



AACHEN CATHEDRAL

ROUTE CHARLEMAGNE AACHEN

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Aachen Cathedral

Aachen Cathedral is a Roman-Catholic church. Its patron saint has always been the Virgin Mary. That St Mary's Church actually became a cathedral, in other words an episcopal church, is actually the result of recent rather than ancient history. Up to the French Revolution (1789-1799), Aachen's churches all belonged to the Diocese of Liege, and today's Cathedral was a collegiate and parish church.

In 1978, in view of its outstanding historical, artistic and architectural importance, Aachen Cathedral became the very first site in Germany, and one of the first twelve sites worldwide, to be admitted into the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.



8

An octagon has eight sides. Eight is a potent symbol of cosmic balance and eternal blessing. Christ rose from the dead on the eight day. He delivered the Eight Beatitudes in His Sermon on the Mount – as depicted on the base plate of Barbarossa's Chandelier.



**ROUTE
CHARLEMAGNE
AACHEN**

The Cathedral and its history

Although archaeological finds and features indicate that Aachen had already been settled continuously since Roman times, the first written record of the place only appears in 765 AD, when King Pippin († 768) celebrated Christmas here. At that time, the settlement of Aachen and its environs formed a sizeable royal estate. The principal church of this estate, later to be known as St Mary's, was the property of the king. At the same time, however, it also ranked as a church of public pastoral care (a parish church) and thus belonged, legally and organisationally, to the Association of Dioceses. In those days, this official form of church was also referred to in Latin as a *capella*. Later, in the 19th century, the term *capella* spawned the false impression (unfortunately still very widespread today) that St Mary's had been a private oratory for the king, a "Palatine Chapel" reserved exclusively for religious services for the royal court.

Nobody knows exactly when St Mary's was founded. The church already existed in the 7th century, but it is probably even older than that. Around 800, Charlemagne commissioned the erection of a new structure, one that has generally remained intact to this day. Around the same time, at the very latest, he also founded a chapter of canons, in other words a community of clerics who lived according to certain ecclesiastical rules (canons). Their principal duty was the celebration of the liturgy. Several times a day, the canons would gather to celebrate a service consisting of a mass and breviary. Their incessant prayer was meant to help secure the salvation of the ruler and his family, and also the survival of the realm. This collegiate in Aachen was actually the only spiritual community that Charlemagne ever founded.

On 28 January 814, Charlemagne died in Aachen and was buried on the same day in his St Mary's Church. ⁷ In 1002, the young emperor Otto III was also buried here. He actually died in Italy, but had expressed the wish to be buried in Aachen next to Charlemagne, whom he had revered all his life. ^{8 11}

In 813 and 817 respectively, Louis the Pious and Lothair I were elevated to co-emperorship in St Mary's. From 936 onwards, in consideration of the former Carolingian significance of Aachen, the East Franconian-German kings were all crowned here in this church.

The church used its rich collection of relics to turn St Mary's into a destination for pilgrims. At least from 1349 onwards, the „Aachen Pilgrimage“ became a regular event taking place every seven years, and for a while ranked as one of the most important pilgrimages in Europe. During the pilgrimages, the four "Great Relics" were presented and revered: the cloak of the Virgin Mary, the swaddling clothes of the Infant Jesus, the cloth in which the head of John the Baptist was wrapped after his beheading, and the loincloth worn by Christ on the cross. These are kept in the Shrine of the Virgin Mary. ⁹

Following the occupation of Aachen by French troops at the end of the 18th century and subsequent unification with France, the chapter of canons was dissolved. With the foundation of a first Diocese of Aachen in 1802, St. Mary's became an episcopal church (cathedral). However, this diocese was dissolved again in 1821, Aachen was made part of the Archdiocese of Cologne, and St Mary's returned to being a collegiate church (minster). When the second, present Diocese of Aachen was established in 1930, the minster once more became a cathedral.



Aachen Pilgrimage 1951

The building

The new structure that Charlemagne had built around 800 has generally remained intact to this day. It is a rotunda ④ with an eight-sided core (the Octagon) encircled by a two-storey, sixteen-sided outer structure. Originally, Charlemagne's Palatine Chapel had extensions in all four directions of the compass: a small east end, the Westwork with the main portal, and annexes on the north and south sides. The services of the canons took place on the ground floor of the rotunda, the parish masses on the upper floor.

The choice of the relatively rare octagonal shape reflects Charlemagne's intention to transform the architecture into a potent bearer of meanings. St Mary's was supposed to represent the "Temple of Solomon" in Jerusalem, which was imagined to have had an octagonal central building. So if structures like San Vitale in Ravenna had an influence on the design of the church in Aachen, it was not to do with a desire to adopt Byzantine models but to emulate the Old Testament archetype of a House of God, the legendary "Solomon's Temple". Another concept that played an important role was that of the "Heavenly Jerusalem", a biblical image for heaven and for the apocalyptic realisation of the dominion of God (Revelation, Chap. 21, verse 4). Both of these visions went hand in hand with the abstract idea that numbers and dimensions also have inherent symbolic significance. The number 8 in particular was seen as an expression of perfection, along with certain multiples and congruities of 8.

