

ALEXANDRE CABANEL'S *ST. MONICA IN A LANDSCAPE*:

A DEPARTURE FROM ICONOGRAPHIC TRADITIONS

by

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## ABSTRACT

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The iconography employed by Alexandre Cabanel in the 1845 work *St. Monica in a Landscape* drastically deviates from the established artistic tradition utilized in other depictions of St. Monica in Christian art. Cabanel's work depicts a female saint accompanied by a derelict young child. This thesis considers an alternative identity for this female saint, proposing that St. Elizabeth may be the definite subject of the work, accompanied by a young St. John the Baptist. The visual content of *St. Monica in a Landscape* is analyzed in conjunction with other works depicting St. Monica, as well as St. Elizabeth with a young St. John the Baptist. The patron of the works and the original site of placement are also examined. This iconographic study describes the varied interpretations of *St. Monica in a Landscape*, a work that embodies characteristics of St. Monica as well as St. Elizabeth.

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## Chapter 1: The Milwaukee Pendants and Their Place in Cabanel's Oeuvre

### Introduction

The Milwaukee Art Museum recently acquired a pair of paintings by French artist Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889), titled *St. Monica in a Landscape* (figure 1) and *St. Augustine in His Study* (figure 2). The works share precisely the same dimensions, a feature that strengthens the likelihood that they were designed as pendants to be displayed together. The subjects also pair well given the history of St. Monica and her representation in art; she was the mother of St. Augustine and instrumental in her son's conversion to Christianity. As a result, the two are frequently depicted together. However, the Milwaukee Art Museum's painting of St. Monica is notably different from other depictions because of its unusual iconography, a feature that will be expounded upon in the following chapters.

Cabanel completed these two works in 1845 to fulfill a commission for the prominent French botanist Auguste Prouvensal de Saint-Hilaire (1779-1853). Saint-Hilaire then donated the pendants to his parish church of St. Jean-Baptiste in Sennely, France.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, as we will see, *St. Monica* and *St. Augustine* were commissioned for the sole purpose of the donation. There the pair remained for nearly 170 years until they were acquired by Jack Kilgore and Company, a New York City art gallery, around 2013.<sup>2</sup> A year later, the Milwaukee Art Museum purchased the paintings from Jack Kilgore and Company. Little significant research has been conducted on the paintings since the acquisition.

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<sup>1</sup> This information is drawn from the Milwaukee Art Museum acquisition proposal written by Dr. Tanya Paul shared with me regarding the two works, *St. Monica in a Landscape* and *St. Augustine in His Study*.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Jack Kilgore & Co. profile on the Arsty website, both of these works were displayed for sale at the Frieze Masters Art Fair in 2013.

The subsequent chapters of this thesis will focus on the visual content of *St. Monica in a Landscape* in conjunction with what is known about St. Monica's life and other artworks in which she appears alone or alongside St. Augustine, her son. The original location of the aforementioned painting, as well as existing sources specifically discussing *St. Monica in a Landscape* will also be considered, as well as the artistic career of the artist, Alexandre Cabanel. Through the examination of these sources and the iconography of St. Monica in Christian art, the identity of the female saint depicted in *St. Monica in a Landscape* by Alexandre Cabanel will be evaluated.

### **The Paintings as Pendants**

*St. Monica in a Landscape* is a moderately-sized oil painting that measures approximately 39.5 inches high by 32 inches wide. It is surrounded by an ornately-carved gilt wooden frame. The subject of the work is a female saint, indicated by the delicate halo above her head. She stands in the direct center of the canvas, creating a balanced composition. A boy in a ragged tunic grasps her by the waist and leans his head against her body, his face gaunt and darkly shadowed. The woman clasps the boy's arm with one hand and reaches out toward the viewer with the other. Her face is impassive yet serene; her dark eyes are fixed directly on the viewer. Her head is partially covered by a sheer black veil and her shoulders draped with a vivid green cloak. The woman's upright pose and gesture are simultaneously heroic and benevolent as she shelters the young child at her side. Woman and child stand amidst a stormy landscape. In the distance, a small group of buildings are visible the horizon, suggesting a town surrounded by a wall.

The second painting, *St. Augustine in His Study*, exhibits exactly the same dimensions as *St. Monica in a Landscape*. The subject is depicted in three-quarter perspective, seated in an elaborate chair behind a writing desk. With his right hand he holds a quill to his chest, while in his left he holds a piece of parchment with what appears to be his own writings. Other items are seen on the desk—letters, papers, and an open ink well. The lightness of the paper contrasts with the deep indigo blue cloth that covers the desk. Looking deeper in the space, the viewer sees a bookshelf behind St. Augustine filled with various bound volumes, as well as a skull and an hour glass.

The identical dimensions of the two paintings provide a sound argument for a thematic relationship between the works. The compositions are somewhat similar; both figures are shown in three-quarter view and positioned in the center of the canvas. Cabanel also utilized a similar color palette for both works. The use of a pale green is notable both in St. Monica's cape and the back of St. Augustine's chair. These formal similarities certainly support a thematic relationship between the two paintings, one that will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

### **Existing Sources on the Paintings**

As previously noted, very little research has been done on *St. Monica in a Landscape* and its pendant *St. Augustine in His Study*. The two works appear in the catalogue raisonné portion of the 2010 exhibition catalog *Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889): La Tradition du Beau*.<sup>3</sup> In the catalog raisonné, a brief note is included about the history of the works, with Jean

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<sup>3</sup> Michel Hilaire, Sylvain Amic, and Musée Fabre, *Alexandre Cabanel, 1823-1889: La Tradition Du Beau*, (Paris: Somogy Editions D'Art, 2010).

Claparède, curator of the Musée Fabre from 1945 until 1965, cited as a source. According to Claparède, both works were painted for the botanist Auguste Prouvensal de Saint-Hilaire (1779-1853), a relative of the prominent Dreuzy family of the Chateau de la Turpienière, an estate located in Sennely, France. Based on the information in Dr. Paul's acquisition report and the research of Jean Claparède, the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste in Sennely was the location where these two works were originally displayed, and indeed the location for which they were intended from their conception. Claparède noted that Saint-Hilaire had met Cabanel several times during visits to Montpellier and that the painter agreed to work on the commissions when not occupied with work from Francois Edouard Picot's atelier, where Cabanel was currently employed.<sup>4</sup>

Aside from the information collected in the 2010 catalog no substantial records or writings about these works are known to exist. What little is known was compiled in an internal acquisition report by Tanya Paul, curator at the Milwaukee Art Museum, which in turn drew upon information supplied by Kilgore and Company, the dealer, and the information in the 2010 catalog.<sup>5</sup> In all likelihood, the dealer's claims about the work's provenance derived from local traditions reported by the clergy of the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste. Apart from these sources there is little other extant information on the paintings. It is, of course, possible that a

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<sup>4</sup> Hilaire, "Cabanel," 454.

