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L'espace sacré au sein de l'église médiévale

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On the meaning of gargoyles

Elizabeth den Hartog

1. Introduction : gargoyles

- Gargoyles, with their characteristic long zoomorphic bodies protruding from the upper parts of buildings were a novelty in the first decennia of the thirteenth century¹. It is generally held that they made their first appearance around 1220 on the west front of Laon Cathedral, an idea that can be traced back to Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture*, published between 1854 and 1868. These gargoyles, so he writes, were of animal shape, large and few in number, and consisted of a lower part forming the gutter and an upper part serving as a lid². As the functionality of this type of drain was soon realized, it was adapted elsewhere in ever greater numbers. By 1240 gargoyles were systematically used at the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. The oldest examples there were as yet quite short and in need of an extra support in the shape of a figurative corbel, but as time passed, they acquired their characteristic long-silhouetted appearance. Generally speaking, the earliest gargoyles tend to have animal or monstrous bodies, but by the late thirteenth century the repertoire also included human forms³.
- Gargoyles represent evil creatures, animals and sinful humans. The word gargoyle is said to derive from the French words « garge », which means to gurgle, and « goule », throat, and is found in texts from the thirteenth century onwards⁴. The original purpose of gargoyles was to convey rainwater from a roof onto the streets, preventing it from running down the walls and thereby causing damage (fig. 1).

Fig. 1 – Utrecht Cathedral, exterior choir, north side. Fourteenth-century gargoyle with a waterspout (cl. Den Hartog).



- 3 At around the same time, the Middle High German song *Der Erlösung* (the Salvation), written around 1250 by Heinrich von Hesler, described gargoyles as part of the throne of God, together with pinnacles and gables (*fiôlen, wintburgelîn, gargôlen*)⁵. These gargoyles, that were obviously part of an interior rather than an exterior setting, were symbolic rather than practical, as they would not have issued water (fig. 2).

Fig. 2 – Utrecht Cathedral, exterior choir, north side. Fourteenth-century gargoyle (with a renewed head) without a waterspout (cl. P. Cox, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, Amersfoort).



- 4 This shows not only that gargoyles were from the beginning used as decorative devices, but also that their devilish forms were not necessarily related to the cleansing properties of water.
- 5 Although gargoyles appear mainly on and in churches, textual sources indicate that their habitat sometimes extended to other types of building. In 1277, Rikier Amion, a clerk from Arras, was reprimanded for having placed gargoyles and other constructions on his house that issued their contents onto the street without obtaining the bishop's prior permission⁶. In his *The Troy Book*, the late fourteenth-century English poet John Lydgate mentions that « every hous keuered was with lead / And many gargoyl and many hidous head⁷ ».

2. Current ideas on the meaning of gargoyles

- 6 Since the publication of Janetta Rebold Benton's 1997 book *Holy Terrors. Gargoyles on Medieval Buildings*, there has been a renewed interest in the iconography and iconology of gargoyles, especially in Germany, where several monographs have appeared on, for example, ensembles in Cologne, Magdeburg, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Ulm and Schwäbisch Gmünd⁸. These studies are very helpful as they give us an insight in the medieval gargoyle repertoire by distinguishing the old from the new specimens – a distinction that was lost on Rebold Benton – and as they enable comparative iconographic studies. Most recent authors tend to see gargoyles as some sort of device to ward off evil, an idea that was propounded by Maximilian Steiner, in his unpublished 1953 Erlangen dissertation⁹. His idea was followed by Schymiczek, whose 2004 study on the gargoyles of Cologne Cathedral was even given the subtitle (in translation): « On your walls, Jerusalem, I have placed sentries¹⁰. » Her findings were briefly recapitulated in Anja Elias' book on the gargoyles of Magdeburg Cathedral :

Demons turned into stone, driven from the church by exorcism, and made subservient to the church building is just one of the possible meanings [of gargoyles]. More recent interpretations by Steiner (1953) and Schymiczek (2004) make more sense and are more conclusive. They attribute to the gargoyle an apotropaic function. In the Middle Ages it was believed that church buildings were constantly under attack from air and weather demons. The best way to get rid of these creatures was to make a similarly formed counter-demon, as no demon was able to bear seeing its horrific counterpart. Gargoyles should therefore be seen as sentinels¹¹.

- 7 Strobel, in his 2009 study of the gargoyles in Schwäbisch Gmünd, also adhered to this hypothesis, while admitting that medieval sources backing up this idea are virtually non-existent¹². The only documentary hint in favour of this apotropaic interpretation is a passage in the so-called *Hexenbüchlein*, written by Jacob Freiherr von Liechtenberg in the early sixteenth century. In this book, the following is said (in translation) :

item some figures can, when they have been carved into a roof tile, and are directed towards bad weather, drive this weather away, and if they are placed on the places under attack, the damage will be healed, for the reason that a superior power, which is meant by the figure, directed towards the other, will drive this other away. This is how the witches that house in cats, wolves, goats and so on can be conquered, beaten, imprisoned and killed.

