Spherical geometry: area of triangle

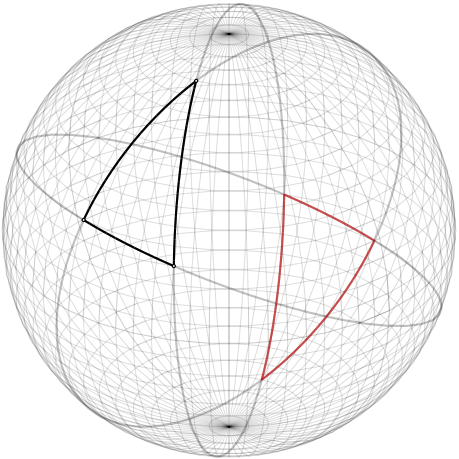
Viktor Blåsjö

Utrecht University

v.n.e.blasjo@uu.nl
uu.nl/staff/VNEBlasjo
@viktorblasjo

Antipodal triangle

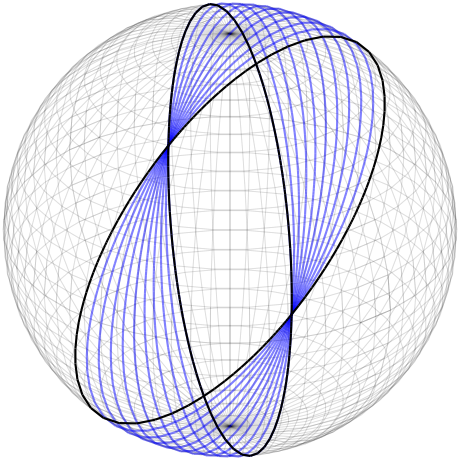
The planes (corresponding to the three great circles) that meet at three angles on the front meet in three angles at the back as well, making an equal triangle by AAA.



The “lunes” of a spherical angle

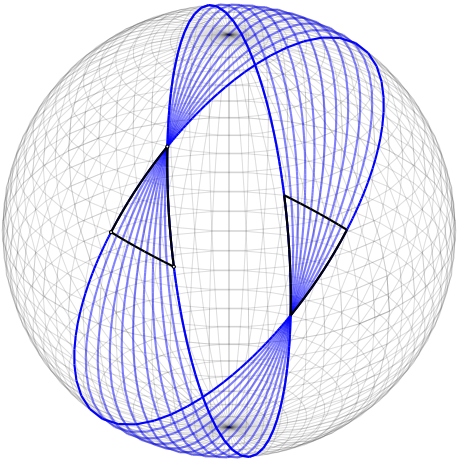
Area between two great circles with angle θ:

$$A(\text{lunes}(\theta)) = (2\theta/2\pi)^{\text{th}} \text{ part of the full sphere } = ❓$$



If you have forgotten the formula for the area $A(r)$ of a sphere it can be useful to recall that it is the derivative of the volume: $\frac{dV}{dr} = A(r)$.

Lunes of triangle angle include triangle and antipodal triangle



Area of spherical triangle

$$\underbrace{A(\text{lunes}(a))}_{4a} + \underbrace{A(\text{lunes}(b))}_{4b} + \underbrace{A(\text{lunes}(c))}_{4c} = \underbrace{A(\text{sphere})}_{4\pi} + 4A(\text{triangle})$$

$$\implies A(\text{triangle}) = a + b + c - \pi$$