<sup>5</sup> The acquisition report, prepared by Milwaukee Art Museum curator Tanya Paul, is of course unpublished. Dr. Paul kindly supplied the report to me for the purposes of this thesis. Its contents form the basis for a MAM blog post by Allison Barr. See Barr, "From the Collection: A Pair of Paintings by Alexandre Cabanel," *Milwaukee Art Museum Blog*, accessed October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016, <https://blog.mam.org/2016/10/04/from-the-collection-a-pair-of-paintings-by-alexandre-cabanel/>.

written record may exist that details the commission and confirms the specific titles of the works, but such a record has yet to emerge.<sup>6</sup>

In her acquisition proposal Paul proposed that the two paintings may have been Cabanel's response to a popular work by the artist Ary Scheffer (1795-1858) painted in the same year (1845); Scheffer's *Saints Augustine and Monica* (figure 3) shows St. Monica and her son St. Augustine seated together near a window, gazing into the heavens. No doubt Paul's connection with the Scheffer work originated from the 2010 catalog, which compares Scheffer's *Saints Augustine and Monica* to another Cabanel painting, *Aglaia and Boniface* (figure 4). In fact, Scheffer's *Saints Augustine and Monica* and the Cabanel pair now in Milwaukee have in common only subject matter, for Cabanel divided mother and son between two separate canvases, utilized a richer color palette, and depicted them with greater solemnity both in terms of poses and facial expressions. Compositionally, the Scheffer work corresponds more closely to Cabanel's *Aglaia and Boniface*, as discussed in the 2010 catalog, not the pendants now in Milwaukee. If the subjects of the pendants have been correctly identified, the physical proximity and interaction between an adult St. Monica and St. Augustine displayed in the Scheffer work appealed little to Cabanel's artistic vision for this particular commission. This is not to imply that Cabanel was not influenced by Scheffer. As previously mentioned, he most

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<sup>6</sup> Future on-site research at the physical archives of the Musée Fabre in Montpellier and the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste in Sennely is required in order to confirm the existence of any such record of the commission completed by Cabanel for Saint-Hilaire. The online records of the Musée Fabre website contain numerous notes and documents compiled by Jean Claparède and Phillippe Bordes about Cabanel's biography and artistic career. These offer areas of further in-depth study for the artist, but do not specifically mention either of the two works discussed in this thesis. Notably, both works are absent from Phillippe Bordes' extensive list of Cabanel's known works, perhaps because *St. Monica* and *St. Augustine* hung in the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste until recent years. The Church of St. Jean-Baptiste does not have any online records that could be accessed for this present research.

certainly replicated the composition of Scheffer's painting in his later work of two other ancient Christian saints, *Aglaia and Boniface*. The separation of the two figures in Cabanel's work suggests that perhaps he was attempting to differentiate himself from the highly-praised painting by Scheffer of the same subject matter. Indeed, the decision to represent mother and son as separate pendants and the unusual iconography employed for St. Monica—the latter a matter discussed further in Chapter 2—raise difficult questions about the artist's intentions and therefore necessitate a brief overview of his life and career.

### **Alexandre Cabanel's Career**

According to Michel Hilaire, Alexandre Cabanel was born in 1823 in Montpellier, France.<sup>7</sup> Cabanel's skill as a draughtsman emerged at a young age but his father, a carpenter and cabinet maker, could not afford to send him to an important city for professional training. In 1840, at age sixteen, Cabanel won an art contest and was awarded a scholarship to pursue his studies in Paris.<sup>8</sup> He moved to Paris, accompanied by his elder brother. There he became a member of the atelier of Francois-Edouard Picard, a well-known historical painter, and studied at the École des Beaux-Arts.<sup>9</sup> At the 1844 Salon, Cabanel exhibited his first painting, *Christ in the Garden of Olives (Gethsemane)* (figure 5). The next year he was awarded the Prix de Rome, which afforded him additional years of study and training in another of Europe's great cities.<sup>10</sup> In 1845, shortly after his arrival in Rome, Cabanel painted *St. Monica in a Landscape* and *St. Augustine in His Study*. While in Rome, he met the wealthy Alfred Bruyas, who would later

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<sup>7</sup> Michel Hilaire, "Cabanel Reconsidered," in *Alexandre Cabanel, 1823-1189: La Tradition Du Beau* (Paris: Somogy Editions D'Art, 2010), 11.

<sup>8</sup> Alice Meynell, "Our Living Artists: Alexandre Cabanel," *The Magazine of Art*, 9 (1886), 271-272.

<sup>9</sup> Hilaire, "Cabanel" 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

become a prominent patron of the arts. This meeting would prove beneficial to Cabanel, as Bruyas would commission a number of works from him in subsequent years. The two men forged a strong friendship.

Following his time in Italy Cabanel produced *The Death of Moses* (figure 6), his fifth submission to the Paris Salon in 1850. This work earned high praise from critics and allowed Cabanel the opportunity to embark on a number of monumental projects, notably *The Glorification of St. Louis* (figure 7), which would be displayed at the World Exposition in Paris in 1855. Subsequently the Senate commissioned him to paint another depiction of French royalty, *Louis XIII and Richelieu* (figure 8). Cabanel also completed a highly acclaimed portrait of Napoleon III that was displayed in the 1865 Salon in Paris (figure 9). Cabanel's execution of commissions like these for important and wealthy clients added to his fame and prestige as an artist.

At the height of his career Cabanel was considered one of the quintessential French academic painters of his time. He was named as a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts, where he had previously been a student. Ultimately, however, despite his many successes, Cabanel would suffer disgrace after the rejection of his painting of *Paradise Lost* (figure 10) in 1867 by the royal court architect of Bavaria. Critics proclaimed his style outdated and his compositions lacking in visual power and innovation.<sup>11</sup> The artistic turmoil of the 1863 Salon and its rejects had fostered an interest in new modes of painting, approaches with which Cabanel was not familiar. Paintings of everyday life and anecdotal moments were now in demand and consequently Cabanel's depictions of ancient history, the Bible, and mythology were no longer

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 14.

*en vogue*. He remained a sought-after portraitist, specifically amongst upper class ladies in America, and it was through such work that he sustained himself after his star had fallen.<sup>12</sup> Following his death in 1889 his work fell into virtual obscurity, largely due to the closing of the Musée du Luxembourg where many of his well-known works were on display. Today, the Musée Fabre, Montpellier, holds a substantial number of Cabanel's works.<sup>13</sup> The Musée de Fabre has served as the primary bastion for the remembrance of Alexandre Cabanel and has hosted a number of exhibitions dedicated to his work.

### **Historical Context for Cabanel's Work**

A variety of societal and religious factors contributed to the subjects that Cabanel painted. Religious art in nineteenth century France was fraught with controversy fed by ongoing debates between different religious groups within the Christian church. Michael Diskel explores these conflicts in his book *Representing Belief: Religion, Art, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France*, where he offers a crucial framework for interpreting the tempestuous relationship between art and religion at this time. Diskel identifies a fixation on the "Byzantine" in the nineteenth century and describes its reflection in the art of the period, as expressed particularly in the interest in early Christian basilicas and the proliferation of religious imagery in the work of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, someone with whom a young Cabanel, no doubt, was familiar. Diskel argues that Ingres' depiction of religious subjects revived the "iconic" mode of representation by employing severely frontal body positions and a hieratic

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<sup>12</sup> Leanne Zalewski, "Alexandre Cabanel's Portraits of the American 'Aristocracy' of the Early Gilded Age," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2005).