- 8 In other words, an evil influence can be averted by making a counter-image¹³.
- 9 This, however, was probably no more than a popular belief. Although Von Liechtenberg's book shows that gargoyles, by the sixteenth century, had come to be thought of as images that countered attacks of demons, this is unlikely to have been the original meaning of these sculptures. For one, demons were not just bad, as even demons had their uses, as will be shown below¹⁴. What is more, such methods, which have the ring of magic to them, were quite contrary to the official teachings of the Church. Using counter-images is akin to using amulets, a practice the Church did not condone, considering it to be a superstitious form of magic. Offenders were generally heavily punished¹⁵. The dying wet nurse Grietken lost all her possessions when the clergy discovered she was carrying a small bag round her neck that contained a piece of heart in order to ward off attacks of epilepsy¹⁶. Such an amulet was thought of as magical, and was considered as a sign of a turning away from the true faith¹⁷. And there were many cases like Grietken's. It therefore seems unlikely that the purpose of gargoyles was to ward off evil, as in this case the Church would itself have been doing what it was trying to ban through its writings, thus blatantly disregarding its own teachings.
- 10 Of course, theory was one thing and practice another. There is no denying that there was a huge gulf between the official teachings of the Church and what people believed and did. And it was precisely because people kept resorting to magic in order to solve their problems that summons to stop this kind of behaviour never ceased. This also means that people had to be offered an alternative. Rather than using amulets and magic, the Church encouraged the faithful to put their trust in the sacraments, and in prayer and devotion.

3. The purpose of demons

- 11 There can be no doubt that medieval people believed in the existence of air and weather demons, intent on leading men and women astray. Their presence was thought to be ubiquitous, demons appearing in even the most sacred of places like churches and monasteries. The reason for this was that the sanctity of place did not prevent people from sinning there and being led astray. One of the exempla – moralistic stories from which to draw lessons – in Jacques de Vitry's *Sermones vulgares* of the 1220s has a devil filling a large sack with the syllables and words that were omitted, mumbled or pronounced badly by the officiants of either the Mass or the Divine Office¹⁸. In the *Liber de septem donis*, written by Etienne de Bourbon after the middle of the thirteenth century, devils not only stalk priests and clerics to keep track of whether they performed their duties correctly, but also the laity. They too were to say their prayers with attention, without mumbling and not as quick as possible to get them over and done with. Above all, they had to behave during Mass and not disturb the goings-on by talking through the service¹⁹.
- 12 Caesarius, a monk from the Cistercian abbey of Heisterbach (1180-1240), proved himself to be an adept of such stories of devilish temptation in his *Dialogus Miraculorum*. Book V of this work is entirely devoted to them. In book IV, which is devoted to temptation, Caesarius holds that man was not only tested by God, but also by the flesh, the world and the devil and should always be on the alert as « in succumbing to them we are shamed, whilst by resisting them we gather merit. In being victorious we deserve a crown²⁰. » To this he adds that for this reason every human being was given two angels at birth : a good one to look after him and a bad one (a demon) to train him²¹. Jacques de Vitry knew of a priest who found a small devil in his church who was pulling at a piece of parchment with his teeth. When he asked him what he was up to, the devil told him he was lengthening the parchment to enable him to note down all the sins committed by the congregation, as the piece he had with him had proved too small²². On the choir stalls of Bonn Minster (c. 1200-1210, fig. 3) and in the church of Saint Nicholas in Kalkar – 1508, by Henrik Bernts – these two ideas were combined. In both cases we have a devil putting the bad deeds he witnesses to paper, while an angel is shown noting down the good ones²³.

Fig. 3 – Figure remaining from the stone choir stalls in the Minster in Bonn showing a devil writing down the bad deeds of the canons (cl. Den Hartog).



- 13 In medieval times, the road to salvation was thought of as a spiritual battle, as was exemplified by the figure of Job in the Old Testament *Book of Job*. Job was a righteous and God-fearing man, who, without being aware of this, was praised by God as an example of piety. The devil found this piety somewhat gratuitous in view of Job's prosperity and God therefore allowed him to test Job, by taking away his possessions. This undeserved loss of cattle, slaves and children did not cause Job to abandon his faith. The devil, however, was still not satisfied and was therefore given permission to try him with illness. Covered in ulcers and sitting on a dunghill scraping his wounds with a sherd of pottery, Job then received visits from his wife, who mocked him, and his friends, who felt sorry for him and wondered why God-fearing men like Job were not spared such suffering. Still, however desperate, Job remained true to God, who eventually showed him mercy by awarding him with renewed health, riches and prosperity.
- 14 The idea of a spiritual battle was tremendously influential in the monastic world and is best expressed in the *Moralia in Job*, a commentary on the *Book of Job* written by Gregory the Great in the sixth century. An important theme in his exegesis of the book is the apparent contradiction between the prosperity and material well-being of the bad and the suffering of the good. Why does God punish the righteous? In Gregory's view, material deprivation and spiritual suffering train the righteous towards spiritual perfection²⁴.
- 15 Some demons targeted people's environs rather than the people themselves. By negatively influencing the progress of building projects, by striking churches with lightning and having them go up in flames, and other such tricks, demons could be a right nuisance and bring people to despair. However, even these demons were thought

to have been sent by God, as is clear from one of the headings in a didactic poem on the nature of the universe, written by brother Gheraert of Lienhout in Ghent around 1300 : « of the devils, to be seen in the sky, who do evil during thunderstorms at the command of God²⁵. » Brother Gheraert, who was much influenced by Thomas of Cantimpré in this respect, holds that evils occupied themselves day and night with bringing people down by misguiding them and making them sin, while also claiming that they are there to test the faithful who were to withstand temptation and not be caught by the devil's lures²⁶.