Although Charlemagne's palace stood separate from the church and its annexes, in both spatial and legal respects, the two architectural complexes did relate to each other. The main palace building with its grand King's Hall lay opposite St Mary's, at the highest point on the site – exactly where today's Town Hall is situated, and with about the same dimensions. The axis of the King's Hall was set parallel to the axis of the church, and the long connecting north-south tract between the complex with the King's Hall



The building

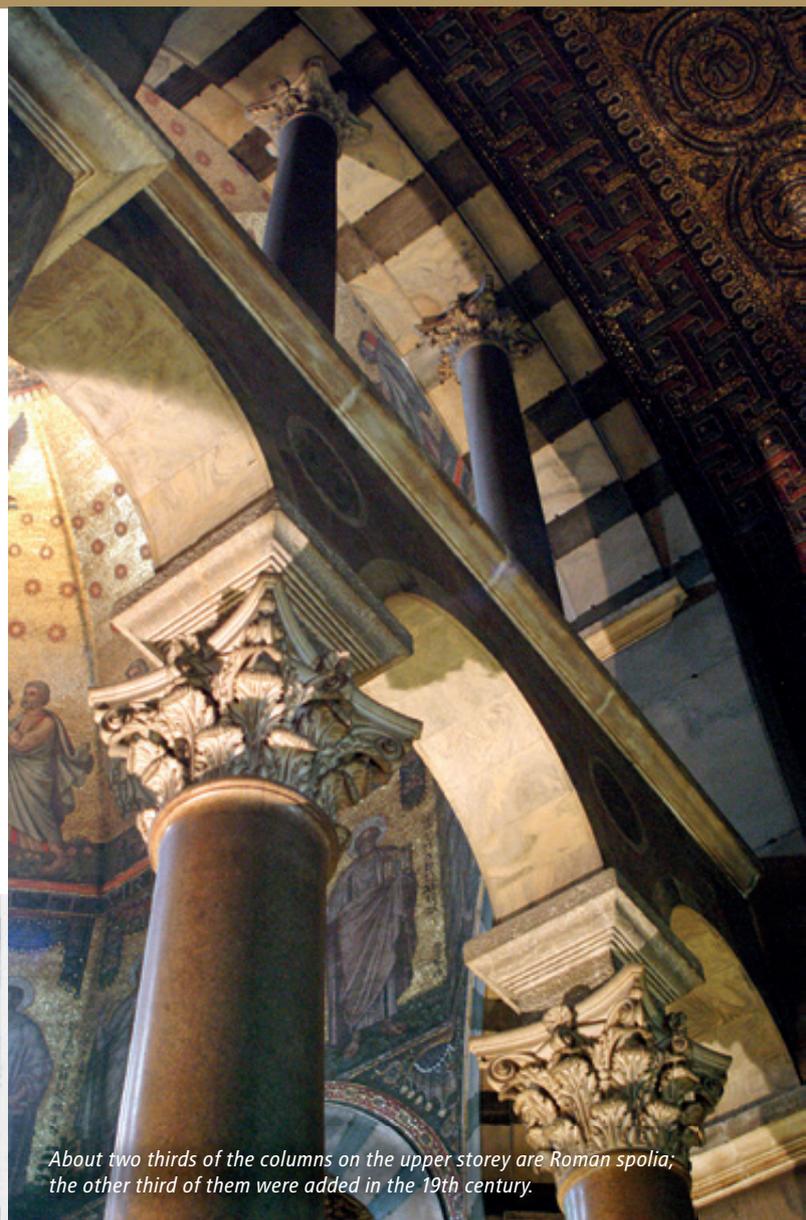
and the complex with the church created an orthogonal ensemble of awe-inspiring monumentality.

The annexes to the north and south of St Mary's Church are now gone, as are the east end and the original top of the Westwork. Today, the two remaining lower floors of the Carolingian Westwork are crowned with a neo-Gothic tower, and a cluster of extensions of various shapes and sizes encircles the sixteen-sided outer wall of the Carolingian rotunda. Except for one, these were all built in the Gothic style of the mid-14th to late 15th centuries, including the monumental Choir ¹¹, which was completed in 1414 and counts as the most important post-Carolingian edifice in Aachen. The Baroque Hungarian Chapel was built shortly after the middle of the 18th century.

On 21 October 1944, the German troops in Aachen surrendered to the Americans. The fierce house-to-house fighting that preceded capitulation, along with 74 air raids since 1940, had reduced about two thirds of the town to rubble, and yet, in the middle of all the ruins, the Cathedral had miraculously remained standing, for the most part intact. That the Cathedral did not suffer more severe damage through firebombs was entirely due to the efforts of the "Domwache" (Cathedral Guard), a group of young people who, from 1941 to 1944, braved the Allied air raids to extinguish fires as they broke out in the Cathedral.