<sup>13</sup>The Musée Fabre collection holds approximately 176 paintings and drawings by Alexandre Cabanel according to the online catalog search featured on their website.

scale, much like the saints in the two works in question by Alexandre Cabanel.<sup>14</sup> By considering the work of Ingres through the framework of Driskel, Cabanel's pendant paintings can be contextualized as a product of the religious and social climates of nineteenth-century France. Throughout his entire career, Cabanel emphatically practiced painting in the academic style that was embraced by the French government and the Catholic church alike. This artistic style of depiction aligned with the conservative religious ideology in France at this time. However, Cabanel's adherence to this style does not necessarily reflect his interest in large religious conflicts of the time but serves as an example of Cabanel's devotion to the academic style of painting that was praised by the academy. In 1845, Cabanel was a young painter and art student trying to establish himself in the art world of France. The most effective way to emerge as a sought-after artist capable of winning commissions was the implementation of the favored artistic style of the time, the academic style. Cabanel's application of these traditional artistic modes would have appealed to Auguste Prouvensal de Saint-Hilaire as he sought out a painter to create two paintings to donate to the village church near his family's estate. Even though this practice is not frequently discussed in nineteenth century art history scholarship, prominent families and individuals continued to commission works of art to be donated to their local churches as a sign of their wealth as well as their alliance with the church.

### **Existing Sources on Cabanel**

Two volumes have been published recently that recount the life and career of Alexandre Cabanel. The first and most substantial is the 2010 catalog mentioned above, which was

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Paul Driskell, *Representing Belief: Religion, Art, and Society in Nineteenth-century France*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 206.

published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same name at the Musée Fabre. The Musée Fabre catalog features a collection of essays by curator Michael Hilaire and several others. It includes all fundamental information for Cabanel's known works as well as a timeline of his artistic career divided into sections that correspond to his time in Rome, his debut at the Paris Salon, and his portraiture. The catalog also features helpful comparative images and information about Cabanel's artistic contemporaries, which together provide a full picture of the context in which the artist operated. The volume appeared only in French, which probably speaks to the lack of interest in this artist outside of France. This catalog stands as the sole source on Cabanel readily accessible to researchers and scholars today.

Another recent publication that discusses Cabanel is a much shorter exhibition catalogue created for the aforementioned iteration of *La Tradition du Beau* show that took place in Cologne, Germany at the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in 2011.<sup>15</sup> Many full-page color images of Cabanel's works are reproduced. Neither a complete catalog raisonné of Cabanel's works nor comparative content is included. The opening essay is by Michael Hilaire, director of the Musée Fabre, but all subsequent essays are written by Sylvain Amic, a curator from the Musée Fabre. These essays, written in English, cover a similar range of topics from the larger 2010 catalog, including the influence on his work of Cabanel's studies in Rome and the presence of drama and literary influences in many of his paintings.

During the early period of Alexandre Cabanel's artistic career, his artistic output primarily consisted of portraits and Biblical and mythological scenes. *St. Monica in a Landscape*

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<sup>15</sup> Andreas Blühm. *Alexandre Cabanel: The Tradition of Beauty*. München: Hirmer Verlag, 2011.

and *St. Augustine in His Study* are a part of this early phase, yet they are notably different from his other early works. Visually, the somber frontality and three-quarter view of the subjects appears similar to his early portraiture, yet the subject matter is religious in nature and not, evidently, the depiction of a paying patron. On the other hand, Cabanel's other religious works of this time differ greatly from these depictions of St. Monica and St. Augustine. His selection of religious subject matter primarily focused on dynamic scenes of action and drama, much like his choices from classical mythology, such as the death of the prophet Moses or events from the life of the ancient general Cincinnatus. For example, Cabanel's painting, *Christ in the Garden of Olives (Gethsemane)* was created only one year before *St. Monica in a Landscape* and *St. Augustine in His Study* were painted and yet the composition and style of the works are thoroughly disparate. *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* depicts a specific moment in the days leading up to the Crucifixion where Jesus stays awake and prays all night, begging God the Father to stop his Crucifixion.<sup>16</sup> In Cabanel's painting, Jesus is shown exhausted and spent, laying in the lap of an angel while a second angel looks on. Cabanel uses a murky color palette, foreshadowing the darkness that approaches the world as Christ's death on the cross draws nearer. The figures of Christ and the two angels are fully shown in this composition, with Christ's haloed head positioned in the center of the canvas. This work emphasizes the emotion of the event in the Garden of Gethsemane, reflecting Christ's agony through his defeated pose and heavy shadowing incorporated throughout the painting. This work is typical of the religious scenes painted by Cabanel, specifically in the beginnings of his career. Therefore, *St. Monica*

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew 26: 36-46.

and *St. Augustine* are a distinctive and unusual part of Cabanel's early period of production as a painter.

## **Chapter 2: Cabanel's Enigmatic St. Monica**

### **The Life of St. Monica**

The identification of the subject of the Milwaukee painting as St. Monica is open to question because of two primary reasons. First, no known documentation exists regarding the commission and the official titles given to the paintings. Second, *St. Monica in a Landscape* does not follow traditional iconography employed for St. Monica. Before discussing the iconographic tradition of St. Monica, we must first consider her life and significance to Christianity. St. Monica (331-387 AD) was the mother of St. Augustine. The specific date of her canonization is unknown, as she was declared a saint before the official procedures of canonization were institutionalized by the Church in the eleventh century.<sup>17</sup> Monica was a member of the early Christian church in the region of Ostia, in Italy. According to the *Confessions*, she wept and prayed incessantly for her son's salvation during the years of his misspent youth.<sup>18</sup> Eventually her prayers were answered, and Augustine converted to Christianity. He would then go on to become the Bishop of Hippo and author many influential theological texts, works critical for the development of Christian doctrine, including the seminal *Confessions* itself. Augustine mentioned his mother frequently in the *Confessions*, where alongside his theological discourse he detailed the story of his life. The work was widely disseminated throughout Europe after Augustine's death in 430; it was critical to the establishment of the Augustinian order within

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<sup>17</sup> Gillian Clark, *Monica: An Ordinary Saint* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 164-70.

<sup>18</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, 3.12.21.

the Catholic Church. The new order and its later exponents followed the Rule of St. Augustine, which stresses a rigorously ascetic monasticism with an emphasis on poverty and charity. Because of Augustine's vivid recollection of his mother's faith and persistence St. Monica would go on to become an idealized example of a Christian woman and mother.

