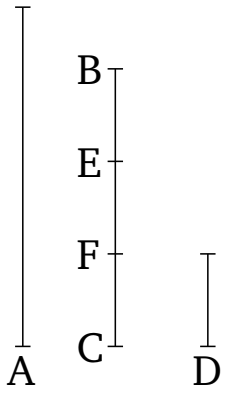
Book 7
Proposition 4

Any number is either part or parts of any (other) number, the lesser of the greater.

Let A and BC be two numbers, and let BC be the lesser. I say that BC is either part or parts of A.

For A and BC are either prime to one another, or not. Let A and BC, first of all, be prime to one another. So separating BC into its constituent units, each of the units in BC will be some part of A. Hence, BC is parts of A.



So let A and BC be not prime to one another. So BC either measures, or does not measure, A. Therefore, if BC measures A then BC is part of A. And if not, let the greatest common measure, D, of A and BC have been taken [Prop. 7.2], and let BC have been divided into BE, EF, and FC, equal to D. And since D measures A, D is a part of A. And D is equal to each of BE, EF, and FC. Thus, BE, EF, and FC are also each part of A. Hence, BC is parts of A.

Thus, any number is either part or parts of any (other) number, the lesser of the greater. (Which is) the very thing it was required to show.