The Cathedral and the neighbouring Church of St Foillan at the end of the Second World War



About two thirds of the columns on the upper storey are Roman spolia; the other third of them were added in the 19th century.

Tour

View of the Carolingian rotunda from the southwest

❶ The masonry facade has only been visible since the 19th century. The outer walls were originally completely coated in red plaster, and probably only the sparingly used ornamentation was light (white?) in colour. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the Octagon was extended upwards with an encircling blind arcade and eight decorative triangular gables (renovated in 1870-72). In 1663 the Octagon was given its present roof with its distinctive Baroque folding. The bridge between the Octagon and the tower was constructed in the 19th century according to a model from the 12th or 13th century.

The Cathedral Courtyard

❷ The dimensions of today's Cathedral Courtyard are about the same as those of the atrium in Carolingian times.

The original substance of the Carolingian Westwork goes up to the string-course cornice above the large arched niche. The current glazing of the huge Gothic window was installed in 1954 (designed by Ewald Mataré). In 1879-84, a neo-Gothic tower was erected on the two remaining storeys of the original Westwork (designed by Hugo Schneider). Until 1965, its galleries served as the stage for the public display of the four "Great Relics" during the pilgrimages, as did the connecting bridge to the Octagon.

The grand porch of the Westwork, built in 1788, accommodates the massive bronze doors of the original Carolingian main portal. Their outer surfaces are decorated in a simple yet monumental way through division into mock-antique panels (eight on each door!). Along with the other remaining pieces of Carolingian bronze work that still survive in Aachen – three further, smaller pairs of doors and the eight large bronze grilles between the columns on the gallery – these two main doors rank among the most prominent examples of artistic interpretation of antiquity in Carolingian times. At the same time, these enormous cast doors, each moulded as a single piece (apart from their riveted door handles) using the lost wax technique, are also testimonials to the admirable technical skill of a bronze workshop operating in Aachen around 800 AD.



The Gothic Choir and the Octagon with the connecting bridge to the tower



The Cathedral Courtyard with the Carolingian Westwork, on which a tower was set in the 19th century.

Tour

The Entrance Hall

③ Two bronze statues are to be seen here. The fountain-head in the form of a pine cone was cast in the 9th or 10th century. It shows remnants of personifications of the four Rivers of Paradise. It may originally have decorated a fountain in the atrium. ② The statue of the so-called “She-Wolf”, actually a bear, was created, according to latest opinion, in the 3rd century BC as the central figure of a hunting scene. It is unknown exactly when it found its way to Aachen (circa 800 AD?), but at least since the 14th century it has stood here in the main entrance, which is why the portal is also known as the “Wolf’s Door”.

The rotunda

④ For a pre-Gothic room, the Octagon is unusually steeply proportioned (internal dimensions: 30.47 m high, 15.55 m wide). The correspondence between height (of the Octagon) and width (of the sixteen-sided ambulatory) was intended as an expression of perfection.



A pine cone and the “She-Wolf” statue, actually a bear, decorate the Entrance Hall.



The Octagon with a view of the white marble throne on the upper storey (gallery)

Tour

The mosaics, the marble wall panels and the floor decorations, which all strongly influence the visual impact of the interior, were only installed relatively recently in two campaigns during the period from 1880 to 1913.

First, the central vault of the Octagon was redecorated. There had probably already been a figurative mosaic there in the 9th century. This was chipped off in 1719-20 and replaced with a stucco decoration, which itself was removed again in 1870-73. The current mosaic, dating from 1880-81, represents a historical attempt to restore the lost original mosaic (designed by Jean-Baptiste de Bethune, Bruges, later Gent). Like the original, it depicts the biblical vision of the four and twenty elders paying homage to Christ (Revelation, Chap. 4).

Subsequently, in 1901-13, all the remaining surfaces in the Octagon and the sixteen-sided ambulatory including the floors were decorated with marble and mosaics. In contrast to the mosaic in the central vault, these mosaics were a modern creation in Wilhelminian/neo-Byzantine style (designed by Hermann Schaper, Hannover). The Octagon had also originally featured floor decoration made of coloured antique marble, but only a few remnants of this have survived.

The columns in the arches of the upper storey are part of the original Carolingian decoration. About two thirds of them are Roman spolia; the other third were added in the 19th century.

The chandelier (copper, gold-plated) in the middle of the Octagon was presented to the church around 1180 by the emperor Friedrich I "Barbarossa" († 1190) and his consort Beatrix († 1184). It depicts "Heavenly Jerusalem", the biblical vision of a gold-gleaming city of God descending out of Heaven at the end of days (Revelation, Chap. 21).