Prior to the fourteenth century Monica was not a particularly well-known saint. An important article by Ian Holgate investigates the rise in interest and 'rebirth' of Monica in fourteenth-century Italy, giving specific consideration to her relationship with female tertiaries of the Augustinian order. According to Holgate, the movement of Monica's remains from Ostia to Rome in 1430 was the culmination of a movement that likely began some 80 years earlier.<sup>19</sup> Prior to this moment, a growing interest in St. Monica is evident through a few key events that took place in Italy in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Holgate showed, for example, that the first indication of a renewed interest in the saint was the dedication of a sorority to her in Monte Sansavino in 1356.<sup>20</sup> Later, in 1387, an official feast day in her honor was added to the Christian calendar of the General Chapter of the Augustinian Hermits in Imola. During this time, Monica began to appear in artistic cycles of St. Augustine's life, for example in church murals, and importantly as part of the sculptural program of St. Augustine's tomb.<sup>21</sup>

In 1429 a woman from Ostia known only as Giovanna proposed to the local religious community that St. Monica should be venerated in a more focused, public manner.<sup>22</sup> Holgate

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 182-183.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

asserted that Giovanna's knowledge of Monica was most likely gained from the text of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, as this was the only written record of her life. Giovanna's cause was taken up by the Prior General of the Augustinian Hermits, Agostino Favaroni, whose petition was brought before Pope Martin V. Papal permission was then granted to move St. Monica's remains to Rome. Her body was then interred in a chapel in the Hermits' Roman church on Palm Sunday in the year 1430.<sup>23</sup> At this time, the Augustinian Hermits were campaigning to gain legitimacy and power for their mission by linking their order to a strong historical and religious narrative. The Hermits realized that St. Monica was an important link in the chain to the heritage of St. Augustine; as his mother, she was crucial in his conversion to Christianity. Therefore, the Hermits cultivated the development of her cult in Italy throughout the fourteenth century.<sup>24</sup> As Holgate has shown, she would be venerated as the mother of the entire order, including the order's female tertiaries.<sup>25</sup>

As previously mentioned, the Augustinian Hermits sought to buttress their claims to an ancient pedigree through spreading the cult of St. Monica and treating her as a sacred ancestor of their order.<sup>26</sup> The Hermits' adoption of Monica served as a remedy to unrest within the order of the Hermit Friars due to disagreement over observant reforms. St. Monica was proposed as a mother to the entire order as an attempt to provide a unified focus for all members. Holgate noted that, unlike the Dominican and Franciscan orders that were founded by their titular leaders, the Order of St. Augustine was founded many years after Augustine's

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-6.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

death. This meant that the official history and legitimacy of the order was susceptible to debate and disagreement.<sup>27</sup> A tradition held that Tuscan Hermits were present at the death of St. Monica was invoked by the Hermits to further solidify their connection to St. Monica and her hagiography. This connection between the Hermits and St. Monica was subsequently illustrated in church frescoes and also in the sculpture of St. Monica's monumental tomb executed in 1455.

Holgate addressed the significance of the growth of St. Monica's cult by adding another element to the discussion—the role of gender and the motivation to encourage an appropriate role-model for female tertiaries of the Augustinian order. Holgate went on to describe the various roles that the female members of the order performed and the various forms their devotion took.<sup>28</sup> These women were devoted to the veneration of Monica as an example of an ideal woman, wife, mother, and Christian. Holgate specifically detailed the way in which St. Monica was depicted as an ideal female example through his analysis of the Botticini altarpiece at Santo Spirito in Florence. (figure 11). This altarpiece pictures an elderly St. Monica enthroned, wearing a dark robe and head covering.<sup>29</sup> She holds a book in her right hand as well as a scroll in her left hand. A group of kneeling women surround her dressed in similar dark garments. Two young girls are also present. These girls wear white garments, suggesting that they have not yet been initiated into this order of religious women. It is not specifically noted whether these women are nuns or female tertiaries but nonetheless clear that they signify a

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 193-196.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

group that is devoted to St. Monica.<sup>30</sup> The iconography of this altarpiece illustrates the growth of the cult of St. Monica in Italy and her rising importance, especially to female devotees.

As Holgate has shown in his research, artists consciously created visual parallels between St. Monica and the Virgin in order to attract female tertiaries to the Augustinian Hermits. The elements of St. Monica's character deemed suitable and appropriate for female devotees to emulate were illustrated in other altarpieces in various Italian churches during the fourteenth century. Holgate offered a few examples to support this argument. The altarpiece for the Hermit Church of Santo Stefano in Venice illustrates St. Monica's life in a sequence and visual program that mimics typical life cycle events and compositions of the Virgin Mary. This altarpiece features sections depicting St. Monica's marriage and the birth of her son, St. Augustine, which are visually and typologically similar to events shown depictions of the Virgin Mary's life.<sup>31</sup> This fashioning of St. Monica's life after the life of the Virgin Mary bolsters the connection between the life of the saint and the lives of the female laity. St. Monica is shown embodying all of the roles that women were permitted to hold at this time. She is shown as a daughter, a wife, a mother, and a widow, while continuously following the teachings of Christianity.

Through the above consideration of Holgate's research, it is evident that the rise of the veneration of St. Monica served as a way to legitimize the sacred heritage of the Augustinian Hermits, as well as an opportunity to offer female tertiaries an appropriate and suitable role model for Christian behavior and womanhood. Accordingly, the above survey of the life of St.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 205.

Monica and the formation of her cult provide context necessary for any consideration of the saint in religious art and the iconography employed to signify her presence. By extension, an examination of the iconography employed for St. Monica is vital to an appraisal of the symbolic significance of Cabanel's *St. Monica in a Landscape*.

### **The Iconographic Tradition of St. Monica**

Cabanel's depiction of St. Monica varies greatly from medieval, Renaissance, and Early-modern period iconography associated with the saint. In order to evaluate the subject of Cabanel's painting, therefore, the typical iconography of St. Monica must be considered. The artworks surveyed here date from the mid-1400s until the mid-1800s (Cabanel's *St. Monica* was painted in 1845), which is to say from the moment of the saint's translation until Cabanel's lifetime. As this survey will make clear, St. Monica is almost always featured alongside her son, St. Augustine in the context of his life. Rarely, if ever, is she depicted outside of the framework of the life of St. Augustine. St. Monica began to be featured on altar pieces and in other works for Italian churches in the 1450s and 1460s in the aftermath of the translation of her relics to Rome, as described previously.<sup>32</sup> Fifteenth-century depictions show her in a dark religious habit with her head covered in a white or black veil completely concealing her hair (figure 12). In these early works, Monica is shown in a stiff, frontal pose with a peaceful and neutral expression. Her portrayals are often stylized in a manner typical of late medieval art. She typically holds a book or scroll, referencing her status as a learned and scholarly saint. These attributes are supported by the text of the *Confessions* and *The Happy Life*: in both works

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<sup>32</sup> Ian Holgate, "The Cult of Saint Monica in Quattrocento Italy: Her Place in Iconography, Devotion and Legend," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 71, 2003, 181-206.

Augustine discussed scholarly and philosophical debates in which Monica was a participant. The text of *The Happy Life* describes a particular debate in which St. Monica discussed the definition of what makes a person truly wretched or needy—lack of property or lack of knowledge. In this debate, she questions Augustine and his associates saying:

I don't know, but I don't clearly understand how wretchedness can be separated from neediness or neediness from wretchedness. For the one who was rich and wealthy and, as you say, longed for nothing more, was still in need of wisdom, because he was afraid of losing [his wealth]. Are we to call him needy if he lacks silver and money, but not if he lacks wisdom?<sup>33</sup>

This passage and others in the *Confessions* and *The Happy Life* thus support the portrayal of Monica as a scholar and intellectual. Artists utilized this connection between St. Monica and St. Augustine's writings to shape the elements of her rather generic iconography, which usually included a scroll or book. Indeed, artists employed the same iconographic approach with depictions of other scholarly female saints. For example, St. Catherine of Alexandria was commonly depicted reading a book in hand or simply holding a book, a reflection of hagiographic accounts. Catherine was well-educated and defeated a number of orators and philosophers in rhetorical debates about her faith in Christianity. St. Monica was not martyred for her faith as St. Catherine eventually was but likewise engaged in religious discussions with scholars. Additionally, this textual evidence from *The Happy Life* provides a view into St. Monica's personal perspectives on poverty.