- 16 In the medieval view, then, demons were a reality and had a purpose. They were there to put the faithful to the test. Of course, demons had to be fought, resisted and sent packing, but the question is, how did the medieval faithful go about this ? As we will see, they had quite a few methods at their disposal.

4. Protecting churches and the faithful

- 17 At the end of the thirteenth century, in his *Rationale divinarum officiorum*, Durandus of Mende († 1296), whose writings are much indebted to Jean Belet's *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis* written between 1161-1165, describes various ways by which church buildings were protected from the demons. These did not include making gargoyles and placing them under the roofs of churches, cloisters and the like, even though in Durandus' time, they were all the fashion.

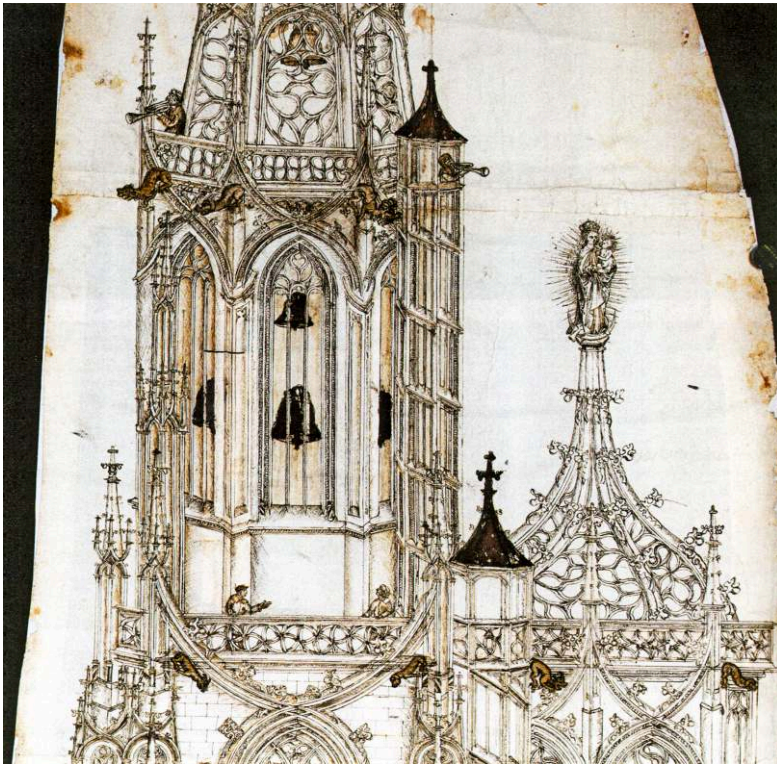
- 18 First of all, the church was consecrated. Durandus mentions that holy water was well suited for this purpose as by its virtues it drove away demons. A second reason to consecrate the church building was to cleanse and expiate it from sin. The third reason was to remove all malediction²⁷. He also discusses consecration crosses, which were in the first place intended as

a terror to evil spirits, that they, having been driven forth thence, may be terrified when they see the sign of the cross, and may not presume to enter therein again ; secondly, as a mark of triumph. For crosses be the banners of Christ, and the signs of his triumph. Crosses therefore are with reason painted there that it may be made manifest that that place hath been subdued to the dominion of Christ²⁸.

- 19 In addition to the church consecration and consecration crosses, Durandus names church bells. Their primary function, so he writes, was to call the faithful to mass and increase their devotion, but their second purpose was to protect the produce of the fields, drive away the legions of the enemy and counteract the machinations of the devil²⁹. He also claims that :

Bells be also rung during processions, so that the evil spirits may hear them and flee [...]. For they do fear when the trumpets of the Church Militant, that is the bells, be heard, like as a tyrant doth fear the moment when he heareth on his own land the trumpets of any potent king his foe. And this is the reason also why the Church, when she seeth a tempest to arise, doth ring the bells ; namely, that the devils hearing the trumpets of the Eternal King, which be the bells, may flee away through fear and cease from raising the storm ; and that the faithful also may be admonished at the ringing of the bells and be provoked to be urgent in prayer for the instant danger (fig. 4)³⁰.

Fig. 4 – Detail from a drawing of the west facade of the cathedral in Konstanz of c. 1512-1518 by Lorenz Reder. Hessisches Hauptarchiv, Wiesbaden (From : R. STROBEL, *Wasserspeier. Bestand und Bedeutung am Beispiel des Heiligkreuzmünsters in Schwäbisch Gmünd*, Stuttgart, 2009, plate 22).



