

# **Thomaz Scheuchl, the Trajectory of a Disciple of Beuron: from the restoration of the Cathedral of the Ascension from Satu Mare to the Paintings of Churches in Brazil**

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**Abstract:** : In our studies about the Beuron School of Art and its arrival in Brazil, we consider the hypothesis that it has been used in the decoration of Liturgical spaces, either partially or entirely, by other artists directly linked to the Beuron School of Art or by influence of the new paintings of Basilica of Our Lady of Assumption, works made by Dom Adalbert Gresnigt (1877-1956) and Br. Clement Maria Frischauf (1869-1944) from 1914 to 1922. To verify this hypothesis, we have analyzed the set of pictorial cycles located in the College's Chapel of São Bento Faculty, in the Eucharistic Sanctuary Our Lady of Penha, two medallions in Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption, and some pictorial fragments of the Church of the Rosary of Campinas, all of them works by Thomaz Scheuchl made between 1920s and 1940s. We also remember that the artist developed some of the graphic works, such as the cover to the Almanac of the National Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida, but it is possible that he could have made other works which are unknown up to the present moment.

**Keywords:** Thomaz Scheuchl, Beuron School of Art, sacred art, art and liturgy, religious image.

## **The School of Art of Beuron as source for the elaboration of a pictorial program**

The models for Beuronese images have as reference the medieval compositional schemes of masters such as Giotto de Bondone (1267-1337) and Fra Angelico (1387-1455), as well as the ornamental and chromatic elements that we can more easily identify in the illuminations. Let us remember that the image itself has the hieratic aspect, the solemn purpose, as seen in the Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek and Byzantine images, which inspired Dom Desiderius Lenz (1832-1928) to compose his canon. We think that as we transpose the aesthetic and artistic question, all these arts are directly linked to the history of the Christian people in the Old and New Testaments,

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which leads us to a reflection of the Canon of Beuron as the imaginary synthesis of this trajectory.

The new monasteries will have as a source of inspiration the Carolingian architecture. In others built in the Gothic, Renaissance or Baroque period, Beuron's ornamentation was included, keeping each of the styles and aspects present in the monasteries.

The preparation for the 1400th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict (480-547) in 1880 was the theme for the restoration of the Monastery of Monte Cassino between 1873 and 1913, with the interior decoration done in Beuron style, directed by Dom Desiderius Lenz. Undoubtedly, this was a time when Beuron art was widely disseminated. The process of preparation of the paintings, the execution of the works, the views of the chapels and other decorated spaces appeared in postcards, sacred and holy art magazines, throughout Europe and America, with the use of photographs and lithographic processes.

The foundation of Beuron Abbey's printing house in 1892 would contribute to the wide dissemination of Beuron's images, with the publication of various devotional graphic materials, Bibles, Psalteries, saints, among others.

In 1895, it was published the book *Marienleben* (Figure 1), containing images of the Abbey of Emmaus in Prague, with photograph and lithographed images in a compilation of seventeen images depicting scenes from the life of Our Lady and Our Lord Jesus Christ, accompanied by Biblical quotations, references of breviaries and the Roman missal, with sonnets composed by P. Fritz Esser, SJ (1854-1926).

It is in a climate of study and recollection that some artists have approached a medieval environment of arts and crafts led by masters, often making their work anonymous by not signing the work, be it in painting, sculpture or graphic art. This is what we will see in publications such as *Marienleben*, where the signature is given by *Schola art Beuron*.

In 1905, the Beuronese monks were invited to participate in the XXIV Vienna Secession Exhibition, whose catalog contains some images of Beuron (Figure 2) and Monte Cassino, as well as a presentation on Beuron art. Another publication would corroborate the exhibition, which was written by the monk Ansgar Pöllman, OSB, who explains the meanings of the hieratic art developed by Dom Desiderius Lenz.



Figure 1. Assumption of Our Lady. Detail. Marienleben, 1896



Figure 2. School of Art of Beuron. Our Lady enthroned, the Infant Jesus, Saint Scholastica and St. Benedict, 1871. Chapel of St. Mauro, Abbey of Beuron. *Die Kunst für alle: Malerei, Plastik, Graphik, Architektur* — 23.1907-1908, p. 259.