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<sup>33</sup> St. Augustine, *The Happy Life*, b.vita 4.27.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the figure of St. Monica was painted in a more dramatic and naturalistic fashion in keeping with the goals of the Baroque movement in religious art. Baroque artwork sought to engage the viewer in an intense, emotional experience through the viewing of the sacred imagery. The influence of earlier Renaissance painters is evident in these later adaptations. St. Monica's pose differs greatly from the earlier, medieval altarpieces in which she appeared as a static, statuesque figure. Luca Giordano's painting from 1657, for example, features St. Monica in a dynamic pose of religious rapture (figure 13). In this work, she is pictured alongside St. Augustine. This is the first instance of Augustine and Monica directly interacting with each another in the same spatial plane, a type that subsequently gained great popularity. Augustine holds a heart in his hand that has been pierced as part of the pair's "ecstasy" in Christ, as denoted in the title of the painting, *St. Augustine and St. Monica in Ecstasy in Ancient Ostia*. The moment depicted in this work is also in a setting surrounded by classical architecture, as well as various putti floating in the sky above. In the center of the sky, God the Father is visible, with Jesus Christ seated on his right side. St. Augustine and St. Monica gaze heavenwards to God the Father and the Son. The primary focus of this work is St. Augustine. He wears a richly-colored flowing robe that appears to be an elaborate liturgical cloak, indicating his role as the Bishop of Hippo. A putti above his head holds a bishop's miter, preparing to place it on St. Augustine's head.

Visual pairings of Augustine and Monica, however popular, were not the only context in which Monica appeared. For example, she is depicted in a dramatic moment of religious fervor in a work by Pietro Maggi from 1714 (figure 14). Monica is again shown in a moment of movement and action as she gazes up at an angel who has appeared in the sky above her. No

doubt this is meant to function as an indirect reference to the Annunciation and therefore to illustrate the parallels between the life of the Virgin Mary and the life of St. Monica. St. Monica still wears her dark robe and veil, but her face is full of wonder and interest as she looks up at the angel. This scene depicts an event from the traditional hagiography of St. Monica. As noted previously, St. Monica was the main instrument in the conversion of Augustine. Prompted by her prayers and tears for her son, a figure (shown in this work as an angel) appeared to her to tell her that her requests were not meaningless and that her son Augustine would repent and turn to Christ in the future.

Through this iconographic survey it is evident that St. Monica usually appears in artwork along with her son St. Augustine or in the context of the narrative arc of his life. She is consistently depicted in a simple religious habit and commonly appears holding a book or scroll as a reference to her engagement with philosophy. However, none of these elements are present in the Cabanel painting known as *St. Monica in a Landscape*. Cabanel's deviation from the iconographic norm of St. Monica raises questions about his approach to sacred subject matter. The following chapters will address this difficult issue.

### **Chapter 3: St. Elizabeth as Holy Mother**

#### **The Case for St. Elizabeth**

It is evident that Cabanel's painting of Monica is unlike any earlier depiction of the Saint. This observation raises the question—is this painting indeed meant to solely represent the mother of St. Augustine? It is, undoubtedly, an image of a female saint, as indicated by her halo, but perhaps the woman was intended to also imply the presence of another saint. This chapter will propose a new hypothesis: that this painting by Alexandre Cabanel may depict St.

Elizabeth, cousin of the Virgin Mary and the mother of St. John the Baptist. This suggestion finds support in the visual components of the painting itself, comparison to another work by Cabanel, and the original location for which the Milwaukee painting was made.

As previously mentioned, Cabanel's depiction of St. Monica varies greatly from typical depictions of the saint. The iconographic survey of the previous chapter indicates that the Milwaukee painting lacks many of the elements that traditionally signify the presence of St. Monica, for example a dark religious habit and a veil that completely obscures the hair, which together denote St. Monica's status as a matronly widow and devout follower of Christ. Instead, this woman appears in fine, brightly-colored garments and jewelry. Her hair is partially covered by a sheer black veil, indicating piety and modesty before God. St. Monica's typical attribute, a scroll or book, is also absent here. In contrast, this woman is accompanied by a child dressed in a ragged animal skin. Typically, St. Monica's companion is her son St. Augustine but he is usually pictured as a young man or adult. In no example that I know of is he depicted as a child, much less a child dressed in rags. The inclusion of this disheveled, dirty child bolsters the supposition that this woman could be interpreted as St. Elizabeth, mother of St. John the Baptist. The tattered clothing and unkempt appearance of the child are all consistent with depictions of John the Baptist as a wanderer living in the wilderness. Indeed, the imagery of this painting is similar to that in other depictions of St. Elizabeth with her son. However, the presence of the child in this work prompts another possible interpretation— St. Monica as the embodiment of Christian charity. The display label text for this work at the Milwaukee Art Museum proposes that this is the function of the derelict child in the work. It is worth noting that St. Monica is not typically linked to the Christian virtue of charity in artwork. However, the

previously quoted text of St. Monica's debate regarding the needy in *The Happy Life* substantiates the connection between St. Monica and the virtue of Christian charity. Therefore, the employment of St. Monica as the embodiment of charity is a reasonable supposition to draw from the visual content of the painting and St. Monica's own words from *The Happy Life*. The visual tradition of the personification of Christian virtues and vices dates back to the Middle Ages.<sup>34</sup> These allegorical figures, almost exclusively female, appeared in manuscripts, sculptures, tapestries, and other art forms along with specific attributes to signify the particular virtue that was being depicted, such as chastity, temperance, diligence, patience, kindness, humility, and in the case of Cabanel's *St. Monica*, charity. The iconography for charity frequently consists of a woman holding or comforting a child, as exemplified by the sixteenth century German print by Daniel Mignot (figure 15) and the sixteenth century Italian print produced by the school of Marcantonio Raimondi (figure 16). Both of these prints feature a woman as the embodiment of charity accompanied by three children. The inclusion of three or more children in these types of images is typical. This visual tradition was also employed by painters, as exemplified through the work of Francesco de Rossi (Salviati) (figure 17) and Alexandre Laemlein (figure 18). *St. Monica in a Landscape* shows a woman with only one child, yet the elements of Cabanel's painting and allegories of charity are strikingly similar and worth

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<sup>34</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of the origins of personifications in art, please reference E. H. Gombrich, "Personification", *Classical Influences in European Culture AD 500-1500*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971, 247- 57. Additionally, Rosamond Tuve's work presents a very detailed study of the origins of the concept of virtues and vices in classical and subsequent medieval literature in "Notes on the Virtues and Vices," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 26, no. 3/4 (1963), 264-303. The concept originated in classical literature and was then proliferated in artwork of the medieval period, notably in the margins of medieval manuscripts to serve as didactic imagery to accompany the text.

