



finite projective planes have  $q^2 + q + 1$  points  
and  $q^2 + q + 1$  lines

Canonical name	FiniteProjectivePlanesHaveQ2q1PointsAndQ2q1Lines
Date of creation	2013-03-22 15:11:18
Last modified on	2013-03-22 15:11:18
Owner	marijke (8873)
Last modified by	marijke (8873)
Numerical id	4
Author	marijke (8873)
Entry type	Proof
Classification	msc 51A35
Classification	msc 05B25
Classification	msc 51E15

**Given** a finite projective plane that contains a quadrangle OXYZ (i.e. no three of these four points are on one line). **To prove:** the plane has  $q^2 + q + 1$  points and  $q^2 + q + 1$  lines for some integer  $q$ , and there are  $q + 1$  points on each line and  $q + 1$  lines through each point.

Let  $x$  and  $y$  be the lines OX and OY, which must exist by the axioms. By the assumption OXYZ is a quadrangle these lines are distinct and Z is not on them. Let there be  $p$  points  $X_i$  on  $x$  other than O, for each of them one line  $ZX_i$  exists, and is distinct (one line cannot pass through two  $X_i$  unless it is  $x$  but that's not a line through Z). Conversely every line through Z must intersect  $x$  in a unique point (two lines intersecting in Z cannot intersect at another point, and Z is not a point on  $x$ ). So there are  $p + 1$  lines through Z (OZ is one of them). By the same reasoning, using  $y$ , there are  $q + 1$  lines through Z so  $p = q$ . We also found  $q + 1$  points (including O) on  $y$  and the same number on  $x$ . Intersecting the  $q + 1$  lines through Z with XY (on which Z does not lie, the quadrangle again) reveals at least  $q + 1$  distinct points there and at most  $q + 1$  because for each point there there is a line through it and Z.

The lines not through O intersect  $x$  in one of the  $q$  points  $X_i$  and  $y$  in one of the  $q$  points  $Y_j$ . There are  $q^2$  possibilities and each of them is a distinct line, because there is only one line through a given  $X_i$  and  $Y_j$ . The lines that do pass through O intersect XY in one of the  $q + 1$  points there, again one line for each such point and vice versa. That's  $q + 1$  lines through O and  $q^2$  not through O,  $q^2 + q + 1$  in all.

There are  $q + 1$  lines through X (to each of the points of  $y$ ) and  $q + 1$  lines through Y (to each of the points of  $x$ ). Intersect the  $q$  lines through X other than XY with the  $q$  lines through Y other than XY, these  $q^2$  intersections are all distinct because for any P there's only one line PX and one line PY. Note we did not use the line XY. Conversely for any P not on XY there must be some PX and some PY, so there are exactly  $q^2$  points not on XY. Add the  $q + 1$  points on XY for a total of  $q^2 + q + 1$ .

The constructions above already showed  $q + 1$  lines through some points (X, Y and Z), by the same games as before that implies for each of them  $q + 1$  points on every line not through that point. We also saw  $q + 1$  points on some lines ( $x$ ,  $y$ , XY) which implies for each of them  $q + 1$  lines through every point not on that line. Such reasoning covers  $q^2$  items on first application and rapidly mops up stragglers on repeated application.

Some form of this proof is standard math lore; this version was half remembered and half reconstructed.