Among these artists, we can highlight Jan Verkade (1868-1946) who later became a monk under the name of Br. Willibrord Verkade, and Maurice Denis (1870-1943) who founded in 1919 the *Ateliers d'Art Sacré* together with Georges Desvallières (1861-1950).

Thus, we saw that the artists trained in the Abbey of Beuron led to their countries and abbeys of origin or those in which they would become missionaries of other religious orders, contributing to the diffusion of Beuron art in Europe, the Americas and Asia.

For this reason, we believe it is relevant to present the work of an artist who arrives in Brazil at the beginning of the 1920s, whose past is still uncertain as to its formation. We will deal with a "disciple" of Beuron and his artworks in Europe and Brazil.

### **Beuronese art sources**

We can see that the artist also uses other visual sources such as the theme of Jacob's Ladder (THE NEW AMERICAN BIBLE, Gen 28, 10-22), painted in the vestibule of the Beuron Abbey (Figure 3) and in the murals of the Abbey of St. Hildegard (Figure 4); the series of frescoes referring to "Prodigal Son" in the Gospel of St. Luke (THE NEW AMERICAN BIBLE, 15, 11-32), the work of Br. Notker Becker (1883-1978), monk of the Abbey of Maria Laach, who painted the frescoes in the Church of Saint Martin in Dudelange, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, between 1924 and 1927.

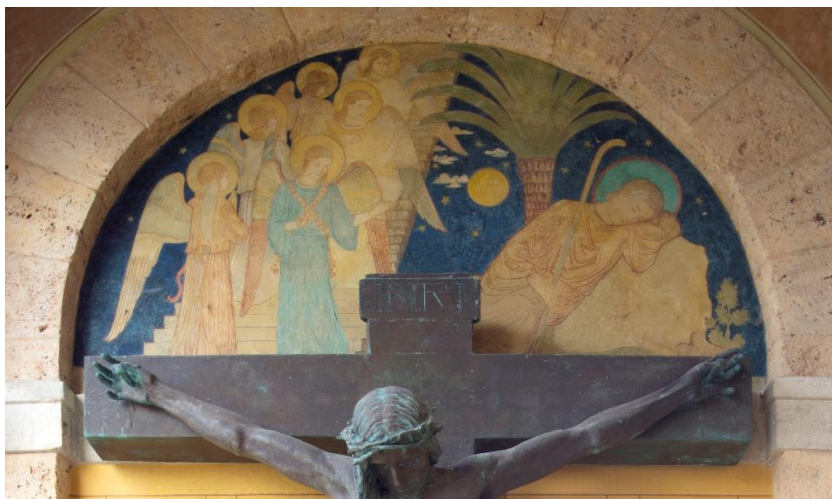


Figure 3. Jacob's Ladder. Fresco. Vestibule, Beuron Abbey



Figure 4. Jacob's Ladder. Fresco. Saint Hildegard Abbey.



Figure 5. Notker Becker (1883-1978). Parable of the Prodigal Son. Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Church of St. Martin, Dudelange. Photo: ©Christoph M. Frommen/AEOLUS Musikproduktion, 2012





Figure 6. Notker Becker (1883-1978). Parable of the Prodigal Son. Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Church of St. Martin, Dudelange. Photo: ©Christoph M. Frommen/AEOLUS Musikproduktion, 2012

