφων, ἀποτεισάτω χιλίας δραχμάς τῷ δημοσίῳ.</p>	<p>If the plaintiff in a private action compliant with the law does not succeed or does not receive at least one fifth of the votes in favour of his suit, he is liable to pay 1000 Drachmas to the treasury. <i>Demosthenes, Against Meidias 47</i></p>

Summarizing the data so far presented one realizes that the Greek lexeme ψῆφος as used from the 5th century B.C. onwards owns several lexicographical meanings, which all depart from the referential meaning. First of all ψῆφος refers to a little stone as found at river banks or on beaches and named in English *pebble*. Such an item was used for quite a few different purposes: as dice or piece in games, as movable object in calculation devices like an abacus, as gemstone, and as ballot. So the lexeme integrated these usages in its semantical functions and adopted them as meaning. Depending on context

ψῆφος means in fact dice, piece, gemstone, calculator, or vote. The handling of pebbles in court decisions became the most prominently one, and therefore the word ψῆφος eventually adopted the meaning «vote» as the most frequent and therefore as the most obvious meaning. The physical composition became unimportant, even irrelevant; important and relevant were purpose and application. This is illustrated by the following text.

Ἄνῆρ γὰρ ἰδιώτης ἐν πόλει δημοκρατου-μένη νόμῳ καὶ ψήφῳ βασιλεύει.	In a democracy essentially common man reigns by law and vote. <i>Aeschines, Against Ctesiphon 233</i>
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A further detail concerning the appearance of the bronze voting disc³⁵⁾ is to be mentioned, for it sheds light on the phrase καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γε-γραμμένον Rev 2:17. On the voting discs found on the Agora in Athens is engraved ΨΗΦΟΣ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑ, literally: «Public Pebble» or «pebble for casting votes and belonging to the people». A dynamic gloss may even render «National Ballot». This may have been another precaution against corrupt judges, who previously collected pebbles at river banks and now might have been tempted to forge bronze pebbles. The meaning is clear: This bronze pebble belongs to the people or to the city/state and is to be used on behalf of the city or pertaining to public affairs. Discs found in Piraeus carry single capital Greek letters. Each letter indicates a particular bench, δικαστήριον, i.e. court jury. The inscriptions on the bronze discs, that serve as ballot pebbles, name the court, where the particular type of bronze pebbles is used. This again serves as precaution against manipulation and manoeuvring. From this we must conclude that by the time of Aristotle's *Athenaion Politeia* only official tokens issued and imprinted with the sign of relevant judicial authorities were to be used in court and for each court its own proper series. In spite of the fact that these tokens were made from bronze they were denoted as «pebble» thus demonstrating that the metonymical significance and the symbolic use had become a lexicalized meaning of the Greek word ψῆφος, and that in this case the function was

35) I wish to remind the reader that this bronze disc in Greek texts is always (without any exception!) called ψῆφος, «pebble». Only by the adjectives «pierced» (τετραπημένη) and «massive» (πλήρης) or «not pierced» (ἀτρύπητος) it becomes clear, of which material the vote casting requisite is made of. The word ψῆφος in this context has completely acquired the meaning «ballot». In order to understand and translate Rev 2:17 this is to be kept in mind.

semantically more important than the material composition. This is indirectly indicated also by Act 26:10 in the Lucan speech of St. Paul before Agrippa:

Act 26:10

... ὁ καὶ ἐποίησα ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ πολλοὺς τε τῶν ἁγίων ἐγὼ ἐν φυλακαῖς κατέκλεισα τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐξουσίαν λαβὼν, ἀναιρουμένων τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον, ..

NRSV Act 26:10

And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death.

Surely Luke does not imply that St. Paul used a (black) pebble for the process of passing the verdict of a death sentence against the early Christians. The phrase does not even prove that Paul was a member of an official court with this purpose. The phrase *to cast a pebble* is at his time already an idiom with the precise meaning *to cast a vote*. The character of the vote can be formal and official, but it can also be personal and private, meaning: I agreed with the death sentence and supported it by assisting in executing it. For Act 26:10 this is accepted by most modern translations.

The Greek lexeme ὄνομα not only refers to proper names but to designations of things and matter also. Therefore one is not obliged to assume a natural person being indicated in Rev 2:17. In the context of ballot pebbles the phrase ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον rather means, that it is not the people's court or the official state's court that delivers, but delivery will be solely in the name of a new court, by the court of God, where Christ is the juror and judge.

