

EL GRECO

Spanish school, 1541 - 1614.

The real name of this artist was Domenikos Theotokopoulos. In Spain his contemporaries called him Domenico Greco or "el Griego" (the Greek) ; El Greco, the form which is now generally used, apparently came into use only later. He was born in Crete, then a Venetian possession. Nothing is known of his early years, but there are a few surviving paintings which indicate that he worked initially in the Byzantine manner practiced by Cretan icon-painters.^① The date of his move to Italy is equally unknown. It seems probable that he went to Venice first, around 1560. He was almost certainly a pupil of Titian's there, and appears to have assimilated alongside this the art of Tintoretto and Jacopo Bassano. He can be identified with reasonable certainty as the pupil of Titian's, "Giovanni Candiotto", whom Giulio Clovio mentioned in 1570 as having arrived in Rome. There he reacted, in a fundamental way, to the work of Michelangelo. By 1577 he was in Toledo, where he remained for the rest of his life. In 1580 Philip II commissioned him to do a painting for the Escorial, but was displeased with the result. He worked also for numerous churches and convents, both in Toledo and in other parts of Spain. Most of his compositions exist in several versions, and there are further versions which appear to have been done by assistants working under him. He died in Toledo on April 6 or 7, 1614.

EL GRECO, cont.

^{Saint}

St Judas Thaddeus

oil on canvas, 42 X 25½ ins.

Condition

Examined by the Conservation Dept. of the Fogg Museum, Sept. 1966. The canvas has been relined. It was once wider at the two sides (there is dark green paint on the tacking margins). Red ground. Plant forms at the bottom have been painted out. Found to be a work of some age.

Provenance

Private colln., Madrid⁽¹⁾; Max Rothschild, London (1930); Dorotheum, Vienna, sale of Oct. 20-22, 1932⁽²⁾; Silbermann Galleries, New York. Acquired by Dr Clowes in 193 .

Literature

A.L.Mayer, El Greco, Munich, 1926, no.216 and fig.37⁽³⁾; J.Camon Aznar, Domenico Greco, 2 vols., Madrid, 1950, II, p.1376, no.390 and fig.820; H.E.Wethey, El Greco and his School, 2 vols., Princeton, 1962, II, p.245, no. X-394.

According to Mayer^{(1) (1926)}, this painting represents a workshop repetition of a lost original, belonging to a series of four saints --the other three being ^{Saints} Sts Andrew, John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. He reproduced in his book versions of these three saints⁽²⁾ which certainly appear to be by the same hand as the Clowes painting. He considered that the ^{Saints} Andrew and Evangelist might be by Jorge Manuel (son and follower of El Greco, 1578-1631) and that the Baptist was definitely by him. Wethey (1962) attributed the present work to Luis Tristan

(1586 (?) -1624) or his school, around 1620. It ^{is} appears, however, to be of later date than either of those suggestions would imply.

The identification of the saint as Judas Thaddeus is based on his holding of the halberd with which he was martyred. ⁶

Notes.

1. It appears to be the painting reproduced in M. Legendre ⁷³ - A. Hartmann, Domenikos Theotokopoulos called El Greco, London, 1937, pl. 334 (as in a private colln. ; photo Moreno, Madrid)

2. These two details of provenance are taken from Wethey ^(see lit.)

3. As "present whereabouts unknown".

4. Andrew, colln. Diego Canovas, Madrid ; dimensions unknown (Mayer no. 175a ; Wethey no. X-233). Evangelist, Museo Gerralbo, Madrid. 40x25 ins. (Mayer no. 194a) ; Wethey no. X-384). Baptist, whereabouts and dimensions unknown (Mayer no. 190a ; Wethey no. X-380). → e

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5. The sources for ^{these} the three saints enumerated ~~in n. 4~~ appear to be (as noted by Mayer and Wethey) : (1) Andrew, Metropolitan Museum, New York (Mayer no. 175 ; Wethey no. 196 and fig. 112) (2) for the Evangelist, ~~the~~ Sts John Baptist and Evangelist, San Ildefonso, Toledo (Mayer no. 193 ; Wethey no. 252 and fig. 199) (3) Baptist, formerly in colln. of Bernard Koehler, Berlin ; present whereabouts unknown (Mayer no. 190 ; Legendre and Hartmann, op. cit., pl. 289 ; Wethey no. X-379, as school or workshop of El Greco, ca. 1600-1610).

6. See n. 4 for refs. & Camon Aznar ¹⁹⁵⁰ (pp. 1374, 1376) similarly considered that the Andrew was by Manuel, and ~~possibly~~ the Evangelist also, and H. Soehner ("Greco in Spanien", pt. iii, Münchener Jahrbuch für Bildende Kunst, 9-10, 1958-59, p. 226, no. 235) attributed the Evangelist to this artist, ca. 1620-30. Wethey, on the other hand, gave different attributions for each of the three ~~same~~ question (

Notes, cont.

saints in question (Andrew : Spanish school ca.1650 ; Evangelist : workshop of Greco, Jorge Manuel (?), ca.1610-20 ; Baptist : school of Toledo, ca.1625-50). The latest of the dates suggested by Wethey here seems the most plausible, if the four saints do indeed go together (lack of record of the dimensions in two cases makes it difficult to be certain of this) ; Soehner (op.cit., no.259) correspondingly classified the Andrew as a XVIIth or XVIIIth c. copy.

6. Cf. the Judas Theaddseus in the series of saints in the Museo del Greco, Toledo, and also in the Toledo Cathedral series (Wethey nos. 165, 179, figs. 216, 226). Wethey correspondingly corrected Mayer's identification of the Clowes saint as St Thomas, who is shown by El Greco holding either the lance with which he was martyred, as in the Museo del Greco series (ibid. no.185, fig. 233) or his normal attribute, the carpenter's square, as in the Toledo Cathedral series (ibid. no.172, fig.210). The weapon held in the present case is definitely a halberd and not a lance.