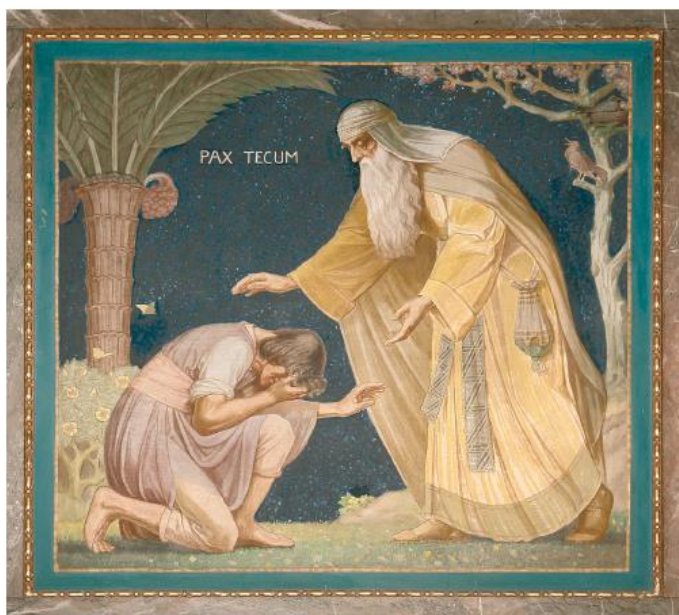


Figure 7. Notker Becker (1883-1978). Parable of the Prodigal Son. Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Church of St. Martin, Dudelange. Photo: ©Christoph M. Frommen/AEOLUS Musikproduktion, 2012



Figure 8. Notker Becker (1883-1978). Parable of the Prodigal Son. Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Church of St. Martin, Dudelange. Photo: @Christoph M. Frommen/AEOLUS Musikproduktion, 2012

As Beuron's art was not only closed in the designs of Dom Desiderius Lenz, we believe that some drawings were created by Thomaz Scheuchl according to the canon, as we observed in the works of other Beuronese artists.

### **Thomaz Scheuchl: biographical notes**

After more than seventy years of the artist's death, little is known of his life. Our effort to compose his biography has been something of extreme complexity. Beyond his works, we not have literature in Portuguese about his artistic study or origin.

In the face of uncertainty and complexities, we look at various documentary sources, such as baptism and marriage books, immigrant collections, genealogical trees, and death records.

Another difficulty we have encountered is the various forms of how he was referred to in other written texts in several languages, such as Scheuchl Tamás in Hungarian, Tomazino Scheuchl in Italian, and even the incorrectness in the writing of his surname as perceived in his Register of Foreigners, where Scheuchel appears, in journalistic news and publications

like Schenchl or Scheutel. For this reason, the captions of the images will follow the spelling signed by the artist.

We will present the analysis of the pictorial cycles of the Chapel's College and Faculty of São Bento of São Paulo, of the Eucharistic Sanctuary of Our Lady of Penha. To achieve our goals, we extend the research to the city of Campinas where there still exist some pictorial fragments of the Church of the Rosary of Campinas, demolished in 1956 because we understand that it would help us comprehend his earlier artistic career in Brazil.

In addition to the study of the pictorial cycles, we analyzed the cover of the Almanac of the National Basilica of Our Lady, but we emphasize that it may be possible to have others works not yet known at this moment.

### Biographical data: records in the archives from Vienna and São Paulo

The starting point for checking with the Viennese archives came from a *Genealogie der Familie Leininger* family tree website, which provided us with the identification in the Viennese registers in the online database Matricula. In the Book of Baptism (Figure 9), his date of birth on June 16, 1867, being baptized on the 18th of the same month under the name of Adolf. We know how to deal with the artist, because we verify the names of the parents who verified in the Alien Registration of 1944. Another source was the Wedding Book, where we find that in 1901 he married Theresia Redl (1860-1900).



Figure 9. Detail of the **Taufbuch** [Book of Baptism] 1850-1879, Fol. 103, 01-03. Screenshot of the file available in the database Matricula

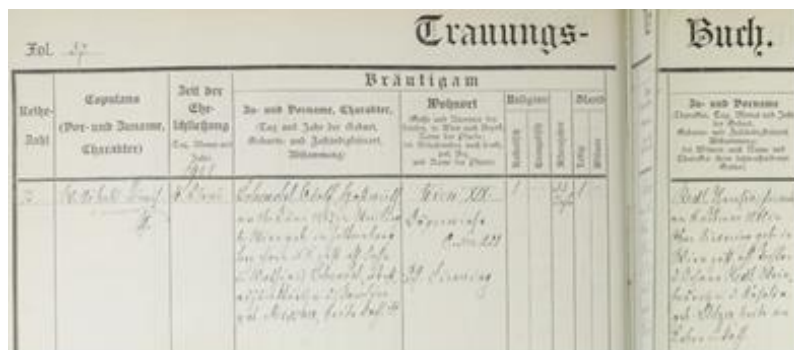


Figure 10. Detail of the **Traunungs-Buch** [Wedding Book]. Fol 37 (verse). Screenshot of the file available in the database Matricula