Thus ψῆφος, predominantly used in the context of politics and jurisdiction, means the pebble, by which a vote is cast; in most cases it means the vote itself, even if the vote is cast by raising hand or by small metal discs.³⁶⁾ In connection with the adjective attribute λευκή («white») the noun ψῆφος refers to the absolving judgement by a jury member,³⁷⁾ whereas the black pebble (μελαίνη

36) This seems to be reflected by Julius Wellhausen, *Analyse der Offenbarung Johannis* (AGG NF IX,4)(Berlin, 1907), 6, who translates Rev 2:17b: «... und ich gebe ihm eine weiße Marke ...»

37) Cf. Plutarchos, Alc. 22. Diogenianus, prov. 6.9.1; Claudius Aelianus, var. hist. 13.38.13; Pausanias, att. onom. syn. 48.4; Lucianus, Harm. 3.34; Vettius Valens, anth. 246.1.

ψηφός) signifies a condemning vote at court.³⁸⁾

The phrase διδόναι ψηφόν means to cast a vote, as can be seen from the following classical texts.

<p>Εἰ μὲν τοίνυν, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, συνέβαινε τοῖς Ἀλιμουσίοις περὶ πάντων τῶν δημοτῶν <u>διαψηφίσασθαι</u> ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, εἰκὸς ἦν καὶ εἰς ὄψε ψηφίζεσθαι, ἵν' ἀπηλλαγμένοι ἦσαν ποιήσαντες τὰ ὑμῖν <u>ἐψηφισμένα</u>.</p> <p>εἰ δὲ πλείους ἢ εἴκοσιν ὑπόλοιποι ἦσαν τῶν δημοτῶν, περὶ ὧν ἔδει τῇ ὑστεραία <u>διαψηφίσασθαι</u>, καὶ ὁμοίως ἦν ἀνάγκη συλλέγεσθαι τοὺς δημότας, τί ποτ' ἦν τὸ δυσχερὲς Εὐβουλίδῃ ἀναβαλέσθαι εἰς τὴν ὑστεραίαν καὶ περὶ ἐμοῦ πρώτου <u>τὴν ψηφόν διδόναι</u> τοῖς δημόταις;</p> <p>διότι, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, οὐκ ἠγνῶει Εὐβουλίδης ὅτι, εἰ λόγος ἀποδοθήσοιτο καὶ παραγένοιτό μοι πάντες οἱ δημόται καὶ <u>ἡ ψηφός</u> <u>δικαίως δοθείη</u>, οὐδαμοῦ γενήσονται οἱ μετὰ τούτου συνεστηκότες.</p>	<p>Now, men of the jury, if the Halimusians had been deciding on that day the status of all the members of the deme, it would have been reasonable for them to continue <u>voting</u> until late, in order that they might have fulfilled the requirements of your <u>decree</u> before departing to their homes.</p> <p>But, seeing that there were more than twenty of the demesmen left regarding whom <u>they</u> had to vote on the following day, and that the members of the deme had in any case to be convened again, what difficulty was there for Eubulides to order an adjournment until the morrow, and then let the demesmen <u>vote</u> on my case first? The reason was, men of the jury, that Eubulides knew very well that, if an opportunity of speaking should be granted to me and if all the men of the deme should be present to support me and <u>the ballots</u> <u>honestly given out</u>, those who had leagued themselves with him would be nowhere!</p> <p><i>Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.), Eubulides 57,15f</i></p>
<p>Χρῆ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τὸ αὐτὸ φθέγγεσθαι τὸν ῥήτορα καὶ τὸν νόμον: ὅταν δὲ ἐτέραν μὲν φωνὴν ἀφιῆ ὁ νόμος, ἐτέραν δὲ ὁ ῥήτωρ, <u>τῷ</u> <u>τοῦ νόμου δικαίῳ</u> <u>χρῆ</u> <u>διδόναι τὴν</u> <u>ψηφόν</u>, οὐ τῇ τοῦ λέγοντος ἀναισχυντία.</p>	<p>Citizens of Athens, speaker and law must be in agreement; if law and speaker sound different,</p> <p><u>one</u> <u>needs to vote for the just cause of the law</u> <u>and not for the impertinence of the speaker.</u></p> <p><i>Aeschines (389-314 B.C.), Ctesiphon 16</i></p>
<p>ὅσα μὲν γάρ περὶ τῶν τότε</p>	<p>For what he understood about what had</p>

