



The Use of Fire to Demolish a Building and the Burning of the Old Cologne Cathedral in 1248

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Abstract: The *Chronica regia Coloniensis* recounts a strange event: to demolish the former choir of Cologne Cathedral, those in charge of the building works decided, in April 1248, to excavate the space under the walls, to prop up the walls with beams, and set everything aflame so that the construction would collapse. But the situation soon got out of control and the fire destroyed a significant portion of the cathedral. This article explains the military origins of this method by analyzing sources dating back to the fourth century.

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