

The World Through My Mathematical Lens

Semester 2
2025/26



Where Mathematics Meets Heaven: A visit to the Admont Abbey Library

By Panna Miskolczi

I don't know why, but I have always loved libraries. They carry a special atmosphere for me. And the books... so many stories, so much knowledge gathered in one place. Being surrounded by them feels powerful and majestic. As if centuries of human thought were quietly present all at once.

Whenever I can, I visit libraries along my way. Last April, I visited the **Admont Abbey Library**, located in the small town of Admont in Austria, in the Enns Valley of Styria. Surrounded by mountains, the abbey sits in a quiet, contemplative landscape, a fitting place for a library that celebrates knowledge.

Despite being the **world's largest monastic library**, Admont was surprisingly quiet, and even inside, there were only a few visitors. This allowed us explore at our own pace. I was so excited that I was already sitting in the abbey garden before opening hours, waiting for the doors to open.

Admont Abbey Library

The Admont Abbey Library was completed in 1776 and is the largest monastic library in the world.

Designed by the architect Joseph Hueber, the magnificent Baroque hall stretches over 70 meters and is one of the most impressive creations of the European late Baroque period. Its walls are lined with more than 70,000 books, many of them centuries old, carefully preserved and catalogued by generations of monks.

The hall is filled with statues, carved wooden shelves, and delicate stucco decorations, each element reflecting the elegance and grandeur of the period. Walking through it, you feel the weight of history: a space built as a **synthesis of the arts of knowledge**, celebrating learning and the curiosity of those who nurtured it over centuries.



By the numbers

Completed:
1776

Length:
70 m

Width:
14 m

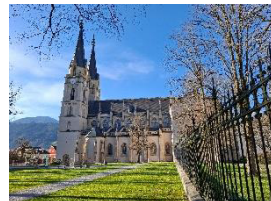
Height:
about 13 m (in the hall)

48 windows
illuminate the hall

Total abbey collection:
approx. 200 000 volumes

More than 1,400 manuscripts,
some dating back to the **8th century**.

About 530 incunabula (early
printed books from before 1500)



Mathematics

I think we can all agree that the library is breathtaking and well worth a visit. But how, you might ask, is all this related to mathematics?

As I walked around, admiring the magnificent frescoes, I noticed that one of the ceiling paintings dedicated to the sciences, represented by medicine, pharmacy, chemistry, anatomy, physics, mineralogy, astronomy, geography, mathematics, and architecture. Mathematics appears as a female figure holding a tablet with numbers written on it. Don't you find it fascinating that in an abbey library, sciences hold such a prominent place?

How would you imagine mathematics if you had to represent it visually? Would you depict it as it is shown in Admont, or in a completely different way?

