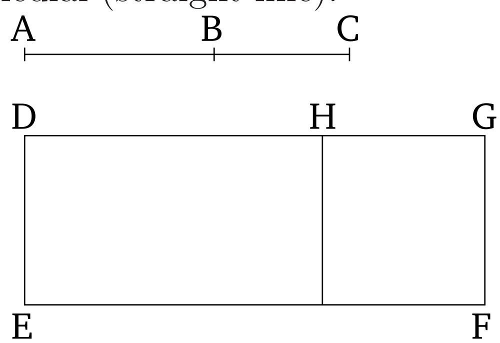
Book 10
Proposition 38

If two medial (straight-lines), commensurable in square only, which contain a medial (area), are added together then the whole (straight-line) is irrational—let it be called a second bimedial (straight-line).



For let the two medial (straight-lines), AB and BC, commensurable in square only, (and) containing a medial (area), be laid down together [Prop. 10.28]. I say that AC is irrational.

For let the rational (straight-line) DE be laid down, and let (the rectangle) DF, equal to the (square) on AC, have been applied to DE, making DG as breadth [Prop. 1.44]. And since the (square) on AC is equal to (the sum of) the (squares) on AB and BC, plus twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC [Prop. 2.4], so let (the rectangle) EH, equal to (the sum of) the squares on AB and BC, have been applied to DE. The remainder HF is thus equal to twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC. And since AB and BC are each medial, (the sum of) the squares on AB and BC is thus also medial. And twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC was also assumed (to be) medial. And EH is equal to (the sum of) the squares on AB and BC, and FH (is) equal to twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC. Thus, EH and HF (are) each medial. And they were applied to the rational (straight-line) DE. Thus, DH and HG are each rational, and incommensurable in length with DE [Prop. 10.22]. Therefore, since AB is incommensurable in length with BC, and as AB is to BC, so the (square) on AB (is) to the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC [Prop. 10.21 lem.], the (square) on AB is thus incommensurable with the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC [Prop. 10.11]. But, the sum of the squares on AB and BC is commensurable with the (square) on AB [Prop. 10.15], and twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC is commensurable with the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC [Prop. 10.6]. Thus, the sum of the (squares) on AB and BC is incommensurable with twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC [Prop. 10.13]. But, EH is equal to (the sum of) the squares on AB and BC, and HF is equal to twice the (rectangle) contained by AB and BC. Thus, EH is incommensurable with HF. Hence, DH is also incommensurable in length with HG [Props. 6.1, 10.11]. Thus, DH and HG are rational (straight-lines which are) commensurable in square only. Hence, DG is irrational [Prop. 10.36]. And DE (is) rational. And the rectangle contained by irrational and rational (straight-lines) is irrational [Prop. 10.20]. The area DF is thus irrational, and (so) the square-root [of it] is irrational [Def. 10.4]. And AC is the square-root of DF. AC is thus irrational—let it be called a second bimedial (straight-line).[§] (Which is) the very thing it was required to show.