On the death certificate, his death occurred on January 2, 1947, at the age of 81, due to heart problems. On January 7, 1947, in the *Deutsche Nachrichten* supplement, German-language section of the *Jornal de Notícias* of January 7, 1947, Margaretha published a note of the seventh day mass that would be held on January 9 at the Monastery of São Bento. Complementing the biographical documentation, we know that he married Margaretha Anna [Wissmuller] Scheuchl, she was born on March 4, 1887, in Austria. We know that she asked for naturalization, granted by Brazilian Government on August 6, 1955.

We did not find any further information about his elementary studies or religious studies. The question we ask is whether the artist would have been emancipated, when we perceive the various conflicts between the dates of the consulted documents. Another issue is the adoption of Thomaz, which leads us to suppose that perhaps he was a Benedictine oblate, since he was married twice and is quoted as a monk in one of the publications that will be discussed below.

### **1903-1904 – The Roman Catholic Cathedral from Satu Mare, Romania**

The presence of the artist is reported in a journalistic note edited by Lajos Mátray and Ágoston Ferencz<sup>1</sup>, published on July 14, 1903, where they point to the restoration and painting of new images in the Cathedral of the Ascension, The Roman Catholic Cathedral from Satu Mare.

In the book that chronicles the life of Bishop Meszlényi Gyula (1832 - 1905), Thomaz Scheuchl is cited as a monk of Beuron, one of the eminent artists of that period, which is why he is chosen for the restoration and painting of new frescoes in the cathedral, like the set of Our Lady of the Hungarians (Figure 11), flanked by the medallions of Saint Kunegunda, Beata Gisela, Saint Margareth of Hungary and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Hungaricana. A róm. kath. székesegyház renoválása. Szatmár-Németi, 1903, Julius 14, 7. évfolyam, 28. Szám, p. 132. In: Szatmár-Németi 1899-1912, <[https://library.hungaricana.hu/en/view/SzatmarNemeti\\_1903/?pg=130&layout=l](https://library.hungaricana.hu/en/view/SzatmarNemeti_1903/?pg=130&layout=l)>, 26 jan. 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231) is Patron Saint of Secular Franciscan Order, Catholic Charities and Bakers, she was canonized in 1235, and her history was collect by Jacopo da Voragine (1229-1298) in his book *Legenda Aurea*. **de Voragine**, Jacobus. *Legenda Aurea*, French translation La Légende Doreé translator L'Abbé J.B.M. Roze, Édouard Rouveyre, Éditeur, Paris, 1902. (Troisième Partie) Archive.org. 29 jan. 2018.



Figure 11. Our Lady of Hungarians. Clockwise: Saint Kunegunda, Beata Gisela, Saint Margareth, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. In: BURA, László. Meszlényi Gyula szatmári püspök 1887-1905, 2008. p. 43.

### **Decoration in Brazilian churches from mid-1920s to 1940s**

Thomaz Scheuchl arrives in Brazil in September of 1920. He will make the complete decoration in liturgical spaces from the mid-1920s to 1940s: Church of the Rosary of Campinas; Chapel of the College of the Monastery of São Bento of São Paulo, Eucharistic Sanctuary of Our Lady of Penha and two medallions in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption.

In a note published in the newspaper, there is a description of the decoration of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary<sup>3</sup>, whose passage we transcribe:

<sup>3</sup> The Claretian missionaries arrived in Brazil in 1895, building their headquarters in São Paulo. The Church of the Rosary was built in 1913, being the second home of the Claretians in the State of São Paulo, its decoration would have begun in 1914 with the arrival of the altars in 1914. The news about the paintings in the church is of 1925. Between 1934 and 1938, the Urban Improvement Plan was developed by Francisco Prestes Maia (1896-1965), which included the expansion of avenues, among other urban works. The Church of the Rosary was in the middle of the route, reason why had been demolished in 1956, even with the strong

## INTERIOR DECORATION OF CHURCH OF ROSARY

CAMPINAS, 30 - The works of interior decoration of the church of the Rosary, of this city, near completion, ordered to be performed by the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Mary, constitute an admirable painting, which greatly enriches that temple.