38) Cf. Plutarchos, Alcibiad. 22, where it is said of Alcibiades that he answered to the question «Don't you trust your fatherland?»: «As far as my life is concerned, I do not even trust my mother, that she may not by accident cast the black pebble instead of the white one into the ballot box.» The same story we find in Claudius Aelianus Sophistes, variae historiae 13.38. Plutarchos tells this story again in apophthegmata 186. E.8-10. Cf. also Eutecnius, alexipharmaca 17.25: τοῦ θανάτου παραιτησάμενον τὴν μέλαιναν ψηφόν

<p>γενομένων ἐφρόνησε, πάντας εἰδέναι ἔφη τὴν γὰρ σώζουσάν σφας ψῆφον δεδωκῶς ἦν, οὐ μὴν καὶ προσήκειν ἐπὶ τοῖς παρεληλυθόσι τοιοῦτόν τινα νόμον συγγράφεσθαι.</p>	<p>happened then, was, that all knew, he said, that he had been giving his affirming vote, and that it was not at all appropriate for those present, to pass any such bill. <i>Dio Cassius (150-235 A.D.), Rom. Hist. 38:17,2</i></p>
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Occasionally ψῆφον δίδοναι even means «to express an opinion about someone».³⁹⁾ But the phrase δίδοναι ψῆφον means also *to give someone the voting pebble*, in order to make him vote on an issue or to make him pass a verdict on a person. This may be deduced from the following texts.

<p>οὕτω δίδωσιν ἐν μὲν τῇ βουλῇ τὴν ἐπιχειροτονίαν, ἐν δὲ τῷ δικαστηρίῳ τὴν ψῆφον: ἐὰν δὲ μηδεὶς βούληται καταγορεῖν, εὐθὺς δίδωσι τὴν ψῆφον:</p>	<p>So he makes them vote in city council by raising hands, in court by means of the pebble; If no one wants to accuse, he makes them vote right away; <i>Aristoteles (384-322 B.C.) Constitution of the Athenians 55</i></p>
<p>Κλαύδιος δέ, ἐπεὶπερ εἰς τὸ Παλάτιον ἀφικνεῖται συναγαγὼν τοὺς ἐταίρους ψῆφον ἀνεδίδου περὶ Χαιρέου. τοῖς δὲ τὸ μὲν ἔργον λαμπρὸν ἐδόκει, ἀπιστίαν δ' ἐπεκάλουν τῷ πεπραχότι καὶ αὐτῷ τιμωρίαν ἐπιβάλλειν δίκαιον ἡγοῦντο ἐπ' ἀποτροπῇ τοῦ μέλλοντος χρόνου. ἀπήγετο οὖν τὴν ἐπὶ θανάτῳ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ Λοῦππός τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων πλείους.</p>	<p>When Claudius arrived in the Palace, he gathered his counsellors and made them judge Chaerea. Although they approved of the deed [the murder of Caligula], they accused the culprit of high treason and punished him and Luppus and even more Romans with death, a just punishment as a deterrent for the future. <i>Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 19:268f</i></p>
<p>καὶ γενομένης αὐτῷ σιωπῆς, εἶπεν ὅτι τοῖς μὲν υἱοῖς αὐτὸς ἀποχρῶν ἦν δικαστής, περὶ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων τοῖς πολίταις ἐλευθέροις οὕσι ψῆφον δίδωσι: λεγέτω δ' ὁ βουλόμενος καὶ πειθέτω τὸν δῆμον. οὐκέτι μέντοι λόγων ἐδέησεν, ἀλλὰ τῆς ψήφου δοθείσης, πάσαις ἁλόντες ἐπελεκίσθησαν.</p>	<p>[Brutus] returned and said, after they had calmed down, to judge his own sons he was right, but concerning the others he was to leave the judgment with the free citizens. Whoever wishes to speak may do so and convince the people. Since there was, however, no need for speeches, the verdict was passed and those were condemned unanimously and then</p>