- 20 Durandus' assertions can be substantiated by other documentary evidence and by the bells themselves. Already in the eleventh century, Bishop Benno of Meissen dedicated a bell that was apparently so effective that everywhere where it was heard the land was protected from hail and lightning³¹. Bells were consecrated objects that were each given the name of a saint, to whose power the bell owed its apotropaic qualities, and some bells even carry or carried inscriptions concerning their role in chasing off demons, bad weather and the like³². An inscription, composed by Erasmus, on a now-lost bell in the abbey of Averbode (Belgium) read : « Sacred unto Peter, I make the demons flee. I ward off lightning. My song adorns both funerals and holy days³³. »
- 21 The bells that were best at driving away tempests, storm, lightning, hail and demons tended to be the very large and heavy ones. A specimen, dedicated to Saint Saviour and made for the church of Saint Lawrence in Alkmaar in 1525, weighs 4 200 pounds and has a diameter of 146 cm. Its inscription mentions its ability to chase off demons³⁴. In the Utrecht Cathedral tower, the Latin inscriptions on as many as three of its seven sixteenth-century bells, refer to their driving away demons and protecting the citizens. Saint Mary's bell reads : « Ambush, ruses and deceptions of the haughty devil I trample and I suffocate the raging fires of hell. » The bell dedicated to Saint Michael refers to the righteous being tested by the devil, claiming that he, Michael, with his helpers, will do something about this³⁵.
- 22 Saint Michael and his angels protected church buildings by other means as well. An early example of this is the ninth-century inscription tablet on the west façade of the westwork of the former abbey church of Corvey an der Weser, which reads (in translation) : « You, Lord, surround this city, and your angels guard its walls. » Not surprisingly, angels often made an appearance on Gothic churches also. Around the

upper parts of the exterior of Reims Cathedral, just above or below the level of the gargoyles, are the figures of large angels (fig. 5).

Fig. 5 – Reims, cathedral, angel in a canopy on the upper parts of the north wall of the nave (cl. Den Hartog).



- 23 In Cologne Cathedral such angels inhabit the canopied niches surmounting the smaller buttresses of the choir exterior, just above the level of the gargoyles. Admittedly, these angels are the work of the sculptor Wilhelm J. Imhoff, made after designs by Schinkel, but drawings show that these nineteenth-century angels replaced earlier ones of which no remnants survive³⁶. These angels represent the true guardians of the church, who made the demons flee. Another example of this can be seen on the western porch of Exeter cathedral, where the crenellations of the western porch are manned by both angels and saints (fig. 6).

Fig. 6 – Exeter, cathedral, detail of the crenelated parapet of the western front, showing the church being protected by saints and angels (cl. Den Hartog).



- 24 In addition to angels, saints were also quite capable of dealing with demons and dragons. Saint Martin, for one, was widely known for his abilities to make short thrift with the devil. Another such saint was Saint Romain, the patron saint of Rouen, who delivered this city from a frightful « gargoille », while Saint Clement freed Metz from the monstrous Graouilly and her offspring. A manuscript of the *Life of Saint Clement* of around 1380 – PARIS, *Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal*, lat. 5227 – contains a picture showing how the Graouilly and her offspring, through the interference of Saint Clement, flee the city. The fleeing dragons, shown jumping out of windows and crevices, look just like gargoyles. Saint Clement’s victory over the Graouilly was celebrated yearly on the three days of the Cross preceding Ascension Day with a series of processions that are described in *Cérémonial de la cathédrale* of slightly before 1245. During these processions the inhabitants of the village of Woippy headed the procession, carrying three golden crosses to which banners had been affixed. On one of the banners the head of a dragon would be fitted. The first two days the person carrying this dragon-headed cross would walk in front of the procession ; on the last day he was relegated to a position behind the other two crosses to demonstrate that the Church had conquered the devil³⁷. This type of procession, that also included dispensing blessings, prayers and liturgical chant was common since late Antiquity and served to invoke the Lord to bless the community with things like a good harvest, a cessation of war or good weather. It was a form of warding off evil in which prayer played an important role and in which the Church took an active part.

4. Warding-off evil through faith, prayer and incantations

- 25 In case of an attack, Christians were encouraged to defend themselves by means of prayer and by keeping faith. Written sources provide ample evidence for Christianised incantations to ward off evil that were sanctioned by the Church³⁸.
- 26 An example occurs in Rahewin's continuation of Otto of Freising's biography of the Emperor Frederik Barbarossa, where he recounts how in 1156 the town of Freising suffered from an outbreak of fire. Both clergy and laity saw four-footed monsters and other creatures flying about, and they could hear kobolds or satyrs in their houses. Bishop Otto advised them to ward off this curse by fasting and singing litanies so as to attenuate the wrath of God, who had sent these demons³⁹. At the end of the sixteenth century the inhabitants of the village of Esch near Longerich were advised to adjure a storm by reciting a particular formula, then, whilst kneeling, recite Our Lord's prayer fifteen times and this was to be followed by fifteen Hail Mary's⁴⁰. Similar practices existed for expelling worms from both people and cattle, and to prevent outbreaks of fire.
- 27 The force of prayer could, if needed, be strengthened by the use of sacred or devout objects, like paternosters, and by making the sign of the cross⁴¹. People also wore textual amulets, using the word of God, Gods name, images of Christ, crosses and so on as the main working ingredients, a practice the Church was not too happy about, even though these amulets were sometimes made by priests⁴².
- 28 In Germany various amulets have been found on which the word of God and the names of Christ – and sometimes even his image – and the saints were used for protection⁴³. An amulet from Schleswig, dating to the eleventh century and found in 1976, protected its bearer against « daemons sive albes » by invoking the name of God in quoting the beginning of Saint John's Gospel: « *In principio erat verbum.* » A lead amulet from Romdrup in Denmark adjures the « elf-men or elf-women and demons through the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, that you do not hurt this servant of God, Nicholas, neither on the eyes nor on the head nor on the limbs⁴⁴ ». Other textual amulets mention demons, Satan and such like. An amulet from Klein-Dreileben, dated between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries and found near a former churchyard, was meant to protect its bearer Merherd from attacks by Satan by invoking God the Father⁴⁵. An eleventh- or twelfth-century specimen from Salhausen near Wolmirstadt was found near the left shoulder of a deceased child, and the inscription states it served to banish « many-coloured female demons⁴⁶ ». Another specimen, this time from the deserted village of Seelschen near Ummendorf addresses the demons and children of the devil. It dates to 1160 and was intended to protect a person named Hazziga⁴⁷.
- 29 The small amulet found in the grave of a boy called Tado who in 1142 was buried in the cemetery of Our Lady's at Halberstadt (fig. 7) is particularly interesting as it was provided with an image of the crucified Christ.

