

The length PA , PB , and PC are $|1 - z|$, $|\omega - z|$, and $|\omega^2 - z|$. Here we use complex numbers to represent points. z is the point P and A , B and C are the complex numbers 1 , ω , and ω^2 . These are the cube roots of 1, and $\omega = \frac{1 + i\sqrt{3}}{2}$, $\omega^2 = \frac{1 - i\sqrt{3}}{2}$. As in the lecture, the complex numbers $1 - z$, $\omega - z$, and $\omega^2 - z$ do not sum to 0. (If they did, their lengths would be the sides of a triangle.) Instead, we multiply these by 1 , ω and ω^2 respectively to get the complex numbers

$$1 - z, \omega(\omega - z), \omega^2(\omega^2 - z) \quad (1)$$

These do sum to 0, and have the same lengths as PA , PB , and PC , and so these lengths do for the sides of a triangle. It is only necessary to show that the area of this triangle depends only on $|z|$. Here we use the fact that the area of triangle OST in the plane, with $O = (0, 0)$, $S = (a, b)$, and $T = (c, d)$, is

$$K = \frac{1}{2}|ad - bc|$$

We use complex numbers to compute this. Take $z = a + bi$ and $w = c + di$. Then

$$\bar{z}w = (a - bi)(c + di) = (ac + bd) + (ad - bc)i$$

Take conjugates to get

$$z\bar{w} = (ac + bd) - (ad - bc)i$$

Subtract and divide by $2i$ to get

$$|ad - bc| = \left| \frac{\bar{z}w - z\bar{w}}{2i} \right| = \frac{1}{2}|\bar{z}w - z\bar{w}|.$$

So

$$K = \frac{1}{4}|\bar{z}w - z\bar{w}|.$$

In the problem at hand, we replace z by $(1 - z)$ and w by $\omega(\omega - z) = \omega^2 - \omega z$. This gives (using $\bar{\omega} = \omega^2$ and $\overline{\omega^2} = \omega$)

$$\begin{aligned} 4K &= |(\overline{1 - z})(\omega^2 - \omega z) - (\overline{\omega^2 - \omega z})(1 - z)| \\ &= |(1 - \bar{z})(\omega^2 - \omega z) - (\omega - \omega^2\bar{z})(1 - z)| \\ &= |\omega^2 - \omega z - \bar{z}\omega^2 + \bar{z}\omega z - (\omega - \omega z - \omega^2\bar{z} + \omega^2\bar{z}z)| \\ &= |\omega^2 - \omega + (\omega - \omega^2)\bar{z}z| \end{aligned}$$

But since $\omega = (-1 + i\sqrt{3})/2$ and $\omega^2 = (-1 - i\sqrt{3})/2$, we have $\omega - \omega^2 = i\sqrt{3}$. Further $|z|^2 = z\bar{z}$. Thus,

$$4K = |\sqrt{3}i|z|^2 - i\sqrt{3}| = \sqrt{3}(1 - |z|^2)$$

This shows that K depends only on $OP = |z|$.