39) Cf. Aelius Aristides (2nd AD), Plato's Rhetoric 115.11: ἐξαιρεῖται δὲ ἡμᾶς αἰτίας καὶ ὁ πάντα ἄριστος Ἀσκληπιός, ψῆφον οὐκ ἄτιμον οὐδὲ αὐτὸς διδοῦς, τὰ μὲν ἐν μέτροις, τὰ δὲ οὕτως περὶ ἡ.

	executed with axes. <i>Plutarchus (46-120 A.D.), Publicola 7:5-6</i>
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Thus we learn that the phrase *διδόναι ψῆφον* means *to vote* as well as *to have someone vote*. From the passage of Demosthenes' speech against Eubulides (oratio 57,15f) we may infer that this usage is not necessarily exclusive, but rather in form of the figure of speech of an antanaclasis, in one sentence in both functions. The way Josephus and Plutarchus employ the phrase, shows that it is clearly detached from the real procedure, for in Rome never a pebble was used in voting, but a table, *tabella*. A *tabella* was utilized in the Roman comitia for electing magistrates. In this case the citizen wrote the name of the candidate, whom he wished to vote for, on the table. Tables were also needed for passing bills. If the citizen wished to support the proposed bill, he took the table with the inscription *U. R. (uti rogas = as you suggest)*; if he wished to reject the proposal, he took the table with the inscription *A. (antiquo = leave it as it was)*.⁴⁰⁾ In court each juror received three *tabellae*: one with the inscription *A. (absolvo = I acquit)*, one with the inscription *C. (condemno = I condemn)*, and the third one with the inscription *N. L. (non liquet = no decision)*. In Athenian courts the third possibility, no decision, did not exist.

The idiom of the pebble even was used by Roman authors of the first and second centuries A.D. and thus entered the literary Latin culture,⁴¹⁾ although the Romans never at all did use *calculi*, the Latin equivalent for *ψῆφοι*, or *lapilli*, i.e. little stones, but wooden *tabellae*. And their courts functioned quite different from the Athenian *δικαστήρια*.

Mos erat antiquus niveis atrisque lapillis, / His damnare reos, illis absolvere culpa; / Tunc quoque sic lata est sententia tristis, et omnis / Calculus inमित demittitur ater in urnam. / Quae simul effudit numerandos versa lapillos, / Omnibus e nigro color est mutatus in album, / Candidaque Herculeo sententia numine facta / Solvit Alemoniden.	From of old there was the custom to condemn the defendant with black stones and to free him from guilt with white ones; so was passed the sad sentence now, and each pebble cast into the urn was black. As it was emptied, in order to count the stones, all changed their colour from black to white. Thus by Hercules' providence the white sentence acquitted the son of Alemon.
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40) Cf. Cicero, In Pis. 3; 96; Phil. 11:19.

41) Ovid, Metamorphoses XV,41-48; Pliny the Younger, Letters I,2; VI,11.

	<i>Publius Ovidius Naso (43 B.C. – A.D. 17)</i> <i>Metamorphoses XV 41-48</i>
Nec est, quod putes me sub hac exceptione veniam postulare. Immo, quo magis intendam limam tuam, confitebor et ipsum me et contubernales ab editione non ahorrere, si modo tu fortasse errori nostro album calculum adieceris.	I would not have you imagine that I am bespeaking your indulgence, by filing this counter-plea: on the contrary, to induce you to exercise the utmost severity of your criticism, I will confess, that neither my familiars nor myself are averse to the publication of this piece if you should give your vote in favour of what may be pure error on my part. <i>Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus Minor (62-114 A.D.) Epistulae I,2</i>
O diem (repetam enim) laetum notandumque mihi candidissimo calculo!	It was a day (I cannot but repeat it again) of exquisite happiness, which I shall ever distinguish with the fairest mark. <i>Plinius Minor, Epistulae VI,11</i>

We also find the idiomatic use of ψῆφος in theological texts:

εἰ γὰρ βουληθεῖη ὁ θεὸς δικάσαι τῷ θνητῷ γένει χωρὶς ἐλέου, τὴν καταδικάζουσιν ψῆφον οἴσει μηδενὸς ἀνθρώπων τὸν ἀπὸ γενέσεως ἄχρι τελευτῆς βίον ἄπταιστον ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ δραμόντος, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἐκουσίως, τὸ δὲ ἀκουσίως χρῆσαμένον τοῖς ἐν ποσὶν ὀλισθήμασιν.	If God wanted to judge the mortal breed devoid of pity, he would pass the verdict of damnation, since no human being lives from birth till death without failing, but freely as well as reluctantly commits transgressions. <i>Philo of Alexandria (1st cent. A.D.), Quod Deus sit immutabilis 75</i>
ἀλλ' ὁ τῶν ἐν ψυχῇ ταμειομένων ἐπίσκοπος ἰδὼν, ᾧ κατιδεῖν ἔξεστι μόνῳ, τὰ ἀθέατα γενέσει, τὴν καταδικάζουσιν ἀπὸ τούτων ψῆφον ἤνεγκε, μάρτυς ἀψευδέστατος ὁμοῦ καὶ κριτὴς ἀδέκαστος ὁ αὐτὸς ὢν:	Since the guard of all, that is buried in the soul, saw, what only he is able to see and which is concealed from mankind, he passed the verdict of damnation, for he himself is the most truthful witness and the most incorruptible prosecutor. <i>Philo., De migratione Abrahami 115</i>
ἀπαραλόγιστος γὰρ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ψῆφος εἰς τὸ δικαιοτάτον κρίμα.	God's verdict of damnation is not at all unreasonable. <i>Clement of Alexandria (2nd cent. A.D.), Stromateis 7.3.20</i>

One may be amazed to finally learn that even today, in contemporary Modern

Greek language the word ψῆφος is used with this meaning. In the Greek-German dictionary by Mandeson⁴²⁾ the following meanings are presented for the word ψῆφος:

Voice, Vote, Pebble, little Stone, Sphere for Voting, Right to Vote, Voting System.

Mandeson also notes specific uses:

δίδω ψῆφον λευκήν = to give a white ball or to vote

δίδω ψῆφον μαύρην = to give a black ball or to deny the vote (i.e. to vote against)

Although the word for the colour black has changed in Modern Greek, the idiom is retained with the adjective μαύρη instead of μελαίνη.

It is startling then that of the translations into the three Modern Greek vernaculars, Katharevusa (καθαρεύουσα), Neoelliniki (νεοελληνική), and Dimotiki (δημοτική) only the Katarevusa version, which is very close to ancient Koine-Greek as used in Septuagint and Greek New Testament retains the idiom.

Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκήν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων. (Koine)⁴³⁾

Ὅστις ἔχει ὠτίον ἃς ἀκούσῃ τί λέγει τὸ Πνεῦμα πρὸς τὰς ἐκκλησίας. Εἰς τὸν νικῶντα θέλω δώσει εἰς αὐτὸν νὰ φάγῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ θέλω δώσει εἰς αὐτὸν ψῆφον λευκήν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα νέον γεγραμμένον, τὸ ὁποῖον οὐδεὶς γνωρίζει εἰμὴ ὁ λαμβάνων. (Katharevusa)⁴⁴⁾

42) Mandeson, Συγχρονο Ἑλληνογερμανικὸ Λεξικόν. Athenai, 1469.

43) Nestle-Aland, 27th ed., 9th corr. imprint 2006.

44) Ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Τὸ θεῖον ἀρχετύπικον καὶ ἡ μετάφρασις αὐτοῦ, ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου κληρικοῦ καὶ καθηγητοῦ τοῦ Ἑθνικοῦ Πανεπιστημίου, αειμνήστου Νεοφύτου Βαμβα (The New Testament in Ancient and Modern Greek. Printed for the Gideons International by United Bible Societies.

"...Ἐκεῖνος ποὺ ἔχει αὐτιά, ἅς ἀκούσῃ τί λέγει τὸ Πνεῦμα εἰς τὰς ἐκκλησίας. Εἰς ἐκεῖνον ποὺ νικᾷ θὰ τοῦ δώσω ἀπὸ τὸ μάννα τὸ κρυμμένον· θὰ τοῦ δώσω καὶ πέτραν λευκὴν καὶ εἰς τὴν πέτραν θὰ εἶναι γραμμένον ἓνα καινούργιο ὄνομα, ποὺ δὲν ξέρει κανεὶς παρὰ ἐκεῖνος ποὺ τὸ παίρνει." (Neoelliniki)⁴⁵⁾

