

The Aachen Dom

Manifestation of an Emperor's dream

When the Emperor Charlemagne built his representative "Pfalz", the Palace, before 800, he started to make his dream of Aachen as a "new Rome" come true. The centrepiece of the Palace complex is its church, which was designed as an octagon according to the example of Byzantine palace churches. The height of its interior of more than 31 meters is a unique architectural achievement. Until the High Romanic period nobody managed to exceed this bold construction.

The Palace Chapel became the burial place of Charlemagne. From 936 onwards the Chapel has been used as the coronation place for the German kings for the following 600 years.

In 1002 the Emperor Otto III was also buried in Charlemagne's Chapel. Since the Gothic period every seven years large numbers of pilgrims have come to Aachen for the occasion of the "Heiligtumsfahrt" (Holy Pilgrimage), in order to pay reverence to the four sacred relics.

From 1355 to 1414 the Gothic Choir Hall was built and added to Charlemagne's construction. It was also called the "Glass House" of Aachen because of its huge glass windows. The Glass House forms the luminous shell for Charlemagne's Shrine. Charlemagne had been canonised and his mortal remains have been contained in the Shrine.

During the 15th century most of the chapels that surround the central building were built. The Western Tower was another addition that was built during the late 19th century. For the first time under Napoleon's rule Aachen becomes an Episcopal town. In modern times it has its own bishop since 1930.

Because it is the location of Charlemagne's grave, the coronation place of the German kings and the destination of the Holy Pilgrimage, the Aachener "Marienkirche" (St Mary's Church) has been appreciated and revered for many centuries. This clearly shows when you look at the large number of exhibits. The Cathedral Treasury is a unique witness of the venerable history of Charlemagne's

Palace Chapel. As ecclesiastical treasure the Cathedral Treasure has no equal apart from the Italian relics.

There were certainly enough reasons for the UNESCO to include the Aachen Dom in its list of World Heritage Sites as the first German architectural monument.

Information:

aachen tourist service e.v.

POB 10 22 51, 52022 Aachen

Tel.: +49/(0)2 41/180 29 60

Fax: +49/(0)2 41/180 29 30

info@aachen-tourist.de

www.aachen-tourist.de

Press Contact:

Melanie Salmen

aachen tourist service e.v.

Postfach 10 22 51

52022 Aachen

Tel.: +49/241/180 29 41

Fax: +49/241/180 29 30

presse@aachen-tourist.de

www.aachen-tourist.de