5 The main altar is already visible from the entrance hall, standing between the Octagon and the Choir in the eastern bay of the sixteen-sided ambulatory. It was assembled in 1951 and, following the liturgical reform,

was moved from the Choir in 1972 to its present location, exactly where the Carolingian Altar of St Peter had originally stood until around 1400. The side plates and the altar top (mensa) are of original Roman marble that was probably recycled in Carolingian times. The front of the altar is decorated with a golden frontal („Pala d'Oro"). 17 chased gold reliefs from the early 11th century (wooden frame from 1951) feature the Passion of Christ from his entry into Jerusalem (top left) to his resurrection (bottom right, women at the empty tomb) in the outer square panels, and in the middle the enthroned Christ surrounded by the Virgin Mary, St Michael and the symbols of the Evangelists. The old wooden frame was lost, and the original order of the panels is unknown. The reliefs are closely related in their style to the chased gold reliefs of the Golden Book Cover (in the Cathedral Treasury).

6 In front of the right eastern column of the Octagon stands a much venerated Aachen icon, the carved wooden statue of the Blessed Mary, which (at least since the 17th century) has been clothed in dresses.

7 There is a long-standing dispute about the nature and the exact location of the original tomb of Charlemagne. The emperor was buried in St Mary's in 814. When he was canonised in 1165, his remains were transferred into a shrine. Today, most of his mortal remains are kept in the Golden Shrine of Charlemagne. 12



The Aachen Statue of the Blessed Mary

The brass eagle lectern was made in the 15th century. The tomb of Otto III can be seen in the foreground.

Tour

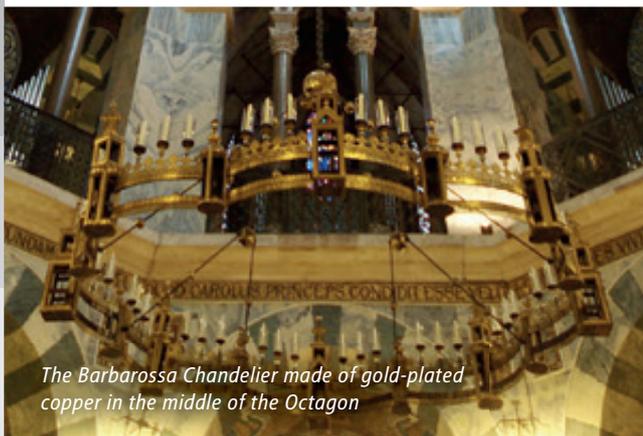
Here, in the south-eastern bay of the ambulatory, until 1788 there was a vaulted burial niche in the wall (arcosolium) that housed the "Persephone Sarcophagus" (today kept in the Cathedral Treasury). Until the 17th century, this recess was assumed to have been the original tomb of Charlemagne, but then the idea established itself that this was in fact merely a memorial. However, according to recent and informed opinion, what was assumed to have been a memorial was indeed the real tomb of Charlemagne.

The Carolingian east end

The original Carolingian east end of St Mary's was situated in the area, today encircled with chairs, between the sixteen-sided rotunda and the Shrine of the Virgin Mary. Here stood the former main altar **8**, consecrated to the Blessed Virgin. It was at this altar that, from Otto I (936) through to Ferdinand I (1531), 30 kings were consecrated and crowned. From 997 until the end of the 18th century, celebration of mass at St Mary's Altar was reserved by papal privilege for the seven cardinal priests among the 14 canons of the Aachen Chapter who had been elevated

to cardinals, and also for the Bishop of Liege and the Archbishop of Cologne. The old main altar was demolished in 1786. In 1002, Otto III was buried in a grave to the west of St Mary's Altar (i.e. behind today's main altar). His sarcophagus was transferred to the Gothic Choir **11** in 1414.

9 The Shrine of the Virgin Mary (wooden core, gilded silver, enamel, precious stones), circa 1220 – 1238. Originally created as a collective reliquary for the old main inventory of relics of St Mary's, the shrine now only houses the four "Great Relics". The long sides show the Madonna and Child on the front and Charlemagne on the back; the sides show Christ on the right and Pope Leo III († 816) on the left. The long sides also feature the Twelve Apostles. The reliefs on the roof of the shrine depict scenes from the life of Christ from the Annunciation to the Crucifixion. Until the demolition of St Mary's Altar **8**, the shrine was mounted in an elevated position behind it.



The Barbarossa Chandelier made of gold-plated copper in the middle of the Octagon



The Shrine of the Virgin Mary houses the four "Great Relics": the cloak of the Virgin Mary, the swaddling clothes of the Infant Jesus, the cloth in which the head of John the Baptist was wrapped after his beheading, and the loincloth worn by Christ on the cross.

Tour

The Choir

Access to the Choir is only possible as part of a guided tour.

