

Part 4 Europe 2025 for Cathy's blog.

Monday 7th April 2025.

Breakfast started earlier on weekdays and we were up and ready for our day quite early. The same construction workers are still there. The food service staff know us (and David gets a waffle cooked for him).

Today is our trip to Aachen. Aachen is a smaller town quite close to the Dutch and the Belgian borders. We caught an ICE train (Inter City Express), the only one we could book and the earliest we could book was after 9:30. So it was a good chance in the morning to tidy up the washing and the suitcases and catch up on a bit of research and blogging.

Trains are easy to find and catch in Germany. Our train was held up by half an hour at Duren (due to a fire at the station).



Our first tourist activity was to see the Marchientor, one of the gates in the city walls. It was bigger and more impressive than I expected! It was built from 1257 to just after 1300.



While walking up into the centre of town, we found one of the many Printen shops. Printen is like gingerbread. You can have it glazed or dipped in chocolate or with dried fruit. You can even have Easter Rabbit Printen.



Then it was time to walk through the Aachen Cathedral. It is older than the Cologne Cathedral and was built by King Charlemagne, in 793 to 813.

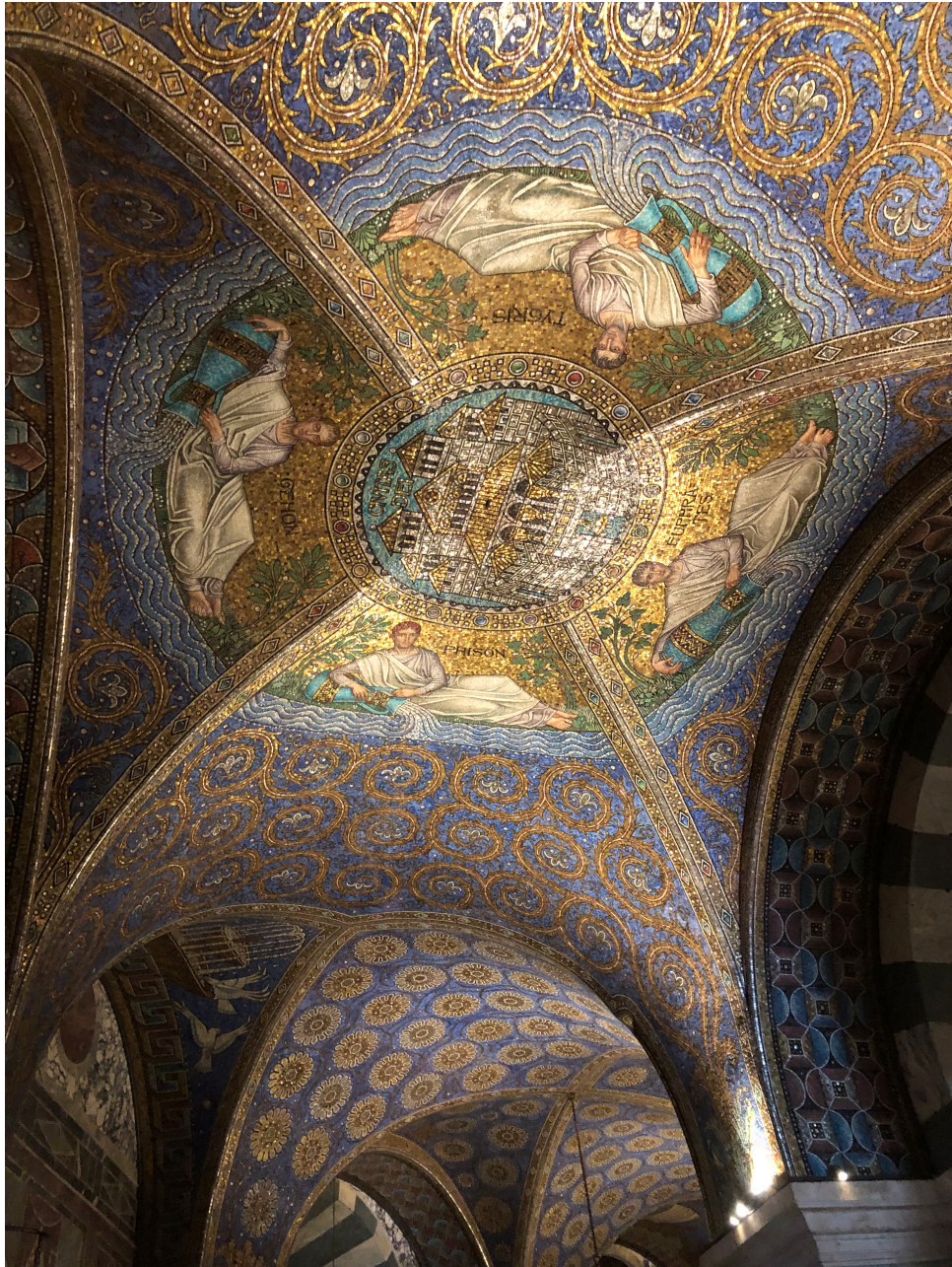
It was used for the ceremonies to crown the Kings for many generations.



This model is of the Aachen Cathedral and is in place for blind people to feel. (The Cologne Dom has one too.)



The Aachen Cathedral (from across the square... the local eateries are just setting up for the lunch trade).



The mosaics on the ceilings were impressive.



The stained glass windows were also spectacular.



They used different coloured marble for the patterns on the floor. Look at the patterns in the marble used for the walls.





Another amazing weather day with such blue skies. This is just part of the Aachen Cathedral in the sunshine.

Aachen is set on a small hill, so it was an uphill walk to the Ponttor, another door in the city walls.





Looking through the Ponttor.

Then it was time for lunch (actually, it was late for lunch!). Another German specialty is different sausages. So we went to the Hans Wurst restaurant. There were chairs and tables in the square, but we ate inside.



Caption



Flowers in tubs around the square.

Aachen was the home city of Charlemagne, so they have a statue of him in the town square.





This is a water fountain (although they built beautiful buildings, they didn't have running water, so people would go to the water fountain nearest their home to collect buckets of water for their daily needs).



This is the Rathaus (town hall). You can see the smaller houses tucked in next door and across the narrow streets.



Even in Aachen, people leave the public scooters around.



These horses are outside the Aachen train station.

Look at the expression on this one.



“Sparkasse” is a bank and has ATMs. You simply press English and you can read and follow the instructions.

Then it was onto the train and a quicker trip back to Cologne. A quick stop at home to collect the washing and we walked on to the laundrette. We had to wait for a machine, it was so busy. People helped with buying washing powder and using the machines.

David went out to find some food and brought back some kebabs (think souvlaki, really) which we ate waiting for the washing and drying.

Our clothes are now clean and we are ready for our train to Amsterdam and then meeting our cruise.