Fig. 7 – Halberstadt Museum. Amulet for Tado, who died in 1142. The object was found in the former cemetery to the south of Our Lady's Church in Halberstadt (cl. Den Hartog).



- 30 Made from a sheet of lead folded many times over, it has a long Latin text on either side of the scratched-in crucifix that is accompanied by an additional small cross in the upper left hand corner. The inscription (in translation) begins as follows :

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I beseech thee Alber, who art also known as the Devil and Satan, by the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost and by all the Angels and Archangels, by the 12 Apostles and by the 12 Prophets and by the 24 Elders and by the 264.000 Innocents.

- 31 Lead was apparently a good choice for a talisman as it was believed to have protective and healing qualities. Already in the eighth-century *Einsiedeln Codex*, parchment, lead, copper and iron are named as suitable materials for the manufacturing of written incantations. But needless to say, the amulet's main working ingredients were the word of God and the image of Christ, which were believed to have mighty powers. Second came the prophets, apostles, elders and innocents. These were all conjured up to help Addo's body and/or soul against the « Alber », a demon or Satan⁴⁸.
- 32 Rather unusual are the walls of the Cistercian abbey of Chorin – northeast of Berlin, Brandenburg – as they show up an impressive collection of bricks with drawings, decorations and inscriptions that in the late thirteenth century were incised into the still-wet clay of the formed bricks. Most of these were discovered during restoration work, when scaffolding enabled access to these high-up places. Not inscriptions in the true sense of the word, the texts are more like graffiti, as they are not made up of well-formed highly artistic letters, but scrawling lettering. Also, the fact that they were placed very high up on the building where they could not be seen with the bare eye and the fact that some were even plastered over suggests that these inscriptions were not really meant to be read, that they had no official status. The inscriptions are mostly in

Latin and some of them point to the learnedness of the inscriber, suggesting it was not just the lay brothers working the bricks but also some of the monks. Apart from names, the inscriptions also include some that are thought to be first sentences of liturgical chants performed in the church. Some are quite short, consisting of one or just a few syllables. One reads « Praise », another « *Beatus vir* ». There are also short sayings, like « Wisdom will conquer badness ». One inscription refers to something having been written badly and keeping your mouth shut. One refers to God being one's helper, another reflects on keeping measure or all will come to ruin. Another even refers to the teachings of Saint Gregory and reads : Abel fieri no[n] ual[let] / si malicia cayn no[n] exercet – there would have been no Abel, had he not been plagued by Cain's wickedness⁴⁹. It could well be that these words taken from the liturgy, from the psalms and other ecclesiastical sources, were built into the church walls in order to strengthen them in a symbolical way.

- 33 It is clear then that gargoyles are very unlikely to have served (from the start) an apotropaic function, as the Church had ample means of taking care of demons through its rites of consecration, saints and angels and by the force of faith, prayer and liturgy. For all these methods there is ample documentary and archaeological evidence. The same cannot be said for the hypothesis that holds that gargoyles had apotropaic qualities.

5. The meaning of gargoyles

- 34 One has only to pay attention to the postures of the gargoyles and their (often) contorted expressions to understand that they are shown in the act of taking off, plunging into the deep (fig. 8) or simply fleeing. A perfect example are the specimens slithering out of Naumburg Cathedral (fig. 9).

Fig. 8 – Reims, cathedral, renewed gargoyle plunging downward on the north side (cl. Den Hartog).



Fig. 9 – Naumburg, cathedral, gargoyles slithering down the roof (from : F. and H. MÖBIUS en K. G. BEYER, *Ecclesia Ornata. Ornament am mittelalterlichen Kirchenbau*, Berlin, 1974, plate 102).



- 35 The fleeing monsters and evil doers signify that evil and sin stand no chance against God, his angels and saints. No wonder that in their flight they often seem to scream in terror.
- 36 This interpretation is confirmed by Heinrich von Hesler's earlier-mentioned poem *Der Erlösung*, in which gargoyles decorate God's throne⁵⁰. As God was perfectly capable of protecting himself, his throne would not have needed protective demonic images to ward off their real-life counterparts. The gargoyles on His throne can only be representations of the forces of evil fleeing His presence. Utrecht cathedral provides another example. In the choir, the little gargoyles extending from the baldachins of the now-lost apostle statues (fig. 10) that were once affixed to the arcade piers symbolize the power of the apostles to triumph over the devil and his demons by the strength and force of their faith⁵¹.

Fig. 10 – Utrecht, cathedral choir, screaming sixteenth-century gargoyle on the west side of the cloisters to the south (cl. Den Hartog).