consideration in order to form a complete analysis of this work. On the other hand, it bears noting that the imagery of this painting may also be interpreted as similar to other depictions of St. Elizabeth with her son, St. John the Baptist, which will be discussed in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

According to the Gospels, St. Elizabeth was mother of St. John the Baptist and cousin of the Virgin Mary. Her significance to Christianity is thus far superior to that of St. Monica, as she is mentioned by name in the New Testament. The Gospel of Luke recounts the story with which Elizabeth is most associated, the Visitation.<sup>35</sup> During her pregnancy with the Christ Child, Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who is also pregnant in spite of her old age. Upon Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's unborn son moves within her womb, prompting Elizabeth to proclaim a blessing onto the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. The figure of St. John the Baptist continues to serve as a forerunner to the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah throughout the New Testament. He would grow up to become St. John the Baptist, a prophet who lived and preached in the wilderness outside of the kingdom of Judea. According to the New Testament, John wore an uncomfortable camels-hair garment and only ate locusts and wild honey to survive in the wilderness.<sup>36</sup> John would prophesy the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah to his followers. Jesus would later journey from Nazareth to be baptized by John in the Jordan River. This is recounted in the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament.<sup>37</sup> During the baptism, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descends on Christ and the voice of God the Father declares Christ as his Son, symbolizing the Holy Trinity. Moreover, the moment of Jesus'

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<sup>35</sup> Luke 1:39-56.

<sup>36</sup> Matthew 3:4.

<sup>37</sup> Matthew 3:13-17.

baptism is frequently depicted in religious art, as it is a moment of utmost importance to the doctrine of the Christian church. St. John the Baptist was a crucial participant in this moment of sacred history, hereby cementing his status as one of the foremost saints in the Christian church.

### **The Iconographic Tradition of St. Elizabeth**

In European religious art, St. Elizabeth is frequently depicted with St. John the Baptist as a young child, most commonly as part of a Holy Family image alongside the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. These depictions of St. Elizabeth and St. John the Baptist together must be considered in order to fully evaluate the potential identity of the woman and child in *St. Monica in a Landscape*. There are a variety of examples to choose from that feature the pairing of St. Elizabeth and a young St. John the Baptist, but this survey will focus on three primary paintings in order to illustrate the iconographic standard for these two saints. The earliest example of St. Elizabeth and St. John depicted as a mother and child pair occurs in a fresco painted in the fifth-century Church of Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome (figure 19). In this fresco, St. Elizabeth is pictured as a member of the Three Holy Mothers. The Virgin Mary is placed in the center with the Christ Child in her arms. On Mary's right, St. Ann, Mary's mother is present, holding an infant Virgin Mary. St. Elizabeth is depicted on the Virgin Mary's left, holding an infant St. John in her arms. St. John is wearing a dark garment deliberately draped over his shoulder that appears to be an animal skin. All of the figures are depicted in stiff, frontal poses and generalized facial expressions. There is no movement in this scene, but the sacred identity of the figures is indicated by prominent halos around each head. The specific age of this fresco is

unknown, but it was created between the sixth and the ninth centuries.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, this painting serves as an early medieval example of the depiction of St. Elizabeth as holy mother holding an infant St. John the Baptist who is clothed in a tattered, animal-skin garment.

This iconographic tradition for St. Elizabeth and her son is continued in later artistic depictions of the pair. Much like St. Monica, the imagery of St. Elizabeth and St. John the Baptist as a child are most prolific in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, no doubt as a response to the Catholic Church's desire to draw followers to Christianity through displays of dramatic and emotional imagery. For example, *Madonna and Child with St. Elizabeth, the Infant St. John, and St. Catherine* from 1565-70 by Paolo Veronese shows St. Elizabeth with a young St. John the Baptist, who wears a tattered, animal-skin garment (figure 20). This garment in particular mimics the garment the young child wears in Cabanel's *St. Monica in a Landscape*. As the title indicates, they are the companions of the Virgin Mary, the Christ Child, and St. Catherine. This coupling is also repeated in the 1777 work by Pompeo Batoni, *Holy Family with Saints Elizabeth and John the Baptist* (figure 21). This scene is a more intimate, familial interior that features direct interaction between all of the figures present, specifically between St. Elizabeth as she reaches for the Christ Child. Young St. John is again depicted wearing the animal skin garment as he looks up at the Christ Child in adoration. Zechariah is shown in the background of the scene, pondering the open book on the table in front of him, most likely the Holy Scriptures.

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<sup>38</sup> Myrtilla Avery, "The Alexandrian Style at Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome," *The Art Bulletin* 7, no. 4 (1925): 132.

Through this brief survey, it is evident that the illustration of St. Elizabeth as a Holy Mother with her son St. John the Baptist as a young child is an established visual tradition that persists from the early Middle Ages until the time of Cabanel's work in the mid-nineteenth century. The visual similarities between the previously surveyed depictions of St. Elizabeth with a young St. John the Baptist and the content of *St. Monica in a Landscape* are notable. The unusual iconography Cabanel employed for *St. Monica in a Landscape* brings into question Cabanel's intentions regarding the identity of this female saint. These correlations between depictions of St. Elizabeth and a young John the Baptist offer a new interpretation for this work—that the saint presented here was intended to invoke the presence of St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, but also St. Elizabeth with a young John the Baptist, for whom the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste was named.

### **Cabanel's *St. John the Baptist***

St. John the Baptist was the subject of at least one other painting by Cabanel. He painted *John the Baptist* in 1849 (figure 22), just four years after completing the commission for the *St. Monica* and *St. Augustine* pair. In this work, St. John the Baptist is shown standing on a rocky platform prophesying to his followers in the wilderness. His hands are outstretched, gesturing into the sky around him as he preaches to those who surround him. On the left of the canvas, a cross-shaped staff holds a scroll that reads "Ecce Agnus Dei," or "Behold, the Lamb of God..." the first words John spoke as Jesus approached the River Jordan.<sup>39</sup> The dark intensity of the figure of St. John the Baptist as an adult is visually reminiscent of the tattered child shown in *St. Monica in a Landscape*. The ragged garments and the gaunt proportions of his body are

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<sup>39</sup> John 1:29.

heavily shadowed, much like the child present alongside St. Monica. By no means does this confirm the child's identity, but the visual similarities of Cabanel's *John the Baptist* and the child in *St. Monica* are notable and warrant consideration. The visual and thematic parallels in both works support the theory that *St. Monica in a Landscape* could also be interpreted as a depiction of St. Elizabeth with a young St. John the Baptist at her side.

### **The Original Site and the Patron**

The case for the identification of the subject of the Milwaukee painting as St. Elizabeth is also supported by the context for which the painting was commissioned. As previously noted, *St. Monica in a Landscape* and *St. Augustine in His Study* were commissioned for donation to the Church of *St. Jean-Baptiste* [my emphasis] in Sennely, France. The particular importance of St. John the Baptist to this church is furthermore evident from the central, stained glass window directly behind the high altar in the sanctuary, which depicts St. John baptizing Christ in the River Jordan, as well as a statue of the saint in a niche to the south (figure 23).<sup>40</sup> At this juncture, the exact date of the stained glass window installation is unavailable, but could be obtained through researching the physical archives of the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste. Therefore, the content of the stained-glass window cannot be employed as solid support to the argument for presence of St. Elizabeth and a young John the Baptist in Cabanel's painting. Indeed, the discovery of the window installation date is necessary in order to accurately analyze the window's relation to the tattered child and woman pictured in Cabanel's *St. Monica in a*

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<sup>40</sup> This is confirmed by a contemporary photograph of the interior of the church obtained from the website for the township of Sennely. However, further research in the physical archives of the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste is necessary in order to confirm the exact date for the installation of the central stained-glass window in the apse of the church as well as the St. John the Baptist statue, as the church has undergone various restorations since its founding in the fourteenth century.

