109 Scattering (*Dispersio*)

Scattering in an army is the sign that the people have been conquered or soon to be conquered, Lam. 4[:1]: “The stones of the sanctuary are scattered in the top of every street.” According to nature, cranes do not fear the falcon before they are scattered but having been scattered, they are confused.[[1]](#endnote-1)

Again John 10[:12]: “The wolf catches and scatters the sheep.” Wherefore says Vegetius, *De re militaris*,[[2]](#endnote-2) that the army should be united before it sets out, thus spiritually, Exod. 5[:12], Pharaoh scattered the sons of Israel so that he might overcome them.

¶ Again, the true mother did not want the division of her son, 3 Kings 3[:26]. Thus, those who love discord do not have true, maternal love, but only that of a prostitute, Luke 11[:17]: “Every kingdom divided against itself, shall be brought to desolation.”

Again, sometimes riches are the cause of scattering, as is evident in Gen. 13[:9], concerning Abraham and Lot.

Again, according to Aristotle, book 8, *De animalibus*, when bees are in tumult toward each other, it is a sign of scattering and desertion of the place. Wherefore, it seems that riches (*diuicie*) are said from division (*diuisione*), because they bring about or cause to bring about division. For before seeding, manure is scattered in fields and thus a harvest comes forth, but it is not the time of seeding through good works at the end, it will be the time of reaping the reward. Therefore, now is the time to put down manure, that is, riches, because according to the Philosopher, *De generatione*,[[3]](#endnote-3) metals are said to be the manure of the earth, Philip. 3[:8]: “Count them but as dung,” said the Apostle, and from their dispersion comes forth the harvest, when [Psal. 125:6]: “Some distribute their own goods, and grow richer; others take away what is not their own, and are always in want.”

¶ The example is in Alexander the Great, Macc. 1[:7]: “Who divided his father’s kingdom, as it was said, among them, while he was yet alive.” To pay out as rich men, his goods while yet he was living adds to the accumulation of his merit and the reduction of his pain. Whence Chrysostom,[[4]](#endnote-4) you have not accepted the riches in order that you may bury them, but that you may distribute them. For if God wants them to be held in custody, he would not have handed them over to men, but would have sent them forth to lie in the earth.

1. Cf. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum* 20.7.14 (PL 82:460-61): Castigat autem voce quae cogit agmen. At ubi raucescit, succedit alia; nocte autem excubias dividunt, et ordinem vigiliarum per vices faciunt, tenentes lapillos suspensis digitis, quibus somnos arguant, quod cavendum erit clamor indicat. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Vegetius, *De re militaris* 2.2: *Necesse est autem tardius ad uictoriam peruenire qui discrepant, antequam dimicent.* http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/vegetius2.html [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Aristotle, *History of Animals* 5.22, 553b17-19 (Barnes 1:873): A hive will go also to ruin if there be too large a number of rulers in it; for they divide int factions. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. John Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* Homilia 31 ex cap. 13 (PG 56: 795): Vide jam, quod sollicitudo divitiarum frequentare te ecclesiam non permittit, ut audias Scripturas et traditiones doctorum, ut nutriatur verbum quod accepisti. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)