

# QUIRINUS-MÜNSTER

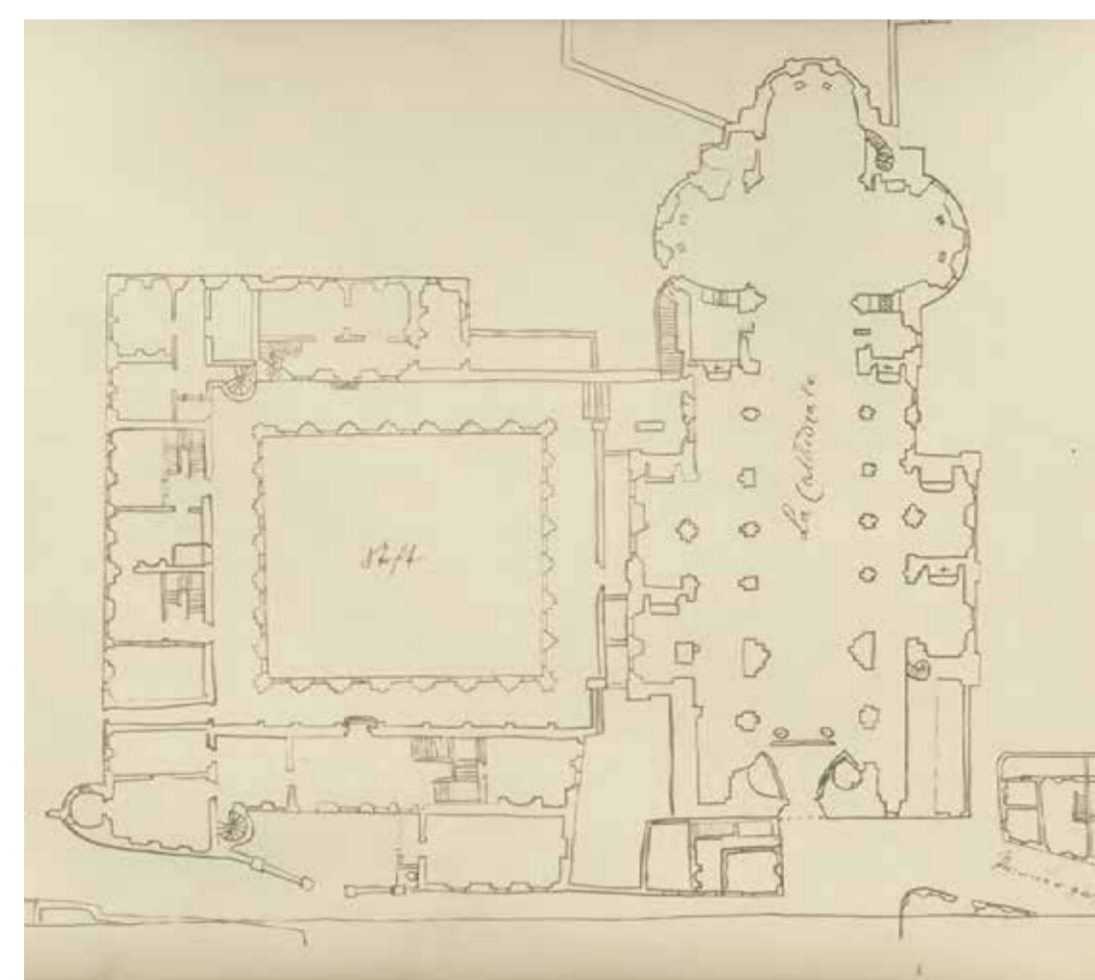
Minster Church of St. Quirinus

With its dome visible from afar, the Minster Church of St. Quirinus stands out as a **landmark in the City of Neuss**. The church building is regarded as an outstanding example of (Lower) Rhenish **late Romanesque architecture**. The foundation stone for the church was laid on 9 October 1209 by the **master builder Wolbero**. This is the fourth building on the site – a small sacred building probably standing there on the edge of a late antique burial ground in the 5th century. It is assumed that a three-aisled basilica was built in the 9th century, this having been extended around 1000 when it gained a four-column crypt. The **crypt** was extended in the early 12th century, this work having been accompanied by a modernisation of the church. Foundations and floor fragments of the previous buildings are visible inside the church.

The church has repeatedly suffered damage and undergone structural changes over the centuries. After a lightning strike destroyed the roof and towers in 1741, the **baroque dome** with the statue of St Quirinus and pyramid roof on the west tower were built above the crossing tower.



