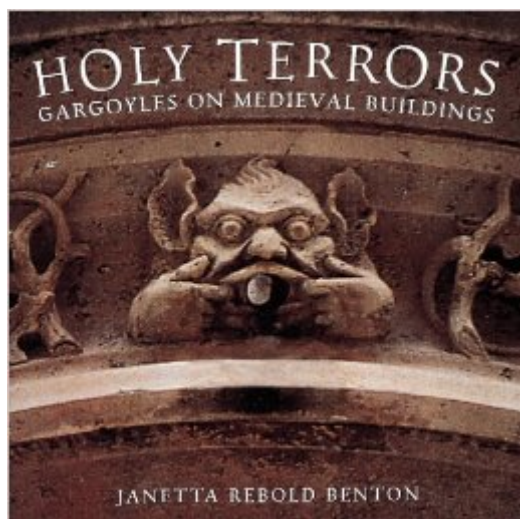


The book was found

Holy Terrors: Gargoyles On Medieval Buildings



Synopsis

Multitudes of gargoyles haunt the medieval buildings of western Europe, peering down from churches and cathedrals, houses and town halls. *Holy Terrors* offers a fresh and irresistible history of these wildly varied characters; a society of stone creatures perched high above the workaday world. The true gargoyle is a waterspout, an architectural necessity that medieval artisans transformed into functional fantasies. The informative introduction to *Holy Terrors* explains everything that is known or conjectured about the history, the construction, the purposes, and the mysterious meanings of these often rude and rowdy characters. The three chapters that follow are devoted to the gargoyles themselves, imaginatively carved of stone in the form of people, real animals, and fantastic beasts. In clear, lively language, Janetta Rebold Benton puts these personality-filled sculptures into the context of medieval life and art and captures their quirky diversity in her engaging color photographs. Concluding the book is an invaluable guide to gargoyle sites throughout western Europe, as well as suggestions for further reading. This is the first book for adults to provide an intelligent and entertaining overview of medieval gargoyles, and it is bound to increase the already abundant legions of gargoyle admirers.

Book Information

Hardcover: 140 pages

Publisher: Abbeville Press; 1st edition (April 1, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0789201828

ISBN-13: 978-0789201829

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.8 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (17 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #408,113 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Decorative Arts & Design > Interior & Home Design > Style](#) #185 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Sculpture > Appreciation](#) #713 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > History](#)

Customer Reviews

Almost every tourist who has ever climbed to the top of the North Tower of Notre-Dame de Paris has taken a photo of his or her companion leaning over the balustrade between two gargoyles (technically 'chimeras'), and surveying the streets below. It's the ultimate gargoyle photo-op. I'm

surprised this author was able to photograph the gargoyles without a tourist leaning between them. I was only slightly disappointed to learn from this book that much of the stonework on this tower is nineteenth-century restoration by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, "started in 1845 to repair damage done to the cathedral during the Revolution." However, he did attempt to use molds of the originals. Basically gargoyles are waterspouts, but to me they are proof that medieval stonemasons had a lively sense of humor--which they might have inherited from the Etruscans or the Egyptians, who also used animal-shaped stone waterspouts. Strictly speaking, gargoyles that do not spout water are known as 'grotesques' or 'chimeras.' It surprised me to learn that gargoyles used to be brightly colored--oranges, reds, and greens were favored--and sometimes gilded. The author believes that "gargoyles may be survivals of pagan beliefs...incorporated into church decorations for superstitious reasons." I've read many a horror story based on this assumption, most notably "The Cambridge Beast" and "The Sheelagh-na-gig" by Mary Ann Allen. Encounters between gargoyles and people are unique to the Cathedral of Saint John in Den Bosch, the Netherlands: "As a monstrous creature leaps out from the top of the buttress, the people cringe in terror, each one leaning back in an attempt to escape the attack of their horrible assailant."

I would like to suggest that Janetta Rebold Benton has done a great service in furthering thought about the gargoyles on medieval buildings. First of all, the choice of photographs and the way she explains them is exquisite! The book is highly worthwhile on this basis alone. However, this book also has the added benefit of some excellent thoughts on the MEANING of the gargoyles. I think this gives much insight into history and church history. She wisely premises that there may be different meanings in different times and situations. She states that, "the medieval affection for ambiguity allowed for a multiplicity of meanings... Characteristic of the medieval mentality was a willingness to freely interpret reality, as well as fantasy, according to religious symbolism." (Page 21) After her 10 years of research and cogent reasoning, here are some of the things she points out:

1. Medieval people did not have telephoto lenses or even good binoculars. The majority of the gargoyles are set too high to be seen very well with the naked eye. This is also the case with many stained-glass windows. Therefore, the exquisite artwork here was meant to be seen by God, or they just enjoyed doing it. (From this, I surmised that possibly the craftsmen themselves may have competed to do the best stone carving. The author suggests this saying that some of the Masons may have had an ego.)
2. Of the medieval gargoyles (as opposed to modern gargoyles such as the Chrysler building in New York City) no two gargoyles are the same! Wow! This shows the amazing individual craftsmanship that was going on.
3. As the glorious medieval times transitioned from

paganism to Christianity, there could have been some concession given to former paganism especially in Roman culture.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

Holy Terrors: Gargoyles on Medieval Buildings Round Buildings, Square Buildings, and Buildings that Wiggle Like a Fish American Gargoyles: Spirits in Stone Triassic Terrors Art and Architecture in Medieval France: Medieval Architecture, Sculpture, Stained Glass, Manuscripts, the Art of the Church Treasuries (Icon Editions) Medieval Myths, Legends, and Songs (Medieval World (Crabtree Paperback)) An Age of Empires, 1200-1750 (The Medieval and Early Modern World) (Medieval & Early Modern World) Medieval Canon Law (The Medieval World) The Medieval Book: Illustrated from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (MART: The Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching) The Secret Language of Churches & Cathedrals: Decoding the Sacred Symbolism of Christianity's Holy Buildings Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints The Code of the Holy Spirit: Uncovering the Hebraic Roots and Historic Presence of the Holy Spirit Holy Fire: A Balanced, Biblical Look at the Holy Spirit's Work in Our Lives Be Filled With the Holy Spirit - Living the Spirit Filled Life: 100 Bible Verses About the Holy Spirit This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion Draw 50 Buildings and Other Structures: The Step-by-Step Way to Draw Castles and Cathedrals, Skyscrapers and Bridges, and So Much More... A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction (Center for Environmental Structure) Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures, 3rd Printing (Standard ASCE/SEI 7-10) Professional Practice: A Guide to Turning Designs into Buildings Mechanical and Electrical Equipment for Buildings

[Dmca](#)