The service is being done by mr. Thomaz Schenchl, consecrated artist of the old world, who from there came contracted for this purpose.

On the front wall of the cupola, it was painted the one symbolizing the Queen of the Sacred Rosary, on the right there is the representation of the Assumption, on the left, the Word became flesh and on the front, Queen Martyr. In the workings of these engravings, on a lower plane, let the four evangelists be named.

In the extension of the ceiling, there are represented all the titles of the litany by their respective symbols.

On the walls of the arcade, on the left, the church pays a fair homage to the founders and martyres of the order.

The medallions, works of artistic value, represent Paulo Vallier (Founder of the Chilean missions), Francisco Cruzato (Protomartyr), Mariano Avelina, (of whom the beatification is thought) Emmanuele Villazo (confounder), Estevam Sala, (confounder) 1st Superior General), Domingos Frabeja to Jacob Clotet (confounders) José Xigré (confounder and 2nd Superior General).

Still other symbolic religious pictures adorn the interior of the temple, thus making it worthy of the admiration of all (CORREIO PAULISTANO, 1925, p. 5).

In the iconographic collection of the Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo, there is a set of photographs, without date or indication of the photographer who captured them that correspond to the description above transcribed.

For example, the image of Our Lady enthroned delivering the Rosary to St. Dominic of Gusmão, with the Infant Jesus sitting on his lap, on the left side, with angels flanking the two saints (Figure 12). In this image, we clearly perceive the throne, something similar to other beuronenses representations of Our Lady enthroned (Figure 2).

In the image with the theme of the Assumption of Our Lady (Figure 13), in which Jesus Christ is represented with crown and scepter with the tip in the shape of a lily placing a crown on the head of Our Lady, we see the use of the Beuronese scheme, with the rearrangement of the figures that are sitting on clouds and the suppression of the image of God-Father.

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commotion of the population of the city of Campinas and government authorities. Another church had been built, where the altars and other objects that had been saved were taken. Some of the mural paintings were kept by the resident doctor in the city, who hired an Italian restorer to remove the fragments. Today, these fragments were auctioned by the heirs, bought by collectors, one of them donated to the Memory Center of the University of Campinas in 2011.

In the tympanum, the medallions of St. Ignatius of Loyola (Figure 14) and St. Vincent de Paula (Figure 15) follow the same scheme, as well as the two angels at the chancel arch (Figure 16).



Figure 12. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Our Lady of Rosary, n.d. Detail of the dome. Unknown photographer. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017





Figure 13. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Assumption of Our Lady, n.d. Detail of the dome. Unknown photographer. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017



Figure 14. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Medallion Saint Ignatius of Loyola, n.d. Unknown photographer. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017





Figure 15. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Medallion of Saint Vincent de Paula, n.d. Unknown photographer. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017



Figure 16. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Top of the high altar, n.d. Archive of the Monastery of São Bento de São Paulo. Photo: Wellington Batista, 2017

Analyzing this small set of images, we can infer that this church served as the basis for the elaboration of a pictorial program if we make a comparison with the works of the painter executed later in the Chapel of the College of the Monastery of St. Benedict (Figures 17 and 18) and in the Church of Our Lady of Penha<sup>4</sup> (Figures 19 and 20).

As for the decorative aspect, we noticed the use of garlands, flowers, such as daisy and white lily, spiraled stems with animals (birds and squirrels), inflorescence and date palms with fruits.



Figure 17. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947), 1937. Our Lady with the Baby Jesus delivering the Rule to St. Benedict (left). To the right, Father José de Anchieta in prayer. Fresco. Signature on left side, bottom: THOMAZ SCHEUCHL PINXT MCMXXVII. Photo: ©Rosângela Ap, 2015

<sup>4</sup> The first chapel dates from 1668, passing through successive reforms, the last one in 1801 which gave it colonial features. In 1909 he was elevated to Archdiocesan Sanctuary by Dom Duarte Leopoldo e Silva (1867-1938), first archbishop of São Paulo (1907-1938). The Redemptorists would take care of the sanctuary that was reformed in 1935, under the direction of Fr. Oscar Chagas de Azevedo, C.Ss.R. (1888-1957) and decorated by Thomaz Scheuchl, who performs fresco paintings on the side and upper walls of the main altar, entrance to the sacristy and Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.