ἽΟποῖος ἔχει αὐτιά ας ἀκούσει τι λέει το Πνεῦμα στις ἐκκλησίες. ἽΟποῖος νικήσει, θα του δώσω ἀπὸ το κρυμμένο μάννα. Θα του δώσω και μια ἀσπρη ψηφίδα, μ' ἓνα καινούριο ὄνομα γραμμένο πάνω της, που δε θα το ξέρει κανένας ἄλλος εκτός ἀπ' αὐτόν που θα την πάρει". (Dimotiki)⁴⁶⁾

It may well be that this is owed to the strong view held by Philologists of the 19th and 20th centuries, which claims that Attic and Koine Greek are so different that Septuagint and New Testament must not be read and interpreted in the light of Classical Greek. This is certainly an important and weightful argument. Yet my claim here is not, to interpret Koine texts in general on the basis of the Classical lexicon and grammar, but to realize that the idiom of the white pebble survived the historical changes of the Greek language until today and that it therefore might be advisable to use the data extant from Classical sources, in order to recover the intended meaning of Rev 2:17. The famous Greek Philologist and Harvard scholar Herbert Weir Smyth writes in the introduction to his Greek Grammar:⁴⁷⁾

In its spoken form the Koinè consisted of the spoken form of Attic intermingled with a considerable number of Ionic words and some loans from other dialects, but with Attic orthography. The literary form, a compromise between Attic literary usage and the spoken language, was an artificial and almost stationary idiom from which the living speech drew farther and farther apart. ... Some writers distinguish, as a form of the Koinè, the Hellenistic, a name restricted by them to the language of the

45) ἽΗ καινὴ διαθήκη. Τὸ πρωτότυπον κείμενον μὲ νεοελληνικὴν μετάφρασιν. Ἐλληνικὴ Βιβλικὴ Ἐταιρία [The New Testament in Modern Greek (Ancient text with Modern Greek translation) Greek Bible Society] Athens 1967.

46) ἽΗ καινὴ διαθήκη. Τὸ πρωτότυπο κείμενο με μετάφραση στη δημοτικὴ. Ἐλληνικὴ Βιβλικὴ Ἐταιρία. (The New Testament in Today's Greek Version United Bible Societies 1989) Athens 1997.

47) Smyth, Grammar p. 4A.

New Testament and of the Septuagint ... The New Testament is composed in the popular language of the time, which in that work is more or less influenced by classical models. No accurate distinction can be drawn between the Koinè and Hellenistic.

The language of the New Testament is according to Friedrich Rehkopf neither literary nor classical Greek.⁴⁸⁾ But then again it is to be underlined that phrases from socio-linguistic areas like the medical or the forensic registers, that concern and influence strongly every-day life of citizens and provincials in the Roman empire and the Hellenistic world, more likely than not exported their specific terms into the ordinary common Greek. Therefore the hint at general differences between Attic and Koine, between literary and non-literary vernacular does not really concern these linguistic areas and consequently is neither convincing nor persuasive.

Against the background of the idiomatic use of the word pebble in Greek courts and here in the NT we may now understand, what Christ is promising to those who remain faithful to him in spite of persecution and suffering: He will cast for them the vote of acquittal. Of course, in the light of the Oresty as written by Aischylos we remember: It was the goddess Athena, who cast the pebble in favour of Orest, causing an equal vote of pebbles for condemnation and acquittal and thus acquitting him from the charge put forward by the Eumenids, the dark spirits of revenge. In order to make up for the murder of his father Agamemnon by his mother Klytämnestra, Orest had killed his mother Klytemnaistra following orders of the god Apoll. Knowing this Greek myth and taking into account that ψῆφος usually means «vote» we must not repeat anymore the opinion, that the white pebble in Rev 2:17 serves as an amulet or as a sign of victorious faith or as an entry ticket to the heavenly banquet.⁴⁹⁾

Before I bring my survey to a close, I want to look at the final part of Rev

48) Blass - Debrunner - Rehkopf, p. 3.

49) Vgl. Zahn 276ff. The only interpretation, which comes close to my proposal, I read in a homily never held but created as a literary genre and device and published in 1862 by Siegmund Henrici: «Neben diesem Manna aber - hält Jesus der siegenden Christenseele vor - einen weißen Stein. ... Die Anerkennung des Ueberwinders, als eines Reinen, Gerechten, und eines des Ehrenlohnes würdigen Siegers. Im Alterthume, da war es nämlich bei den Gerichten Sitte, dem, der im Gerichte als unschuldig und gerecht befunden wurde, einen „weißen Stein“ einzuhändigen.»