- 37 A parallel can be drawn here with the rites of baptism. In receiving the sacrament of baptism the baptized became a part of the Christian community, the « *Ecclesia* », was cleansed of his previous sins to start anew in Christ and receive salvation and everlasting life. Certain medieval baptismal fonts have heads decorating their four corners, as in the church of Saint George in Amersfoort, the church in Epe and a specimen now in the church of Saint John in 's-Hertogenbosch. In each of these three examples, one of the heads signifies a fool, a symbol of the sinner and unbeliever. These heads are not there to protect the font from demons ; to my mind, they symbolize the sins and worldliness that the newly-baptized person was to leave behind, that what was to be exorcised by the rites of baptism, which quite literally say : « I beseech thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost to leave and depart from this servant of the Lord⁵². » A similar idea is expressed by the inscription of the « *Majestas Domini* » portal of the church of Saint Servatius in Maastricht, that translates as : « This house of prayer is a house for the washing away of sins. Pass over the threshold, man, if you want to cleanse yourself of sin⁵³. » Indeed, in their study of the gargoyles of the church of Notre Dame de l'Épine, P.-O. Dittmar and J.-P. Ravaux held that the sculptures served to admonish sinners of their fate if they did not reform⁵⁴.
- 38 This interpretation of the meaning of gargoyles is not entirely new. Already in 1871, L. Gerlach maintained that gargoyles could be explained by the rite of exorcism that took place when a building was consecrated, banning all evil and unclean demons from the house of God and reverting them to petrified monsters on the outside of the buildings⁵⁵. Similar views were held by Abbé Auber⁵⁶. Although I concur with the idea that gargoyles visualize the cleansing power of the church through exorcism, the cleansing force of the Church's sacraments and the force of prayer should also be added. The petrification, to my mind, is not significant, but was a mere side-effect of visualizing how a strong « *ecclesia* », community of the faithful, could expel all evil.

- 39 Gargoyles then, represent the forces of evil that stand no chance vis-à-vis the forces of faith and the power of the sacraments. Just as gargoyles rid the church from rainwater that would harm its walls by spilling it into the gutters where it belonged, the power of faith expelled that what would harm the community of the faithful. It is this cleansing the building from evil spirits that is symbolized by the gargoyles, who flee the building in terror.

NOTES

1. This is not to say that there were no water spouts in animal form before, as such commodities are known even from Antiquity. There is apparently no connection between these Antique water spouts and the Gothic gargoyle. Romanesque architecture also has some examples of zoomorphic waterspouts, esp. in England, where examples can be found at Chichester Cathedral, and the churches of, Beckington and Belton in Rutland, see A. WOODOCK, *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, Oxford, 2011, p. 7 and 20.
2. E. VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVI^e siècle*, t. 6, Paris, 1863, p. 21.
3. E. VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *Dictionnaire raisonné...*, *ibid.*
4. M. CAMILLE, *Image on the Edge, The Margins of Medieval Art*, London, 1992, p. 78.
5. K. BARTSCH (ed.), *Die Erlösung*, Quedlinburg/Leipzig, 1858, p. 15, line 442 ; R. E. G. SCHYMICZEK, *Über deine Mauern Jerusalem, habe ich Wächter bestellt... Zur Entwicklung der Wasserspeierformen am Kölner Dom*, Frankfurt am Main, 2004, p. 124.
6. 1277, nov. – L'official déclare que par-devant lui Rikier Amion, cleric, a reconnu qu'il ne pouvait, sans congé de l'évêque, établir dans sa maison de la rue des Maus, ni gargouilles, ni autres constructions débordant sur rue, et qu'il s'est soumis aux réparations exigées pour ce délit. Fol. 184r°. Coté CCXXVI, see, *Mémoires de l'Académie des sciences, lettres et arts d'Arras*, 1902, p. 218 ; see also M. CAMILLE, *Image on the Edge...*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
7. M. CAMILLE, *Image on the Edge...*, *ibid.* ; R. E. G. SCHYMICZEK, *Über deine Mauern Jerusalem...*, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
8. R. E. G. SCHYMICZEK, *Über deine Mauern Jerusalem...*, *ibid.* ; R. E. G. SCHYMICZEK, *Höllensbrut und Himmelswächter. Mittelalterliche Wasserspeier an Kirchen und Kathedralen*, Regensburg, 2006 ; H. MITTMANN, *Die Wasserspeier am Freiburger Münster*, Lindenberg, 2007 ; R. STROBEL, *Wasserspeier. Bestand und Bedeutung am Beispiel des Heiligkreuzmünsters in Schwäbisch Gmünd*, Stuttgart, 2009 ; A. ELIAS, *Wasserspeier am Dom zu Magdeburg. Katalogisierung und ikonographischer Deutungsversuch eines mittelalterlichen Architekturdetails*, Dessau/Göppingen, 2009.
9. M. STEINER, *Wasserspeier an Kirchengebäuden als Bestandteil des mittelalterlichen Dämonenglaubens. Ein religions-geschichtlich-folkloristischer Deutungsversuch*, unpublished PhD-thesis University of Erlangen, 1953.
10. R. E. G. SCHYMICZEK, *Über deine Mauern Jerusalem...*, *op. cit.*, p. 116-118.
11. A. ELIAS, *Wasserspeier am Dom zu Magdeburg...*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
12. R. E. G. SCHYMICZEK, *Über deine Mauern Jerusalem...*, *op. cit.*, p. 117 ; R. STROBEL, *Wasserspeier...*, *op. cit.*, p. 114. A. Trivellone, in her essay « Têtes, lions et attributs sexuels : survivances et évolutions de l'usage apotropaïque des images de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge » [*Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa*,

39 (2008), p. 209-221, spec. p. 215] does not dismiss the idea either, but is more careful in her assessment, mentioning that such considerations should be verified from « au cas par cas ».

