DEUS HOC VULT: IDEOLOGY, IDENTITY AND SCULPTURAL RHETORIC AT THE TIME OF THE CRUSADES

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During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, busy fairs and pilgrimage shrines brought a variety of visitors to Notre-Dame de Chartres (fig. 1). Part of the fame of Chartres derived from its possession of a valuable relic, the Holy Tunic of the Virgin, which was given to the cathedral by Charles the Bald around 876.1 Because of this object’s prestige, Chartres was the focus of a devotional cult among the upper classes of society.2 Chemisettes, or small souvenirs of the relic, allegedly protected knights against wounds in battle, attracting a local pilgrimage—although not to the degree of other great pilgrimage shrines in France.3 The cathedral precinct also provided space for great fairs coinciding with major Marian and other feasts.4 Vendors and consumers frequenting these fairs sometimes attended the liturgy in honor of the Cathedral’s patroness, and there is some evidence that in the thirteenth century the cathedral itself served as a shelter for the vendors, whose commerce took place in the town’s market.5

Since the thirteenth century, the title “Royal Portal” has designated the monumental western entrance to Chartres Cathedral (fig. 2).6 Earlier

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2 Evidence of visitation to Chartres by rulers such as Richard Coeur de Lion and Phillip Augustus can be found in the E. de Lepinois and L. Merlet, ed., *Cartulaire de Notre-Dame de Chartres* vol. 3, (Chartres, 1861-65), p. 59, n. 203 and in Antoine Thomas, ed., “Les miracles de Notre-Dame de Chartres.” *Bibliothèque de l’École de Chartres*, vol. 42 (Paris, 1881), p. 531. Chedeville notes the lack of surviving lead tokens of the tunic, souvenirs of the pilgrimage, indicates the pilgrimage to the church has been overrated Chedeville, p. 509.
3 Chedeville, p. 510, Lépinois and Merlet, v, 1, p. 59 and Thomas, pp. 526-527.
4 Chedeville, p. 458. A major fair founded in the twelfth century by Count Thibaud IV, and dedicated to the lepers of the Grand-Beaulieu, the hospital, was held on the right bank of the Eure river. Around 1153 it was re-located inside the town. See René Merlet and Maurice Jusselin, ed., *Cartulaire de la léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu et du prieuré de Notre-Dame de la Bourdinière* (Chartres, 1909), n. 35.
5 Chedeville, p. 455. The cathedral cartulary records an entry which indicates a merchant’s stall between the south porch and the Clocher Vieux (Old Tower). Lépinois and Merlet, v, 2, n. 246.
than the majority of the building, which dates to the first quarter of the thirteenth century, the west façade was constructed between 1134 and 1150 and preserved as part of the later edifice. The façade consists of an elaborate architectural frontispiece embellished with a variety of sculptural components. Triple arcuated openings each feature long, slender column statues interspersed with ornamented colonettes and