

STRAHOV MONASTERY LIBRARY

*Where else would you find a cabinet
of curiosities connecting halls dedicated
to theology and philosophy?*

DESIGNED BY GIOVANNI ORSI DE ORSINI AND IGNAZ PALLIARDI
BUILT 1671–1790
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



reaching all the way up to the frescoed ceiling. In the 18th century, the corridor running between these two magnificent halls was filled with an ever-growing collection of strange finds from nature, from dried rays to yellowed tusks. However, the library's most treasured possession is a book of Gospels dating from the 9th century, in jewel-encrusted bindings. Visitors today can marvel at a replica in the Cabinet of Curiosities.

Strahov Monastery Library is the largest of its kind in the Czech Republic and boasts a formidable collection of manuscripts, maps, and precious scriptures. The founding of the monastery in the 12th century was followed by the early-Baroque Theological Hall, which was finished in 1679 and expanded in 1721. The inscription across the vaulted ceiling reads *Initio sapientiae timor domini*: “The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord.” Today the library's shelves mainly hold theological writings and various translations of the Bible. During the High Baroque period, the two-story Philosophical Hall was built, with exquisite walnut shelves