2:17.

... ὁ οὐδεις οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων ...

Normally this phrase is understood in such a way that the Christian, who proudly and victoriously prevails in faith, will receive the pebble from Christ. But in light of forensic register and court language we ought to interpret the meaning and function of this last part in a different way, too. Ancient Greek texts simultaneous with the book of Revelation demonstrate that the phrase ψῆφον λαμβάνειν means *receiving the pebble, in order to cast a vote*. The recipients are citizens or jurors, who use it for decision or judgment. *Receiving the pebble* thus is synonymous with *to pass a verdict* or *to cast a vote*, respectively.

<p>ἐκ τούτου χαλεπῶς διακειμένους τοὺς Ἀθηναίους πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπειρᾶτο παρηγορεῖν καὶ ἀναθαρρύνειν. οὐ μὴν παρέλυσε τῆς ὀργῆς οὐδὲ μετέπεισε πρότερον, ἢ τὰς ψήφους λαβόντας ἐπ' αὐτὸν εἰς τὰς χεῖρας καὶ γενομένους κυρίου ἀφελέσθαι τὴν στρατηγίαν καὶ ζημιῶσαι χρήμασιν, ὧν ἀριθμὸν οἱ τὸν ἐλάχιστον πεντεκαίδεκα τάλαντα.</p>	<p>Although Pericles tried to comfort and to encourage the Athenians, he did not succeed to calm their fury and to change their mind, <u>until they could vote against him</u>, dispose him of his office as commander and charge him with a ransom of at least 15 talents gold. <i>Plutarchus, Pericles 35.4</i></p>
<p>Ἄμα δ' ἡμέρα τῆς ψήφου δοθείσης, ἣ τε πρώτη φυλὴ τὸν θρίαμβον ἀπεψηφίζετο, ... ἀλλ' ἄγε λαβὼν αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν ψήφον.</p>	<p>When at dawn the vote was taken, the first detachment rejected the triumph ... but now <u>go and make them vote</u>; <i>Plutarchus, Aemilius 31.1</i></p>
<p>ΚΛΩΘΩ: Παῦσαι ἀπειλῶν, ἀλλὰ ἔμβηθι· καιρὸς ἤδη σε ἀπαντᾶν ἐπὶ τὸ δικαστήριον. ΜΕΓΑΠΕΝΘΗΣ: Καὶ τίς ἀξιώσει κατ' ἀνδρὸς τυράννου ψήφον λαβεῖν;</p>	<p>Klotho: Cut the threats and step in; the time has come for you to appear in court. Megapenthes: And who dares <u>to pass a verdict against the sovereign</u>? <i>Lucian, Cataplus 13</i></p>

The sentence Rev 2:17b contains therefore three distinct parts with three

different acts in three diverse expressions, but to one end:

1. καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκὴν,
2. καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον
3. ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων

Each of these expressions forms an idiomatic metaphor with these meanings:

1. And I will acquit him
2. in the name of a new authority,
3. which only he knows, who passes the verdict.

The three idiomatic expressions are strung together to build one composite, bold, hybrid metaphor. All three parts of this composite metaphor have the same logical subject: It is Christ, who acquits the faithfully enduring believer; it is Christ's authority, by which this believer is acquitted; it is uniquely Christ, who knows this new authority. The qualifying adjective *new* indicates that this authority is different from the authority, that put Antipas to death. And the implied information is of course that this new authority does not put to death but grants life.

4. Translational Proposal for Rev 2:17

As translation for Rev 2:17 I propose the following rendering:

I will provide everyone, who proudly prevails, with manna stored in heaven, and I will acquit him in the name of a new authority, which no one knows except he, who passes the verdict.

Since the author of this paper is not a native speaker of English, the proposed translation can only be a tentative proposal, a suggestion, that hopefully will stimulate better and more idiomatically appropriate translations. If this presentation and proposal sufficiently demonstrated the inappropriateness of most traditional formal correspondent, so called literal translations, its purpose is

achieved. If not it may well come to pass that meaning, significance, and value of the Biblical message linger lost in translation.

<Keywords>

Idioms in Translation, White Pebble, Public Pebble, Ancient Greek idiom, Bronze voting disc.