The Ambo ¹⁰ is located above the door to the sacristy (wooden core, gilded copper, precious stones, ivory, metal varnishing). It is a rostrum with a balustrade and a lectern for the reading out of liturgical texts (not a pulpit for preaching), and was presented between 1002 and 1014 by Henry II († 1024). It has been radically restored. On the outside, the left and right sides each bear three carved ivory reliefs (from the 6th century); in the middle at the top an antique agate bowl, left and right a quartz crystal (if you look closely, you can make out a cup and saucer), top left a relief of Matthew the Evangelist (the other three reliefs, the glass bowl in the middle and the agate bowl at the bottom are not originals). The Ambo is part of the "very large treasure" that Henry presented to St Mary's as compensation for previously appropriated goods. Its original location in the Carolingian rotunda is not known.

¹¹ The Gothic Choir and Sanctuary were constructed between 1355 and 1414. At the east end, the wide, towering hall (inner height approx. 31.6 m) culminates in a polygon consisting of nine sides of a tetradecagon (the only Gothic choir with a nine-fourteenths termination!). The walls are almost completely of glass. The thrust of the vaults, which in a single-nave structure cannot be diverted via flying buttresses, is held by a complex system of anchors. The four transverse anchors and the six (mostly replaced) ring anchors are original Gothic; the tension anchoring above the vault was installed in the 20th century.

With their height of approx. 25.6 m, the windows of the Choir are some of the largest Gothic windows in existence. The mullions date mainly from the 19th century, but the corresponding glazing was destroyed in World War II. Today's stained glass windows were produced between 1949 and 1951 according to designs by Walther Benner (the polygon) and Anton Wendling (the long



The Main Altar with its golden frontal („Pala d'Oro“) in front of the Gothic Choir and its Madonna Sculpture with radiant corona from the 16th century

Left: The Ambo is decorated with gilded copper, ivory and precious stones.

Tour

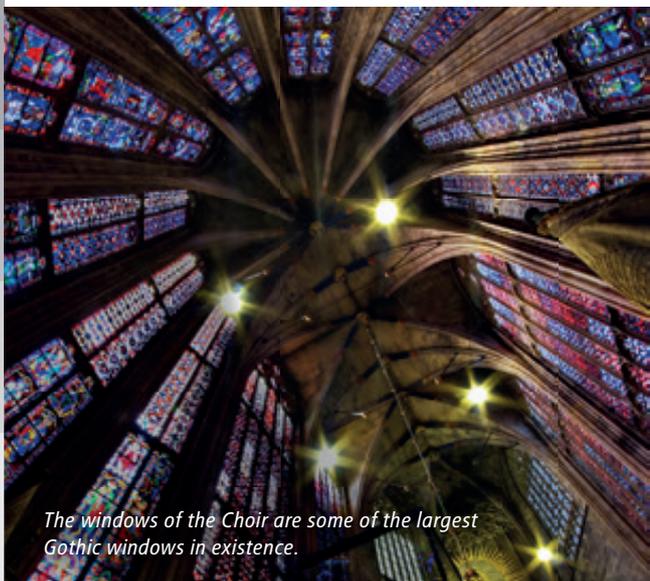
sides). These were joined by Wilhelm Buschulte's windows (in the west) in 1979-80.

The statues on the pillars, erected in 1430, show the Twelve Apostles with the Virgin Mary and Charlemagne. The choir stalls from 1782 replaced an earlier set. The suspended two-sided sculpture of the Madonna and Child in a radiant corona was created by Jan von Stevensweert in 1524 (and reworked in 1685). The brass eagle lectern was made in the 15th century (and modified in the 18th and 19th century). Behind it to the east is the location of Emperor Otto III's grave after it was transferred here in the 15th century. It has a simple cover stone the dates from 1834.

12 The Shrine of Charlemagne (wooden core, gilded silver, enamel, precious stones, metal varnishing), from between 1182 and circa 1220. In 1215, in the presence of Friedrich II († 1250), the remains of Charlemagne were transferred from an older reliquary into this (not yet fini-

shed) shrine. In 1165, Charlemagne had been legitimately (at that time) declared a saint, and his corpse had been ceremoniously retrieved from his tomb (Nr. 7) in the presence of the responsible church officials (local bishop and metropolitan), Emperor Friedrich I and many other dignitaries. On the front end of the shrine, with Christ giving blessing from above, Charlemagne sits enthroned between Pope Leo III and Archbishop Turpin of Reims; the other end depicts the Virgin Mary enthroned between the archangels Michael and Gabriel beneath personifications of Faith, Hope and Charity. Each of the long sides depicts eight (!) Franconian-German rulers, and on the roof of the shrine, eight (!) reliefs portray scenes from the "life" of Charlemagne according to pseudo-historical narratives.

13 The Bishop's Cathedra (throne), 2001 (designed by Elmar von Reth). Whenever the bishop himself leads the liturgy, this chair is set up in front of the Shrine of the Virgin Mary; otherwise it is located here, as proof, so to speak, of episcopal status.



The windows of the Choir are some of the largest Gothic windows in existence.



In 1215, the remains of Charlemagne were transferred into the Shrine of Charlemagne.