Figure 18. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Panels "Prodigal Son" and medallions "Choir of Angels", 1936-1937. Varied dimensions. Photography and digital montage: ©Rosângela Ap, 2015

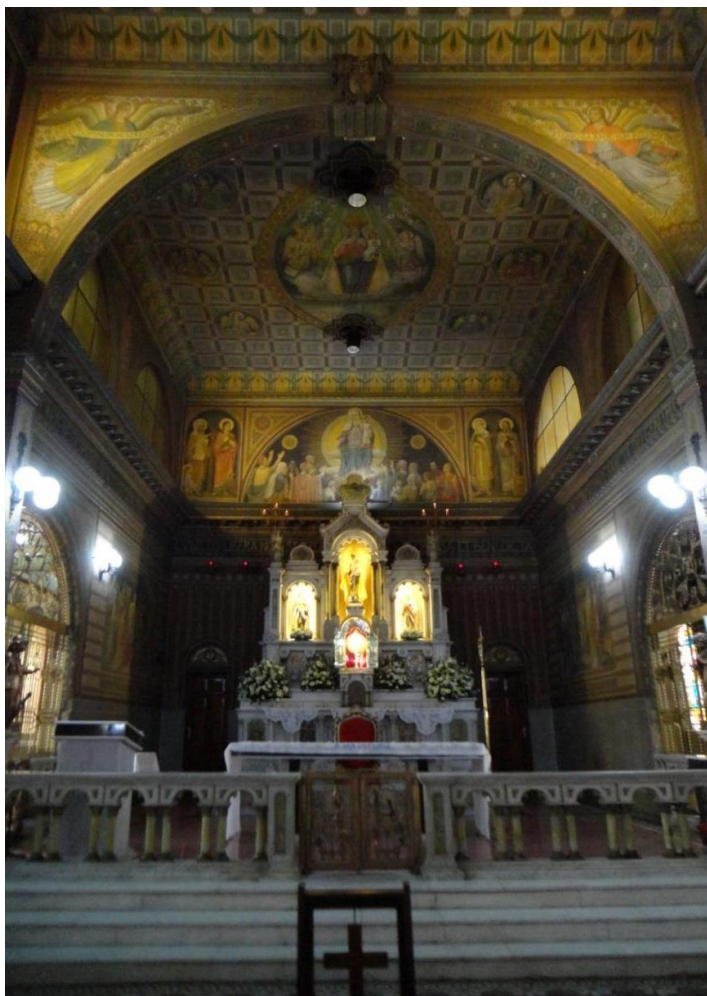


Figure 19. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). View of the main altar, 1940s. Fresco. Photo: ©Rosângela Ap, 2016



Figure 20 Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). High altar (detail), 1940s. Fresco. Photo: ©Rosângela Ap, 2016

In the Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption, the artist painted two medallions (Figures 21 and 22), in which we find his signature, but he did not date them. It is possible that he painted them in the same period during which he made the decoration of the Chapel of the College. The painting depicting the Jacob Ladder, similar to the fresco of the vestibule at Beuron Abbey (Figure 3) and the Abbey of St. Hildegard (Figure 4), located on the side wall of the chapel of St. John the Baptist. It is signed in the lower right, on the lawn below the wall: *Th. Scheuchl pinx.*



Figure 21 Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Medallion Jacob's Ladder, s.d. Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption. Photo: @Rosângela Ap, 2017



Figure 22. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Medallion Burning Bush, s.d. Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption. Photo: @Rosângela Ap, 2017

Comparing what was painted with the cited references, it is perceived that the drawing is much closer to the one executed in Beuron Abbey, although the tonalities approach the frescoes in Saint Hildegard Abbey.



### Graphic work

In 1894, Redemptorist priests arrived in Brazil from Bavaria. As missionaries, they settled in Aparecida, State of São Paulo and Campininhas, State of Goiás. In 1900 they founded the Sanctuary Publishing. Thomaz Scheuchl composed the cover, cover sheet and illustration for the Almanac of National Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida of 1935.

