

# Greek Gematria and the Number 93

By Frater R.I.K.B.

It is lamentable that the great majority of thelemic magicians who practice today have neglected the study of Greek gematria. In a sense, it is not difficult to understand why. Greek is a notoriously difficult language to learn, and magicians who make a superficial study into the number scale of Greek words often complain that the numbers derived are so much larger than the values of most Hebrew words that they boggle the mind.

These are mere excuses for laziness. First, there is no imperative to learn the Greek language in order to use Greek gematria, just as there is no imperative for magicians to learn Hebrew in order to practice Hebrew gematria. While it is certainly preferable to have some knowledge of the Greek language (a concerted study of some few months is really quite adequate), Western occultists have been doing Hebrew gematria with very little knowledge of the Hebrew language for centuries, sometimes with great insight and efficacy.

The objection that the Greek number scale is “too big” is perhaps a more valid one. Magicians who practice gematria have gotten used to having a reference like Crowley’s *Liber 777* to study and understand the Hebrew scale of number, and there is no such widely available resource for Greek words. Crowley’s own effort to produce such a work, *Liber 1264*, has never been published widely, and in any case is unfinished. This author is aware of an effort to remedy this situation currently underway and to be completed this year.

Most magicians labor under the mistaken assumption that gematria is a practice that originated with Jewish mystics engaged in study of the Torah. In fact, there is very good evidence that the practice started with the Greeks and only passed into use with Hebrew words after the development of the square Hebrew text around 200 BCE. It is evident to anyone who studies the writings and culture of the ancient Greeks that the concepts of number, proportion, harmony, and mathematical structure were very important to them. For example, there are several obvious number puzzles (perhaps gematric puzzles) in the dialogues of Plato, and legend has it that the inscription “let no one ignorant of Geometry enter here” was engraved above the entrance to Plato’s academy.<sup>1</sup>

The word “gematria” itself is most likely derived from the Greek work “geometria,” which refers to the measuring of land or geometry. David Fideler, in his book *Jesus Christ, Sun of God* makes the claim that the values of Greek god names are related to one another through specific geometrical relationships, rather than merely arithmetical ones. It is ironic, since geometry seems to be at the heart of gematria’s origins, that modern magicians rarely if ever use geometrical relations as a means of discovering meaning in language and number. This brief essay is an attempt to use simple geometrical figures and Greek word values as a means of exploring the number 93. After all, it is the numeration of  $\theta\epsilon\lambda\eta\mu\alpha$ , the word of the law, which is “do what thou wilt.” That the word of the law was received in the Greek language almost demands that its gematria should be understood

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<sup>1</sup> This matter can be further studied with great profit in David Fideler’s book *Jesus Christ, Sun of God*.

in the Greek manner. A cursory examination of the Hebrew words associated with the number 93 reveals very little of any worth.

Before embarking on this attempt, a brief note on the use of the tradition of “colel” is in order. It was the practice of ancient gematrists to allow a discrepancy of one unit in the calculation of numerical equivalences between words. This practice is known as “colel.” Although sometimes derided as merely being a way of “fudging” results, there are a few reasons that this practice should be respected and observed<sup>2</sup>

First, to anyone who spends time examining the number canon of Greek gematria, it will become clear that precise conceptual relationships exist between a large number of words that nevertheless differ in their numeration by one unit. For example, παρθενος, “virgin,” is 515, while Ἑστια, “Hestia,” (a virgin goddess, and one at whose temples the “Vestal Virgins” resided) is 516. Also, there is αντιδικος, “adversary,” which is 665, and το μεγα θηριον, “the great beast,” and τειταν, “Titan,” (the name of a monster who stormed Olympus) which are both equal to 666. There are many more examples to be had. This empirical fact argues strongly for the use of colel, but there are more abstract lines of reasoning that support its use as well. First, the Greeks did not use decimal points in their calculations. Instead, they used proportions of whole numbers, such as 22/7 to approximate the ratio of a circle’s diameter to its circumference. In geometrical calculations, it is common to use irrational numbers such as the square root of two to calculate distances between points. Although these calculations always result in a remainder or decimal fraction, the fraction can not be represented using whole number proportions of the original lengths or distances. A certain amount of fuzziness is therefore introduced that does not appear with simple addition or multiplication of whole numbers. Using colel is one way of conveniently representing the approximate nature of results when the basis of calculation is geometrical.

Another possible rationale for using colel is the fact that the Pythagoreans — from whom most of our current number symbolism derives — did not consider “one” a number, but the ground or basis from which all other numbers emerged. They may therefore have considered the addition or subtraction of one unit not as a change in number, but as a reiteration of the unity from which all numbers spring. Thelemites might object that “every number is infinite”<sup>3</sup>, but until an enterprising thelemite comes up with a system of transfinite gematria, it is not a very good objection. Colel is also a way of expanding the range of equivalent values in a system with a very broad number scale, where equivalences are less common than in the narrower scale of shorter Hebrew words derived mostly from 3 letter roots. In any case, colel will be used in this demonstration, and the author considers its use perfectly proper, at least in Greek, and at least when the means of derivation is geometrical in nature.