Tour

The chapels on the northwest side of the rotunda

14 The Chapel of St Nicholas (gallery with St Michael's Altar) was built in the second half of the 15th century. Until the end of the 18th century it served as the tomb for the canons. The decoration dates from the 19th century, the glazing from 1951-60 according to designs from various artists (for example, the large north window is by Wilhelm Geyer). The neo-Baroque altar frontal was created in 1922 for the image of the Blessed Mary **6** (designed by Joseph Buchkremer). The eastern wall features the traditional, much-revered image of the Suffering Madonna. The Roman baptismal font (second half of the 12th century; pedestal later; cover from 1696) actually belongs in the Baptistry on the Cathedral Courtyard.

The Chapel of St Nicholas is a place for silent prayer.

15 At the south west of the Chapel of St Nicholas is the entrance to the Chapel of All Saints. Parts of this chapel are remnants of the original Carolingian connecting structure between the King's Hall and St Mary's. Redesigned in 1954-55, it is now dedicated to the memory of Aachen bishops and suffragans. The cover stone of the bishops' crypt is located in the chapel floor.

Gallery

In the western bay of the gallery stands the famous Aachen Throne: a marble seat on a high stone podium. According to old but unverified accounts, this is actually the throne of Charlemagne. The seat itself, of whitish marble, was probably made somewhere between the time when the church was built (circa 800) and the first

royal coronation in 936. It is not clear whether the substructure we see today with its six ascending steps was actually part of the original installation. The marble components (slabs of the seat, four steps of the stairs) are certainly recycled Roman marble. A board game ("Mühle" – Nine Men's Morris) carved into the south side of the chair indicates that this slab had been horizontal in a previous context of use. Our current level of knowledge does not permit a closer specification of what its original function might have been. But the throne certainly had a very important function at the royal coronations that took place from 936 to 1531: after anointment and coronation at St Mary's Altar on the ground floor **8**, the new king was enthroned here.

Across the rotunda, in the eastern bay of the ambulatory (beyond the Octagon, about where the organ is), until 1803 there stood the Altar of the Saviour (Crucifixion Altar), which was used for parish masses. It was at this altar that the two Carolingian imperial coronations took place.

The magnificent bronze balustrade grilles (circa 800) of the gallery count as one of the most technically sophisticated works of Carolingian art.

Viewing of the gallery is only possible as part of a guided tour.



The Aachen Throne

Carolingian bronze balustrade grilles

The Cathedral Treasury

Aachen Cathedral's Treasury houses one of the world's most important church treasures. Since 1979 it has been located in the area of the cloister. The architectural history of the Aachen Cloister is complicated, and we know nothing at all of its beginnings. With its adjacent buildings, it forms the second central area of the old Aachen Chapter, a predominantly non-liturgical centre next to the church itself as the liturgical centre. The architecture of the cloister as it is today shows consistently Gothic forms from different ages.

Only parts of the cloister are accessible to the public.

The collection of objects in the Treasury is not the result of any particular direction of artistic interest. On the contrary, the items are all ornamentations presented to St Mary's that have been gathered here in the course of 1200 years of history. Most of the exhibits relate to the celebration of the liturgy or to the cult of relics.



Entrance to the Cathedral Treasury across the road from the Cathedral Information

→ **Carolingian art treasures.** Hardly any small-scale works have been preserved in Aachen. An example of what the Treasury does have is a **Diptych** made of ivory which was used as a book cover and dates from the early 9th century. The six reliefs portray the resurrection of Christ.

→ **Ottonian art treasures.** In addition to the large-scale works of goldsmith art in the Cathedral itself, the Treasury contains further outstanding masterpieces, prominent among them the **Cross of Lothair** (wood core, gold, filigree, precious stones, pearls), a processional cross created around 980. The jewelled face (crux gemmata) portrays Christ exalted in Heaven in the form of the famous Augustus cameo. The plain face of the cross bears an engraving of the crucifixion.

→ **Gothic goldsmith art.** The Treasury collection includes three precious, larger containers for relics of Charlemagne, each with a completely different design.

The **Bust of Charlemagne** (silver, partly gilded or enamelled, precious stones, some antique gemstones and cameos), dates from around 1350. The crown is possibly somewhat older and was used as a royal insignia. The reliquary for the skull of Charlemagne.



The Cross of Lothair



The Bust of Charlemagne

The Cathedral Treasury

Numerous other Gothic reliquaries can also be seen, like the Charlemagne Reliquary, the Arm Reliquary, the opulent Three-Tower Reliquary, a plate reliquary or the reliquaries for the Small Relics, as well as other masterpieces of goldsmith art like the sumptuously crafted crown (including the original case) which Margaret of York wore in 1468 at her wedding to Charles the Bold in Damme (Flanders) and later donated to Aachen's Statue of St Mary. ⁶

→ The famous **Persephone Sarcophagus** (marble, first quarter of the 3rd century) is not strictly speaking an art treasure. ⁷ It was a part of the vaulted burial niche for Charlemagne in which the mortal remains of the great emperor rested from 814 to 1165. ¹²

Practical tips

Cathedral

Opening hours

April – December: daily 7 am to 7 pm
January – March: daily 7 am to 6 pm

Admission free

Tourist viewings of the interior of the Cathedral are not possible during services, i.e. viewings weekdays only from 11 am, Saturday and Sunday only from 12.30 pm.

