251 Number, To Number (*Numerus, Numerare*)

According to the arithmetical reasons of numbers, one is subtractive, so that the aggregate parts of which constitute a minor sum than the whole itself, as the number eight[[1]](#endnote-1) whose parts are the number four which is one half, the number two which is a fourth part, and the unit which is the eighth part, and these constitute the number seven. Another is a perfect number whose parts aggregate the same sum which they constitute, and this is the whole, as the number six,[[2]](#endnote-2) whose parts are the number three which is one half, the number two which is its third part, and the unit which is the sixth part, which renders the number six. Another is a super abundant or a super excrescent number whose parts aggregated a greater sum which constitute itself totally, as a set of twelve[[3]](#endnote-3) whose parts are the number six which is its one half, and the number four which is its third part, and the number three which is its fourth part, and the unit which is its twelfth part. These consist of the number sixteen. Moreover, since in God there is nothing subtractive nor superfluous, but all is perfect according to that, [Mala. 3:6]: “I” am pouring out, “and I change not.” And there are three perfect numbers below the three limits of numbers.

First, namely, the number six below the first limit of simple numbers which is ten.

And second, twenty-eight which is perfect below the second limit, namely, one hundred.

And third, 496 which is perfect below the third limit, namely, 1000. Because of these God is named under the number six which alone is a perfect among simple numbers since he is called, [Isai. 9:6]: “and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace.” Of course, who on the sixth day performed his works; in the sixth age of time he came; on the sixth day at the sixth hour he redeemed human kind.

Again, according to Chrysostom, *Homilia* 52,[[4]](#endnote-4) it is said he numbers that, which he wants to possess. However, what he does not want to have, he does not number, not the sinners, nor are they numbered as if concerning these, God does not care, as it is written in [Isai. 40:17]: “All nations are before him as if they had no being at all.”

¶ However, how much is the dignity of numbers, it is evident in the book of Numbers 3[:15] and 26[:2]. Where the elect of God according to the precept are numbered by Moses. But among them are not counted the feminine, that is, the soft of body and corruption. For whatever men or women have the feminine are not numbered with God. Wherefore Chrysostom,[[5]](#endnote-5) for example, therefore God does not count so that he may know the number. However, as Wisdom [11:21] from the beginning he “ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight.” But therefore, he numbers, lest anything of them perish. According to that, Psal. [138:17-18]: “Your friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable.” And it follows, “I will number them, and they shall be multiplied above the sand.” Do you wish to know the dignity of numbers? There is the consideration how the shepherd goes through the desert to acquire his sheep and to bring her back to the number. If one of them is missing, Wis. 15[:2]: “If we sin not, we know that we are counted with God.”

¶ When therefore God disposed “all things in number,” Wis. 11[:21], who freely exited and departed to have the number multiplied in evil and to have no care for it, Eccle. 1[:15]: “The number of fools is infinite.” But of the elect it is said in Apo. 6[:11]: “That they should rest for a little time, till” their number of their brothers be filled. Which is however to be known here that from two the people are numbered to provide for food and for the satisfying of taxes.

In the first were counted as many disabled as strong children and women.

In the second only strong men and they who could fight. So were counted all in the present by him who gave food from every flesh, but in the end only the virtuous were numbered, Wis. 5[:5]: “Behold how they are numbered among the children of God.”

1. Cf. Alexdander Neckham, *De Naturis Rerum* 173 (Wright, p. 295): Diminutus est cujus partes multiplicativae reddunt summam minorem toto, ut octonarius; unitas, enim, et binarius, et quaternarius, quae sunt partes octonarii multiplicativae, septenarium reddunt. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Alexdander Neckham, *De Naturis Rerum* 173 (Wright, p. 295): Perfectus numerus est cujus partes multiplicativae reddunt summam aequalem toti, ut senarius, quia unitas et binarius et ternarius senarium perficiunt. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. Alexdander Neckham, *De Naturis Rerum* 173 (Wright, p. 295): Superfluus vel abundans est, cujus partes multiplicativae reddunt summam majorem toto, ut duodenarius, quia unitas et binarius et ternarius et quaternarius et senarius constituunt sexdecim. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* Homilia 25, cap. 10 (PG 56:765): Illud enim numerat Deus, quod vult possidere: quod autem non vult habere, ut quid numerat? Ideo non numerantur peccatores, ut quicumque ex ipsis periret non sentiat, neque curet Deus, quasi de non numeratis: sicut scriptum est, *Pro nihilo habentur omnes gentes (Isai. 40.17).* …

Quanta autem sit dignitas numeratorum, eticam in libro Numeri (Cap. 3 et 26) ostenditur, quoniam electi et colati numerantur a Mose, per praeceptionem Dei. Non numeratur inter eos femina. Femina autem intelligitur mollities, quae est corruptio corporalis. Omnis autem vir mollis animo, remissibilis in fide, et corruptus in actibus, corpore vir est, et femina intelligitur: ideo non numeratur cum sanctis. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* Homilia 25, cap. 10 (PG 56:765): Numquid ideo numerat aliquid Deus, ut numerum ejus cognoscat, qui ab initio, ut dixit Sapientia, omnia in pondere, numero, et mensura creavit (Sap. 11.21)? Sed ideo numeravit, ne aliquid perdat ex ipsis; sicut dicit propheta: *Mihi autem nimis honorati sunt amici tui, Deus*. *Dinumerabo eos, et super arenam mujltiplicabuntur (Psal. 138.17, 18).* Non minuuntur qui numerati sunt, sed etiam multiplicabuntur. Vis scire dignitatem numjeratorum? Considera ovem illam quomodo pastor non requievit per desertum discurrere, donec inveniret eam, et ad prstinum numerum revocaret *(Matth. 18.12, 13).* Nullam ex omnibus se habere putabat, si de numero suo una periret. Qui autem perituri sunt, non numerantur. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)