13. « [...] item etlich figuren an, so sie auff ziegelsteyn gemacht, und gegen wetter gericht, die treiben dz wetter zuruck, und so sie auch auff die angriff gelegt, werd der schad geheylt, ursach, das ein starcker ascendent, die figur bedeut, zu gegen sey, der anderen vertrib. Also werden auch die Hexen, so in katzen, wölffen, böcken etc. verkört, geschlagen, gefangen und getödt. »

14. K. AMBROSE, *The Marvelous and the Monstrous in the Sculpture of Twelfth-Century Europe*, Woodbridge, 2017 (first ed. 2013).

15. L. HANSMANN and L. KRISSE-RETTENBECK, *Amulett und Talisman. Erscheinungsform und Geschichte*, München, 1977, p. 14-16 : « Superstitio ist hier nicht als Aberglaube im modernen Sinne zu verstehen, sondern als ein Glauben, Tun und Handeln abseits des legitimen und rechten Glaubens, die nicht nur leerem Wahn entspringen, sondern denen Realitäten entsprechen. Superstitio ist Abfall von Gott und gläubige Bindung an dessen Widerpart, an den Satan, an die Dämonen oder die vergötzte Macht der eigenen Person. »

16. J. VAN MOOLENBROEK, « Zeeuwen in verzet tegen hun kerkelijke rechtens », in S. CORBELLINI *et al.* (ed.), *Wonderen voor alledag. Elf opstellen over godsdienst en samenleving in de Middeleeuwen door Jaap van Moolenbroek*, Hilversum, 2006, p. 261-290, spec. p. 282.

17. L. HANSMANN and L. KRISSE-RETTENBECK, *Amulett und Talisman...*, *op. cit.*, p. 14-16.

18. T. F. CRANE (ed.), *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry*, London, 1890, p. 6.

19. A. LECOY DE LA MARCHE (ed.), *Anecdotes historiques d'Étienne de Bourbon*, Paris, 1877 ; M. JENNINGS, « Tutivillus : The Literary Career of the Recording Demon », *Studies in Philology*, 74-5 (1977), p. 1-83, spec. p. 13-17. For a more thorough discussion of the work of demons, see J. VÉRONÈSE, « L'historien et ses démons. Autour de quelques travaux récents sur la démonologie médiévale », *Médiévales*, 73 (2017), p. 213-240.

20. CAESARIUS OF HEISTERBACH, book IV-1, ed. *Boek der Mirakelen*, introd. and Dutch translation G. J. M. BARTELINK, Nijmegen, 2003, p. 198.

21. CAESARIUS OF HEISTERBACH, book V-1, ed. *Boek...*, *ibid.*, p. 302.

22. T. WRIGHT (ed.), *A Collection of Latin Stories*, London, 1842, p. 10 ; M. JENNINGS, « Tutivillus... », *op. cit.*, p. 25.

23. For Bonn, see B. BRENK, « Teufel », *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, t. 4, 1972, col. 295-300, spec. 297 ; for Kalkar, see G. DE WERD and M. JEITER, *St. Nicolaikirche Kalkar*, Munich/Berlin, 2002, p. 114-118.

24. C. RUDOLPH, *Violence and Daily Life. Reading, Art, and Polemics in the Cîteaux « Moralia in Job »*, Princeton, 1997.

25. « Van den duuelen, die in die lucht sien ende in onwedere quaet doen bi goods ghehengenisse », see R. JANSEN-SIEBEN (ed.), *De natuurlunde van het heelal. Een 13de-eeuws middelnederlands leerdicht*, Brussel, 1968, p. 321 ; A. LEHR, *Fulgura frangi - Ik breek de bliksem. Een middeleeuws klokopschrift*, Asten, 1983, p. 24.

26. R. JANSEN-SIEBEN (ed.), *De natuurlunde...*, *ibid.*, p. 34 and p. 315-317.

27. GUILIELMUS DURANDUS, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, Book I, chap. 6, § 12, Trans. Fons Vitae, Louisville, 2007, p. 78.

28. GUILIELMUS DURANDUS, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, Book I, chap. 6, § 28, Trans. Fons Vitae, Louisville, 2007, p. 82 ; A. SPICER, « To Show That the Place Is Divine : Consecration Crosses Revisited », in K. KODRES and A. MÄND (ed.), *Images and Objects in Ritual Practice in Medieval and Early Modern Northern and Central Europe*, Cambridge, 2013, p. 40.

29. GUILIELMUS DURANDUS, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, Book I, chap. 4, § 2.

30. GUILIELMUS DURANDUS, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, Book I, chap. 4, § 14 and 15, Trans. Fons Vitae, Louisville, 2007.