The Entrance Hall, the Rotunda and the two chapels in the northwest (Chapels of St Nicholas and All Saints) can be visited outside of service times without restrictions; the Choir and the Gallery are only accessible as part of a guided tour. The Hungarian Chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament is kept, is reserved for those who wish to pray. The chapels dedicated to St Michael, St Charles, St Hubert, St Matthew and St Anne as well as the Baptistery are not open to the public.

Guided tours

Anyone can join guided tours in German without prior booking. These tours last 45 minutes and take place:
Monday – Friday: 11 am, 12 pm, 1 pm, 2.30 pm, 3.30 pm, 4.30 pm, 5.30 pm;



Charlemagne was originally buried in the Persephone Sarcophagus.

Practical tips

Saturday and Sunday: 1 pm, 2 pm, 3 pm, 4 pm, 5 pm
Guided tours of the Cathedral in English for individual guests: daily at 2 pm

Box office and meeting point for all guided tours

Cathedral Information (see below)
Full price: 4 Euro; concession: 3 Euro
School classes: 2,50 Euro per pupil
Opening outside hours: 200 Euro

There are no guided tours of the Cathedral on the following days: New Year's Day (1.1.) / Thursday before Carnival / Carnival Sunday / Rose Monday / Maundy Thursday / Good Friday / Easter Saturday / Easter Sunday / Whit Sunday / All Saints' Day (1.11.) / Christmas Eve (24.12.) / Christmas Day (25.12.) / New Year's Eve (31.12.)

In the case of special events (special masses, concerts, etc.) guided tours may be cancelled or postponed at short notice.



Barrier-free access is restricted to the ground floor of the Cathedral. Please use the entrance via the "Krämertür" (between the Katschhof and Krämerstraße). Please inform the Cathedral staff in the Entrance Hall first. We will be delighted to help you.

Cathedral Treasury

Opening hours

January – March: Monday 10 am to 1 pm; Tuesday – Sunday 10 am to 5 pm, April – December: Monday 10 am to 1 pm; Tuesday – Sunday 10 am to 6 pm
The Cathedral Treasury is closed on the following days: New Year's Day (1.1.) / Thursday before Carnival / Carnival Sunday / Rose Monday / Good Friday / Christmas Eve (24.12.) / Christmas Day (25.12.) / New Year's Eve (31.12.) The Cathedral Treasury is open on Easter Monday and Whit Monday from 10 am to 6 pm.

Admission fees

Full price: 5 Euro / concessions: 4 Euro (pupils, students, senior citizens); groups of 10 or more: 3,50 Euro per person; Family Ticket: 10 Euro (parents with children up to 18)

Guided tours

There are no guided tours for individual guests in the Cathedral Treasury – only group tours with prior booking! We recommend that individual guests use the audio-guide (German/English/French/Dutch/Italian/Spanish); audio-guide for children (German).

Box office and meeting point for all guided tours

Cathedral Information (see below)
Guided tours for groups of 10 or more: (45 minutes)
Full price: 6,50 Euro per person; concessions: 5,50 Euro per person; school classes: 4,50 Euro per pupil
Supplementary charge for other languages than German: 20 Euro per group
Opening outside hours: 200 Euro