*Landscape*. Given that St. John the Baptist was the patron saint of the church for which the Milwaukee painting was made and that the similarities in between Cabanel's work and other depictions of St. Elizabeth and a young John the Baptist, this newly proposed identity remains plausible at this state of the research.

When considering the original context and location of the *St. Monica in a Landscape*, the subject of the coordinating pendant painting must also be acknowledged. The identity of the male saint in *St. Augustine in His Study* is not under scrutiny in the present research. Indeed, this painting depicts St. Augustine in the typical manner utilized in Christian iconography, as a prolific writer and a leader of the Christian church. However, St. Augustine's presence in this work demands the consideration of the relationship between St. Augustine and St. Elizabeth as a pendant pair. The logical connection between a pairing of St. Augustine and St. Monica is readily apparent. On the other hand, the pairing of St. Augustine with St. Elizabeth is challenging to explain without further resources detailing the personal life or interests of the patron who commissioned the work. The patron's affinity for this particular pair of saints is unknown at this juncture because of lack of available sources and documents detailing Saint-Hilaire's personal life, and specific religious or social interests. Additionally, the name of the patron himself must be considered when discussing *St. Augustine in His Study*. As stated in previous chapters, the patron of these works was Auguste Prouvensal de Saint-Hilaire. The name "Auguste" is the French iteration of the name "Augustine." It is probable that Saint-Hilaire may have been named after St. Augustine and in turn he may have viewed the theologian as a patron saint that he identified with. As previously stated, little is known about the personal life of Saint-Hilaire. The majority of existing sources on the botanist focus primarily

on his scientific work and research findings. However, because of the donation of the Cabanel works to the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste, we do know that Saint-Hilaire had a connection to this specific church and congregation, which implies some level of devotion to Christianity. This donation is the extent of the knowledge available regarding Saint-Hilaire's connections outside of the scientific community. As an affiliate of this Catholic congregation, Saint-Hilaire no doubt knew of St. Augustine, as he was one of the primary theologians of the early church. Like St. Augustine, Saint-Hilaire was an avid scholar and prolific writer, publishing various reports on his botanical research throughout his lifetime. However, without further documentation, the choice to create a pendant pair of St. Augustine with St. Elizabeth and a young John the Baptist is unusual to say the least, particularly if based on the typical pairings of saints in the canon of Christian art. That is not to say that it is impossible, but without exact records from the patron, the artist, or the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste, any statement of definitive identity would be unfounded.

#### **Chapter 4: Conclusions**

##### **Remaining Questions**

From the evidence presented in the previous chapters, it is clear that Alexandre Cabanel's St. Monica in a Landscape illustrates a departure from the standard iconography of St. Monica in the canon of Christian art. It is evident from the survey of the iconography of St. Monica that Cabanel's St. Monica work differs greatly from standard images of the saint, most notably the garments she wears and the presence of the tattered child at her side. The rationale behind Cabanel's compositional choices remains uncertain. He may have chosen to depict St. Monica in this unusual way as a means to create a new type of iconography for St.

Monica that differentiated his work from the well-known work of the same subject matter, *Saints Augustine and Monica* by Ary Scheffer. He may have employed this mode of depiction as a result of specific requests made by the patron, Auguste Saint-Hilaire. It is also possible that the painting was intended to depict a different saint—St. Elizabeth with a young John the Baptist, as this thesis has examined.

The case for both identities has been examined in the previous chapters through the analysis of the standard iconography of both saints in Christian art. The attribution of the work as an image of St. Monica is supported by the pairing of the work with a painting of St. Augustine, with whom she is most commonly depicted in art. St. Monica is not typically shown with a young child, but if she was also intended an allegory for the Christian virtue of Charity, as proposed by the Milwaukee Art Museum gallery label, the presence of the child is consistent with other depictions of the female embodiment of Charity in the canon of Christian art. Conversely, the presence of the ragged child can be interpreted as a young John the Baptist clinging to his mother, St. Elizabeth. Unlike St. Monica, St. Elizabeth is commonly depicted with a child, her son John the Baptist. This pairing of St. Elizabeth and St. John occurs most frequently with images of the Holy Family, as presented through the examples analyzed in the previous chapters. Additionally, Cabanel's 1849 depicting St. John the Baptist exhibits visual similarities between the adult John the Baptist and the derelict child in *St. Monica in a Landscape*. Furthermore, this work was specifically commissioned to be donated to the Church of *St. Jean-Baptiste* [my emphasis]. Hence, the information presented in the previous chapters acknowledges the enigmatic nature Cabanel's *St. Monica in a Landscape*. After consideration of this research, the validity of the claim that the identity of the woman in *St. Monica in a*

*Landscape* is actually St. Elizabeth becomes uncertain. The female saint in Cabanel's work exhibits characteristics that align with depictions of St. Monica, but also depictions of St. Elizabeth. Because of this work's status as a pendant to *St. Augustine in His Study*, the most logical conclusion to draw is that St. Monica was chosen as the accompanying saint for St. Augustine in Cabanel's commission. However, the similarities between Cabanel's work and imagery of St. Elizabeth and St. John the Baptist are still evident and warrant contemplation. Therefore, this work may reasonably be interpreted as a painting with multiple functions—a depiction of St. Monica as the embodiment of Christian charity while also imitating earlier images of St. Elizabeth with a young John the Baptist. The duality of this new iconography for St. Monica most certainly would have been apparent to the parishioners of the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste.

### **Areas for Further Research**

In order to expand the scholarly dialogue on Alexandre Cabanel and his lesser known works, like *St. Monica in a Landscape*, further research must be conducted in a variety of areas. The primary source that may have specific information on this work is the archives of the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste and also the archive of the Musée Fabre, specifically notes and documents collected by Jean Claparède and Phillippe Bordes. Bordes's personal research documents contain many original letters written by Cabanel that were obtained from Cabanel's great-nephew, François Saint-Pierre.<sup>41</sup> The limitations of technology prevent the accurate deciphering of the documents, due to the extreme age of the letters and the ineligibility of the

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<sup>41</sup> For further research, please see the Archives of Phillippe Bordes via the Musée Fabre website at [http://museefabre.montpellier3m.fr/RESSOURCES/ARCHIVES/Archives\\_privées/Archives\\_Bordes\\_Cabanel](http://museefabre.montpellier3m.fr/RESSOURCES/ARCHIVES/Archives_privées/Archives_Bordes_Cabanel).

handwriting. However, a visit to the Musée Fabre archives would prove most useful in order to view these documents in person, which would provide a better opportunity to glean any pertinent information from the Cabanel letters regarding his relationship with Saint-Hilaire or the specific details of the commission for *St. Monica in a Landscape* and *St. Augustine in His Study*.

