Book 10
Proposition 74

If a medial (straight-line), which is commensurable in square only with the whole, and which contains a rational (area) with the whole, is subtracted from a(nother) medial (straight-line) then the remainder is an irrational (straight-line). Let it be called a first apotome of a medial (straight-line).

A   C   B

For let the medial (straight-line) BC, which is commensurable in square only with AB, and which makes with AB the rational (rectangle contained) by AB and BC, have been subtracted from the medial (straight-line) AB [Prop. 10.27]. I say that the remainder AC is an irrational (straight-line). Let it be called the first apotome of a medial (straight-line).

For since AB and BC are medial (straight-lines), the (sum of the squares) on AB and BC is also medial. And twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC (is) rational. The (sum of the squares) on AB and BC (is) thus incommensurable with twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC. Thus, twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC is also incommensurable with the remaining (square) on AC [Prop. 2.7], since if the whole is incommensurable with one of the (constituent magnitudes) then the original magnitudes will also be incommensurable (with one another) [Prop. 10.16]. And twice the (rectangle contained) by AB and BC (is) rational. Thus, the (square) on AC is irrational. Thus, AC is an irrational (straight-line) [Def. 10.4]. Let it be called a

first apotome of a medial (straight-line).†