The Minster Church of St. Quirinus from the north-east, engraving, around 1870



Floor plan of St Quirin's Abbey before demolition, 1802



Interior of the Minster Church, around 1930

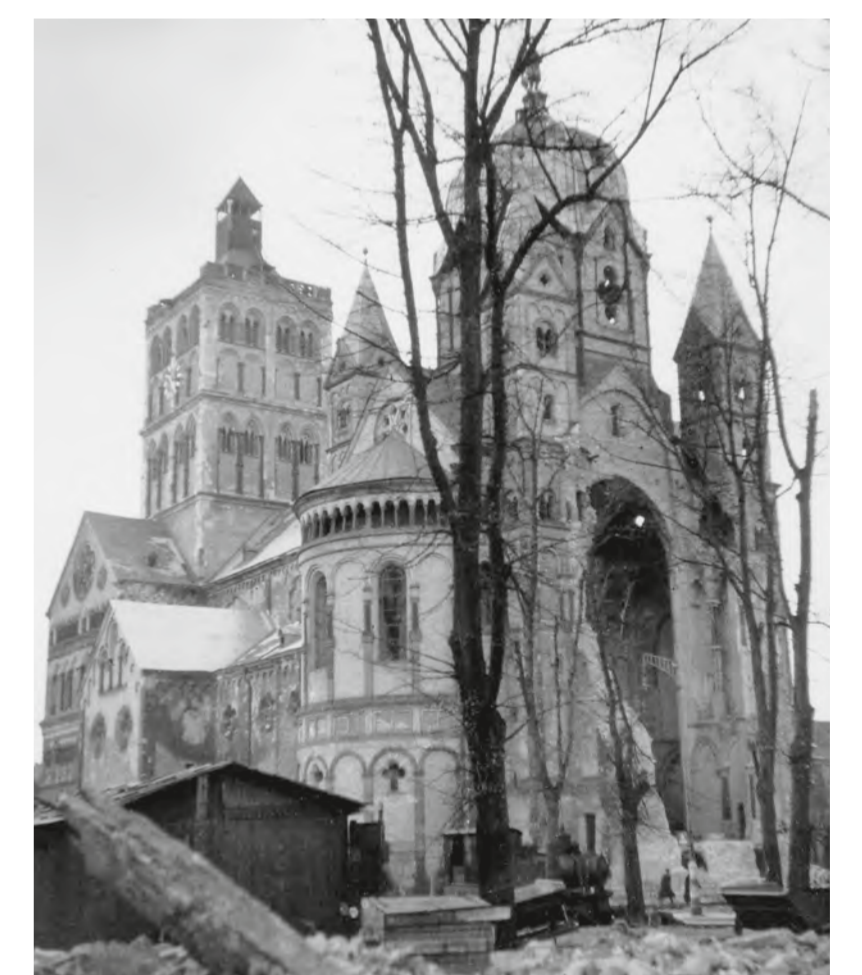
The name Münster (English "Minster") refers to its origins as the church of a **Benedictine convent** (monastery). This was probably founded in the 9th century prior to conversion into a monastery in the second half of the 12th century. Following the transfer of the **remains of St. Quirinus**, an early Christian martyr, around 1050, the church grew into one of the most important pilgrimage centres in the Rhineland in the Middle Ages. The interior of the three-nave **gallery basilica** is dominated by the Quirinus shrine in the **cloverleaf choir** (three-conch choir). The Aachen goldsmith's work from 1900, whose predecessors date back to the High Middle Ages, replaced an older shrine that is now in the Clemens Sels Museum.

Until the time of the French occupation of the Rhineland, a **cloister and monastery buildings** existed to the north of the church. These were demolished after the dissolution of the monastery during secularisation in 1802. Extensive repair and **restoration work** was carried out under Prussian rule in the 19th century, during the course of which parts of the eastern church building were also reconstructed in 1890. Further restorations followed in the first half of the 20th century. The cathedral was badly damaged in a **bombing raid** on 5 January 1944 – the east conch of the choir collapsing and destroying the crypt. The church was restored to its former splendour for the Quirinus anniversary in 1950. Further restoration work was undertaken in the 1980s to 2000s and then 2024. In 2009, Quirinus Minster was awarded the papal title of basilica minor.

(Sources and texts: Neuss municipal archives)



View of the Minster Church with Freithof from the south-east, around 1920



The Minster after the destruction of the east conch, 1945



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**1741**  
Construction of the baroque dome after a lightning strike

**1914**  
Fire in the west tower

**1950**  
Completion of the reconstruction process

**5<sup>th</sup> century**  
Existence of a small sacred building

**9<sup>th</sup> century**  
Construction of the first three-aisled church

**around 1000**  
Installation of a crypt and extension of the church

**1050**  
Bones of St Quirinus translated

**1209**  
Foundation stone laid for today's church building

**1586**  
City fire, partial destruction of the cathedral

**1802**  
Dissolution of the monastery and demolition of the monastery buildings

**1944**  
Collapse of the apse after bombing

**2009**  
Elevation to basilica minor

View of the City of Neuss from the east, copperplate engraving, 1575