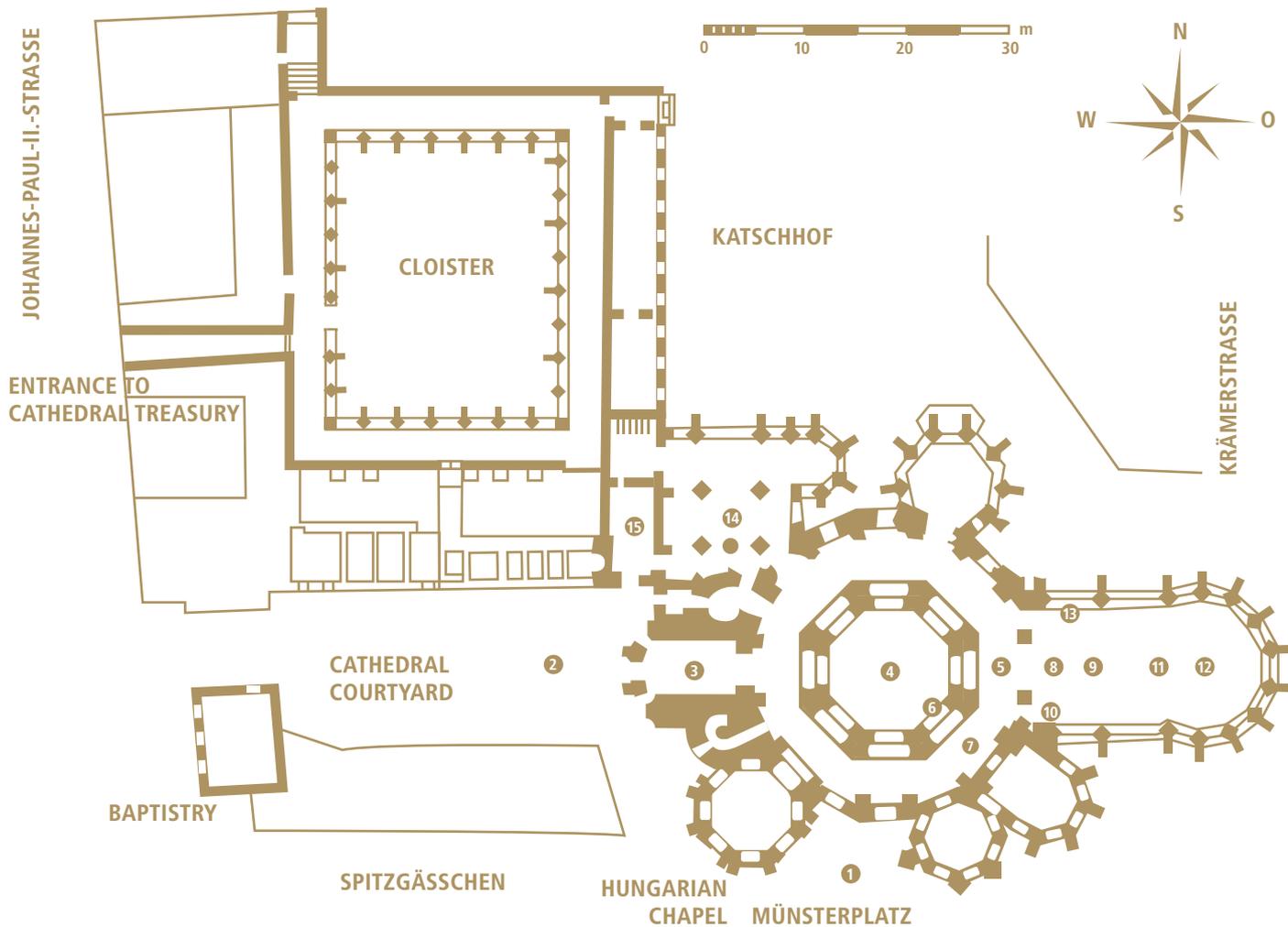


The new Cathedral Treasury offers barrier-free access. Stair lift for wheelchair users to basement and first floor at the end of the entrance area (Please ask at the box office!), barrier-free toilets.

Guided tour of the Cathedral and the Treasury (90 minutes)

Only available as a group tour with prior booking
Full price: 9 Euro per person; concessions: 7,50 Euro per person; school classes: 5 Euro per pupil (120 minutes: 10 / 8,50 / 6 Euro per person) Supplementary charge for other languages than German: 30 Euro per group
Cathedral and Treasury opening outside hours: 300 Euro
Please book guided tours of the Cathedral and the Treasury well in advance under:
Tel: +49 (0)241 477 09-127
Fax: +49 (0)241 477 09-150
E-Mail: domfuehrung@dom.bistum-aachen.de

Site plan



- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 View from south-west | 5 Main Altar | 8 Location of former St Mary's Altar | 12 Shrine of Charlemagne |
| 2 Cathedral Courtyard | 6 Aachen Statue of the Blessed Mary | 9 Shrine of the Virgin Mary | 13 Bishop's Throne |
| 3 Entrance Hall with bronze statues | 7 Original tomb of Charlemagne | 10 Ambo | 14 Chapel of St Nicholas |
| 4 Rotunda (Octagon) | | 11 Gothic Choir | 15 Chapel of All Saints |

Information

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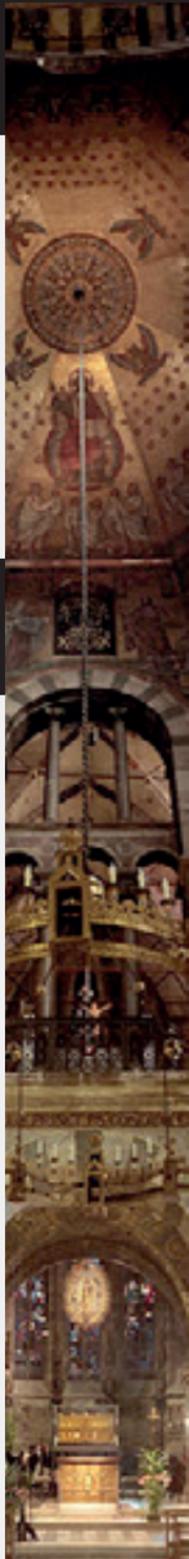
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