

PORTAL

Western Portico: Saint Giles Tympanum

The iconographic interpretation of the left portal is somewhat controversial. According to some specialists, it narrates the life of Saint Giles, while others associate it with the hagiographic cycles of Saint Dominic of the Causeway and his disciple Saint John of Ortega. More recent studies support the idea of Saint Giles, an exemplary saint and intercessor with whom to achieve eternal bliss through good works. He is also associated with royalty and can therefore be related to the royal patronage of the church itself. A short cycle from the life of this saintly confessor can be seen in Chartres Cathedral, and he is very prominent in French Gothic painting. The life of Saint Giles is narrated in four registers, following the same layout as in the other two portals.

The first depicts the giving of the tunic and the cures through the saint's intercession. This is followed by the encounter between Saint Giles and the Bishop of Arles, Saint Caesarius, and also Saint Veredonius, as well as narrating the royal hunt. The upper register depicts the encounter with King Flavius on horseback and the episode in which Saint Giles prays on the beach to prevent a shipwreck. The third register shows the construction of a monastery, an indirect reference to the generosity and magnificence of the Castilian monarchs who promoted Saint Mary's Church. Beside this is the resurrection of the son of the governor of Nimes and, presiding over the tympanum, Christ displaying the Eucharistic Bread together with the Blessed, including Saint Giles, all of who intercede for humanity.



Author: Anonymous

Date: Second third of the 14th century

Technique: Polychrome stone carving

Place: Saint Mary's Cathedral (Vitoria-Gasteiz)



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