31. A. LEHR, *Fulgura frangi...*, op. cit., p. 16.
32. J. P. R. FISCHER, *Verhandeling van de klokken en het klokke-spel*, Utrecht, 1738, p. 89-98 ; A. LEHR, *Fulgura frangi...*, *ibid.*, p. 29-30 ; E. DEN HARTOG, « Over de klokken Bonaventura en Salvator », in E. DEN HARTOG, J. VEERMAN et alii (red.), *De Pieterskerk in Leiden. Bouwgeschiedenis, inrichting en gedenktekens*, Zwolle, 2011, p. 245-253.
33. *Petro sacra fugo cacodaemonas, arceo fulmen, Funeraque et festos cantibus orno dies* ; A. LEHR, « Desiderius Erasmus en het klokkenspel », *Klok en Klepel*, 93 (2005), p. 13-17 [reprinted in *Berichten uit het Nationaal Beiaardmuseum*, 41 (2006), p. 3-10].
34. L. F. W. ADRIAENSSEN, « De Bossche klokkengietersfamilie Moer, 1450-150 », *Noordbrabants Historisch Jaarboek*, 6 (1989), p. 45-78, esp. p. 65. This bell was donated to the abbey of Egmond by Abbot Meinardus. The inscription read : *sum salvator ego / dum pulsor funera plango / ac pello resolvans demonis insidias / ad majora pium vocito solemnina / clerum me wormer natus / meynardus dedit abbas / anno domini MCCCCC XXV / jasper moer me fecit*.
35. E. J. HASLINGHUIS and C. J. A. C. PEETERS, *De Dom van Utrecht*, Den Haag, 1965, p. 448-449.
36. P. CLEMEN, *Der Dom zu Köln*, Düsseldorf, 1938, p. 85-86.
37. P.-E. WAGNER, « Images du Graouilly », in *Le chemin des reliques. Témoignages précieux et ordinaires de la vie religieuse à Metz au Moyen Âge*, Metz, 2000, p. 110.
38. C. TUCZAY, *Magie und Magier im Mittelalter*, München, 2003, p. 81-90.
39. Cited by R. STROBEL, *Wasserspeier...*, op. cit., p. 111.
40. « Jesus und der heiliger Chorst waldt ess durch den vatter, durch den sohn und durch seinen heiligen geist. Nhu scheid dich Wette rund windt, wie Maria is gescheidenn vonn ihrem l(i)eben kindt, durch den vatter, durch den sohn und den heiligen geist », cited by F. IRSIGLER and A. LASSOTTA, *Bettler und Gaukler, Dirnen und Henker. Aussenseiter in einer mittelalterlichen Stadt*, Cologne, 1984 (1993⁵), p. 160-161.
41. C. TUCZAY, *Magie und Magier...*, op. cit., p. 90.
42. D. C. SKEMER, *Binding Words. Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*, Pennsylvania, 2006.
43. A. MUHL and M. GUTJAHR, *Magische Beschwörungen in Blei. Inschriftentäfelchen des Mittelalters aus Sachsen-Anhalt*, ed. *Kleine Hefte zur Archäologie in Sachsen-Anhalt*, 10 (2013).
44. A. MUHL and M. GUTJAHR, *Magische Beschwörungen in Blei...*, *ibid.*, p. 51 ; M. MACLEOD and B. MEES, *Runic Amulets and Magic Objects*, Woodbridge, 2006, p. 134-135 and 151.
45. M. MACLEOD and B. MEES, *Runic Amulets...*, *ibid.*, p. 20-23.
46. M. MACLEOD and B. MEES, *Runic Amulets...*, *ibid.*, p. 24-29.
47. M. MACLEOD and B. MEES, *Runic Amulets...*, *ibid.*, p. 41-46.
48. M. MACLEOD and B. MEES, *Runic Amulets...*, *ibid.*, p. 33-37.
49. M. VON PERGER, « Die Texte aus dem Choriner Backstein-Scriptorium », in *Bibliothek in Backstein – Inschriften an der Choriner Klosterkirche*, ed. *Arbeitshefte des Brandenburgischen Landesamtes für Denkmalpflege und Archäologischen Landesmuseums*, 37 (2016), p. 19-36, spec. p. 20-28, for a more general discussion of the Chorin « graffiti », see S. WAGNER, « Die Choriner Klosterkirche – Botschaften aus dem Mittelalter », p. 9-19, and for the catalogue, see p. 53-78, in the same volume.
50. As in note 5.
51. E. DEN HARTOG, *De bouwsculptuur van de Utrechtse Dom. Een andere kijk op de bouwgeschiedenis*, Utrecht, 2015, p. 112-124.
52. A. LEHR, *Fulgura frangi...*, op. cit., p. 13.
53. E. DEN HARTOG, *Romanesque Sculpture in Maastricht*, Maastricht, 2002, p. 146-147.
54. P.-O. DITTMAR and J.-P. RAVAUX, « Signification et valeur d'usage des gargouilles : le cas de Notre-Dame de l'Épine », *Études marnaises*, 123 (2008), p. 39-80.

55. « [...] Aus dem Exorzismus bei der Weihung der Kirchen [...], indem durch diesen alle bösen und unreinen Dämonen aus dem Haus Gottes vertrieben und gleichsamer versteinert an der Außenseite des Chors oder Allerheiligsten festgebannt seien », L. GERLACH, *Illustriertes Wörterbuch der Mittelalterlichen Kirchenbaukunst*, Stuttgart, 1871, p. 102 ; cited by R. STROBEL, *Wasserspeier...*, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

56. M. l'abbé AUBER, *Histoire et théorie du symbolisme religieux avant et depuis le christianisme*, t. 3, Paris/Poitiers, 1871, p. 256-259.

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