Unlimited, namely, the even component (= even squares) which continuously alternates with the odd (= odd squares). Since only genuine gnomons are added (= odd numbers), the even numbers do not show up within the construction but only as partial results of it, in the form of even squares. The fact that one also gets odd squares as partial results is irrelevant, since the logic of the example goes one way: what 'cuts off and limits' are only odd numbers, while even numbers are only 'cut off and limited' (even if also odd numbers are). The construction displays, on the one hand, the ἀπειρία of the even/odd alternation and of the process of singling out (= generating) and enclosing even (square) numbers by means of odd numbers; on the other hand, the stability of the numerical species. These two features show up as different facets of one and the same process, neither mutually exclusive nor linked by any regular relation.

But the mathematical example is also a σημεῖον: the way in which the even, while being bounded by the odd, persists in square numbers is a particular, and particularly manifest, case of the more general way in which the Unlimited persists in things, although they are limited. Like everything in the cosmos, square numbers materially contain in themselves unlimited and limiting components. But although in general the components of a thing—τὰ ἄπειρα and τὰ περαίνοντα—while present in it, are not apparent, the components of a figurate number—namely, the even and the odd—are. Therefore, the sequence of squares obtained by repeatedly adding gnomons to the unit factually displays the arithmo-cosmological interplay between the odd and the even within a single well-defined static object.

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ARISTOTLE ON PLACING GNOMONS ROUND (*PH.* 3.4, 203a10–15): AN ADDENDUM*

A parallel passage supporting the required meaning of the opposition ὁτὲ μέν … ὁτὲ δέ … in the mathematical example is *Ph.* 5.2, 225b31–3, provided one does not accept (as we think one should not) Ross' correction of ὑγίειαν (which is the reading of all manuscripts) to the semantical *lectio facilior* ἄγνοιαν.

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