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<Abstract>

번역에서 잃어버린 부분

-요한계시록 2장 12-17절: 관용구 번역의 한 사례-

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‘혼제한 청어’(틀리고 잘못 인도하는 단서), ‘흰 코끼리’(쓸모없는 큰 짐), ‘검은 다리’(동료 일꾼들은 파업하는데 일하는 사람)와 같은 관용구들은 번역에 있어 특별한 문제를 만들어 내고 사전적인 단어 대 단어의 전락으로는 다루어질 수 없다. 관용구들은 예를 들어 성서와 같은 고대의 책을 번역하는 데 있어서 특별히 어렵다. 이 소논문은 성경의 마지막 책 요한계시록 2장 17절의 한 구절을 과제로 삼는다. 그 구절은 “그것을 받는 자 외에는 아무도 모르는 새 이름이 그 위에 쓰여진 흰 돌을 그들 각각에게 내가 또한 줄 것이다(Good News Bible, 1994).” 그리고 사례 연구로 “어떤 사람에게 흰 돌을 주다”라는 구절이 정확히 “무죄 판결을 내리다”라는 의미를 갖는 법정 관례와 언어에서 유래된, 분명히 널리 퍼져 있던 고대 그리스어 관용구임을 보일 것이다.

기원전 5세기 초, 재판관들이나, 좀 더 정확히 이야기하면, 배심원들은 각 투표의 비밀성과 독립성을 확실히 하기 위해 깔때기 모양의 뚜껑이 덮여진, 하나는 정죄를 위하고 다른 하나는 사면을 위한 투표인, 두 개의 다른 투표 항아리에 조약돌을 넣음으로 그들의 결정을 표현했다. 기원전 5세기 후반에, 무죄를 위한 흰색, 유죄를 위한 검은색의 두개의 다른 조약돌들이 한 특별한 단지에 던져졌다. 마지막으로, 기원전 4세기 후반에, 조약돌들은 더 이상 법정에서 결정할 때 쓰여지지 않았다. 두 개의 다른 특이한 형태로 된 중앙 축으로서의 관을 가진 작은 청동 원판이 이 목적으로 쓰였다. 검은 조약돌은 빈 관을 가진 청동 원판에 의해 교체되었고, 하얀 조약돌은 짙은 관을 가진 원판에 의해 교체되었다. 엄지와 검지가 통을 가리도록 하여 어떻게 투표하는지 아무도 볼 수 없도록 하지만, 모든 사람이 오직 하나의 투표만 하는 것은 알 수 있게 하였다. 기원전 321년에 아테네의 민주 정체(政體) 그리고 그와 함께 배심원을 갖는 법정은 폐지되었다. 그 때로부터 아마도 조약돌이나 원판은 결정을 하는데 더 이상 사용되지 않았을 것이다. 그러나 후대의 그리스 작가들은 “평결을 내리다”라는 뜻으로 “조약돌을 주다”라는 구절을 여전히 사용한다. 그래서 “어떤 사람에게 (흰) 조약돌을 주다”라는 어구는 오늘날까지 그리스 언어에서 관용적 표현으로 살아남았다.

그 청동 원판에는 ΨΗΦΟΣ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑ(국민의 조약돌)이라는 단어들
 새겨져 있었는데, 그것은 (“국민의 이름으로”라는 현대 어구가 그러하듯) 궁극적
 으로는 아테네 국민이 결정을 내린다는 것을 표현한다. 그래서 그 새겨진 글은
 그 청동 원판이 청동으로 만들어졌음에도 조약돌이라 불리어졌고, 그 새겨진 글
 은 결정이 내려지는 것이 누구의 이름의 권위로 되는지를 가리킨다. (문자
 적으로 “조약돌을 받는 것”을 뜻하는) 어구 λαμβάνειν ψῆφον은 또한 만들
 어진 관용어구이고, 고소되어서 심판받는 사람을 가리키는 것이 아니라 유
 죄 또는 무죄의 평결을 내리기 위해 조약돌을 받는 배심원을 가리키는 것
 이다. 그러므로 요한계시록 2장 17절은 다음과 같이 번역될 수 있을 것이다: “새
 로운 권위의 이름으로, 나는 그를 무죄로 선언한다. 그 평결을 내리는 사람 이외
 에는 아무도 이 권위를 모른다.”