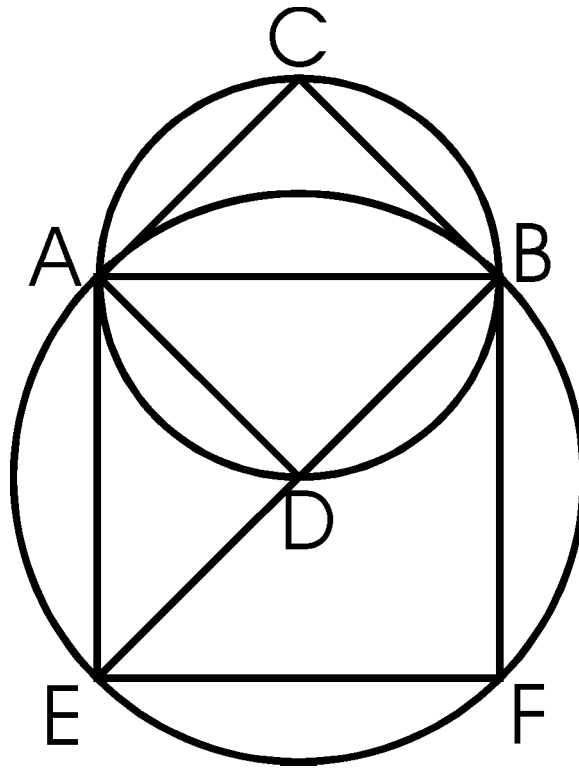
The figure on the following page will illustrate all calculations. We begin with a line AB of 93 units long. A square or diamond ACBD is then constructed with AB as its diagonal. The sides of the resulting square measure 66 units (65.77 exact value). This

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<sup>2</sup> Crowley, in “The Temple of Solomon the King,” *Equinox I (5)* has this to say about the practice: “That this method should ever have been accepted by any Qabalist argues a bankruptcy of ingenuity beyond belief. In all conscience, it is easy enough to fake identities by less obviously card-sharpping methods!” This from the man who held “0 = 2” to be the supreme equation of the Universe!

<sup>3</sup> AL I, 4

number should be familiar to initiates as the mystical number of the Great Work, but more importantly, the perimeter of the square adds to 264 (263.08 exact value), which is the numeration of the Greek word  $\theta\epsilon\mu\iota\varsigma$ , meaning “law.” This confirms beautifully the nature of “will” and “love” as defining “law,” in the same way that the square is defined by the diagonal of 93 units. Further, a circle ACBD is drawn so that the corners of the “square of law” touch its circumference. The circumference of this circle is 292 (292.17 exact value), and by colel, 291 is the numeration of  $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma$ , “child,” which is the Crowned and Conquering Child, within whom the law of love and will is manifest. The number 292 is also the number of  $\omicron\iota\kappa\omicron\delta\omicron\mu\eta$ , which means “building or edifice,” and metaphorically “instruction or edification.” Indeed, it was the initiation of the Aeon of the Crowned and Conquering Child that instructed humanity in the nature of the law of love and will.



So far, this investigation has yielded sweet fruit, but let us carry it further by considering a square, built on the original line of 93 units, ABFE. The perimeter of this square is therefore 372 units, and by colel, this equals  $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\tau\eta$ , “the hour of birth,” and we can see that the child (the circle ACBD, 291) is emerging or being born from this square. The number 372 is also equivalent by colel to 373, which is  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , often translated as “the word,” (remember that this square is defined by the word of the Aeon) but carries a wide range of meanings, and is best left untranslated. The Logos, according to ancient Greek sources, is the pattern on which the universe is built, the very spirit of order and proportion that makes up the harmony of existence.

The diagonal of the second square, BE, is 131 units long (131.5 exact value), and as any good thelemite knows, 131 is the numeration of  $\Pi\text{AN}$ , “All,” or the god Pan. This signifies that within the seed ( $\gamma\omicron\nu\omicron\eta$ , “seed” is also 131) of the Logos, the entire pattern of the universe is held in its nascent or ideal form. The number 131 is also the numeration of

πελεια, meaning “dove,” and the descending dove is frequently used as a symbol of the descending Logos, as in the OTO lamen.

The final step in this exploration is to describe a circle, ABFE, around the “square of the Logos.” This circle has as its perimeter 413 (413.12 exact value), which is ὁ γοος, “the spell” (more literally, “a wail or cry,” but related to γοης, “a wizard”), which is the means of proclaiming the Logos and propagating it through manifest creation, or “the all.”

This illustration shows that Greek gematria, and particularly the method of using geometrical figures with word values, may be of great benefit to the magician. The use of geometrical figures can provide a context within which meanings are refined beyond simple equivalence to include proportions and harmonies. The mathematical proportions of musical intervals might also be used, since the Pythagorean school was the first to discover and codify the principles of musical harmony (as an example, 666 is the proportion of the root of any scale to the perfect fifth). The recovery of this type of inquiry and its application to modern magical concerns has the potential to reinvigorate the practice of magicians for whom gematria has become a rather stale subject.