We see on the cover (Figure 23), the use of the same visual outlines earlier, Our Lady to the center flanked by seraphim. What differs from other works is that the composition encloses the image of Our Lady as if it were in an altar niche for veneration. Also the shields representing the Brazilian states, until that moment.



Figure 23 Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Cover and cover sheet of the Almanac of the National Basilica of Our Lady Aparecida. 1935. Historical and Artistic Collection of the Venerable Third Order of St. Francis of Penance of the City of São Paulo. Photo: @Rosângela Ap, 2016

In the illustration (Figure 24), the artist uses his monogram, consisting of a "TS" in overlap, located in the lower left corner of the arch.

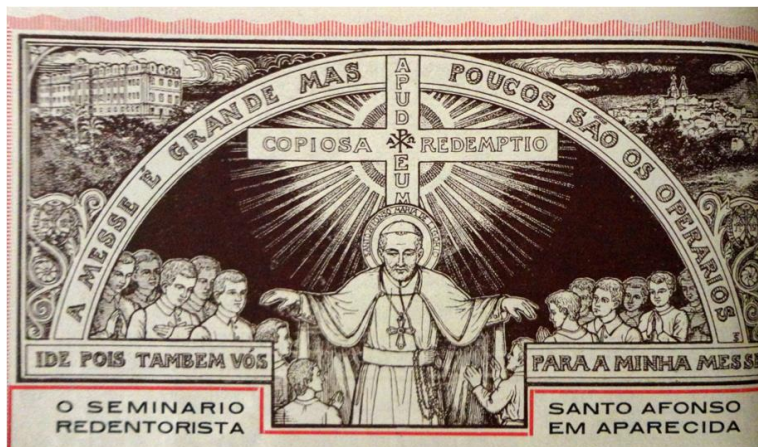


Figure 24. Thomaz Scheuchl (1867-1947). Illustration. Almanac of the National Basilica of Our Lady Aparecida. 1935. Historical and Artistic Collection of the Venerable Third Order of St. Francis of Penance of the City of São Paulo. Photo: ©Rosângela Ap, 2016

### Conclusions

The impulse for this work was represented by the desire to continue our studies about the Beuron School of Art and its arrival in Brazil, where we hypothesized that it was used in the decoration of other liturgical spaces, either partially or totally, by artists linked or influenced by this new art present in the decoration of the new Basilica of Our Lady of Assumption, inaugurated in 1912, whose decoration was executed between 1914 to 1922 by Dom Adalbert Gresnigt (1877-1956) and Br. Clement Maria Frischauf (1869-1944), two Benedictine monks who participated in the decoration of the Monte Cassino Abbey between 1899 and 1913, under the direction of Dom Desiderius Lenz (1832-1928).

As stated, there are gaps to be filled both from a biographical and artistic point of view. We seek answers about his formation, works and performance in Europe, with a view to increasing the knowledge of his relations with other artists, to find other works to confront and deepen the analysis of the pictorial cycles located in Brazil.

We emphasize that we constructed this article based on a chronological structure, whose function was to allow us to confront the dates, to visualize the places and the accomplishments, which we think is fruitful for the reader. We found that there were differences between the dates of the consulted documents, however, we think that what we were able to collect during the execution of this work will be useful for those who have works of the artist, both in Brazil and abroad.

We are very grateful to Abbot Mathias Tolentino Braga, OSB for having received and allowed us to do our research, especially to Dom João

Baptista Neto, OSB librarian responsible for the Archives of the Monastery of São Bento, whose contribution is essential and invaluable, to the librarian Wellington Baptista. The immense contribution with photographs and bibliographical materials received: Mr. Klara Antons, OSB, of the Abbey of Santa Hildegarda; Fr Petrus Novack OSB, librarian at the Maria Laach Abbey; Christoph M. Frommen of AEOLUS Musikproduktion; to Fr. Ataíde Rodrigues Fontes, Rector of the Sanctuary Eucharistic of Our Lady of Penha, Regina Ribeiro Cellino Dorival, parish secretary; to the friends and relatives who support us unconditionally, and finally to Laura Codrina Ioniță and all the other editors and members of the advisory board of “Anastasis”.

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