To establish a thorough discourse on the Saint-Hilaire commission in particular, the archives of the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste must also be consulted. The Church of St. Jean-Baptiste does not make any records or documentation available online, necessitating a visit to conduct future research at the physical archives of the church. The analysis of these archives would prove beneficial as a way to gain information on the relationship that Saint-Hilaire and his family had with this particular church and any other documentation regarding Saint-Hilaire's donation of the pendant pair by Cabanel. This research may also yield greater insight into the personal life of Saint-Hilaire. If more information could be gained about his involvement in the local church and his presence in the religious community, a more well-rounded history of Auguste Saint-Hilaire could be constructed. It would also be prudent to pursue contacting any remaining family members related to Saint-Hilaire in order to gain any applicable information about Saint-Hilaire himself or the commission from Cabanel. This endeavor would require genealogical research into Saint-Hilaire's family in order to locate any familial relations that are still living. The logical expansion of this research also requires an in-depth analysis of the composition and iconography of St. Monica's accompanying pendant, *St. Augustine in His Study*. Constructing an iconographic survey of the visual tradition of St. Augustine in the

Christian art canon would provide greater insight into the Cabanel works as a pendant pair and could further elucidate the artistic choices Cabanel executed in *St. Monica in a Landscape*.

Through this research, it is evident that Alexandre Cabanel's *St. Monica in a Landscape* offers a variety of possible interpretations. It departs from the standard iconography of St. Monica, raising questions regarding Cabanel's intentions as the artist as well as Saint-Hilaire's demands as the patron. A study of the relevant documentation in the physical archives of the Church of St. Jean-Baptiste as well as the Musée Fabre is necessary in order to elaborate further on the iconographic content of *St. Monica in a Landscape*. The continuation of this research will therefore prove beneficial to the scholarly community as a contribution to the study of Alexandre Cabanel as an artist and also to the broader field of French academic painting of the nineteenth century.

## FIGURES



**Figure 1.** Alexandre Cabanel, *St. Monica in a Landscape*, 1845, oil on canvas, 38.5 x 32 inches, Milwaukee Art Museum.



**Figure 2.** Alexandre Cabanel, *St. Augustine in His Study*, 1845, oil on canvas, 38.5 x 32 inches, Milwaukee Art Museum.



**Figure 3.** Ary Scheffer, *Saints Augustine and Monica*, 1854 (replica of 1845 original), oil on canvas, 53.2 x 41.2 inches, The National Gallery, London.



**Figure 4.** Alexandre Cabanel, *Aglaia and Boniface*, circa 1858, oil on canvas, 24.49 x 26.77 inches, Cleveland Museum of Art.



**Figure 5.** Alexandre Cabanel, *Christ in the Garden of Olives*, 1843-1844, oil on canvas, 72.83 x 57.09 inches, Church of Saint-Roch, Montpellier.



**Figure 6.** Alexandre Cabanel, *The Death of Moses*, 1851, oil on canvas, 110 x 154 inches, Dahesh Museum of Art, New York.



**Figure 7.** Alexandre Cabanel, *The Glorification of St. Louis*, 1853-1855, oil on canvas, 168.7 x 175.79 inches, Musée Fabre, Montpellier.



**Figure 8.** Alexandre Cabanel, sketch for *Louis XIII and Richelieu* (digital image of original unavailable), 1854-1855, oil on canvas, 12.91 x 7.09 inches, Musée Fabre, Montpellier.



**Figure 9.** Alexandre Cabanel, *Portrait of Napoleon III*, 1865, oil on canvas, 93.70 x 66.93 inches, Musée National du Château, Compiègne.



**Figure 10.** Alexandre Cabanel, *Paradise Lost*, 1867, oil on canvas, 48.25 x 36.75 inches, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



**Figure 11.** Francesco Botticini, *St. Monica Establishing the Order of the Augustinian Nuns*, 1470-1475, tempera on panel (altarpiece), 70.47 x 70.87 inches, Santo Spirito, Florence.



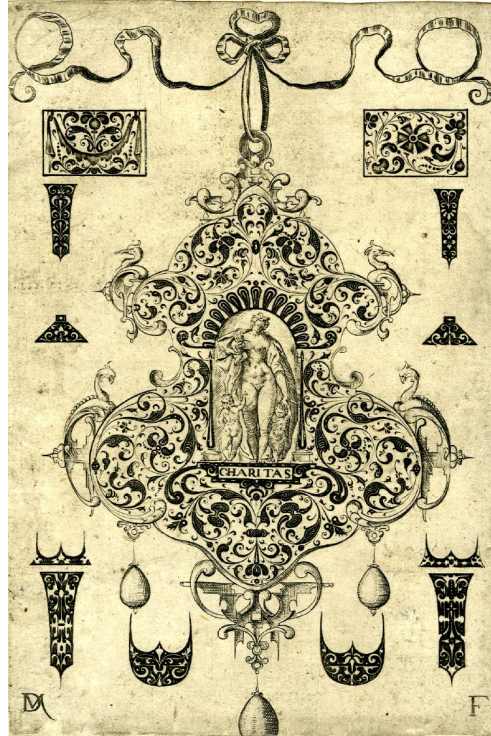
**Figure 12.** Piero della Francesca, *Saint Monica*, 1454-1469, oil and tempera with gold on poplar panel, 15.25 x 10 inches, The Frick Collection, New York.



**Figure 13.** Luca Giordano, *Augustine and Monica in Ecstasy in Ancient Ostia*, oil on canvas, Royal Monastery of the Incarnation, Madrid.



**Figure 14.** Pietro Maggi, *Apparition of the Angel to Saint Monica*, 1714, fresco located in right transept of San Marco Church, Milan.



**Figure 15.** Daniel Mignot, *The Seven Virtues/Charitas (Charity)*, 1593, engraving, 6.02 x 4.06 inches, The British Museum.



**Figure 16.** School of Marcantonio Raimondi, *Charitas (Charity)*, 16<sup>th</sup> century, print, 3.43 x 2.72 inches, University of London.



**Figure 17.** Francesco de Rossi (Salviati), *Carità (Charity)*, 1544-1548, tempera on wood, 61.42 x 48.03 inches, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.



**Figure 18.** Alexandre Laemlein, *La Charité (Charity)*, 1845, oil on canvas, 88.58 x 55.12 inches, Musée de Beaux Arts, Caen.



**Figure 19.** Unknown, *Three Holy Mothers*, 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century, fresco, Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome.



**Figure 20.** Paolo Veronese, *Madonna and Child with Saint Elizabeth, the Infant Saint John, and Saint Catherine*, 1565-1570, oil on canvas, 40.88 x 62.25 inches, Timken Museum of Art, San Diego.



**Figure 21.** Pompeo Batoni, *Holy Family with St. Elizabeth and John the Baptist*, 1777, oil on canvas, 88.98 x 58.86 inches, The Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.



**Figure 22.** Alexandre Cabanel, *John the Baptist*, 1849, oil on canvas, 76.77 x 55.71 inches, Musée Fabre, Montpellier.



**Figure 23.** Unknown, *Interior View of the Church of Saint-Jean Baptiste, Sennely.*

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