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FACTS

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Mentioned people:
Jacopo Bassano
Manuel Bartolomé Cossío
El Greco
Mario Krohn
Statens Museum for Kunst
Jacopo Tintoretto
Ignacio Zuloaga

Archive:
J.F. Willumsens Museum
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TRANSCRIPTION

Peter Johansen. Esq.
Docent in art history at the royal Academie

Dear Sir.

You ask me to describe the conversation I had with Mr. Mario Krohn that day he came to my house to see my Greco-picture.

This I very easy can do, as Mr Krohn only was here about five ten minutes as he seemed to be in a great hurry.

When I bought the picture in Florence,^x ^xIt gave to me the impression to be a work of Greco. I came from Spain where I again had seen the Greco-pictures in Madrid and on my journey to Florence I saw the Greco-pictures in Strasburg and Parma,^{xx} ^{xx} and had still the Greco spirit fresh in my eyes.

As nearly all the early pictures of Greco have been mistaken for pictures of Tintoretto or Bassano. and to lead up to the right painter, I started with asking him if he thought it a Bassano. He answered No – The Bassano are like a picture factory where the same subjects are reproduced over and over again, and this subject cannot be found among them^{x)} ^{x)}This was not right I know, that in Dresden there is a "Adoration of the shepherds" of Francisco Bassano. I showed him a photograph of a donkey after a drawing of Fr. Bassano. the treatment of the hair and mane and the donkeys pose was alike the donkey in my picture, but he thought that the picture had nothing to do with Bassano.

Then I asked him if he thought it might be an early work of Tintoretto, as there were much of his style in S. Joseph and the two ladys in the window, and as to the colours. I told him there was a picture in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence representing the sacrifice of

Abraham painted nearly with the same precious glowing colours as my picture.¹

He answered, he did not know the picture I spoke about, but in any way, he said, it had no resemblance with that sketsh of the "Canaan wedding" of Tintoretto we have in our gallery.

At last I asked him: if he thought it a Greco, and he answered that the caractere of the head of the kneeling man on my picture had some resemblance with the Greco portrait in our gallery but he did not think that my picture was of Greco, as it did not have the same colouring especialy the yellow and blue, as he rememered them from the pictures he had seen in Dresden Wien and London.

But, he said, he did not know much about the production of Greco, as he had not seen the pictures in Spain and had not read the Cossio book on Greco. He promised me to lend me his collection of photographs from Tintoretto, which hed did but I knew them well and there[fore]² of no use to me.

About the colours in the early pictures of Greco you know there are not two alike. There are pictures that have a tone like slate pencil drawings on slate (Julio Clovio portrait in Naples), others are brown like walnut tree (St. Francisco in Zuloaga collection), others again are black and grown ([Raising a]³ flame Cherfils Paris), some are^{are} very precious in colours and only few have that blue and yellow of which^{which} Mr. Krohn speaks.

And the same difference is again in the handling of the brush, some have no touch at all others have a very brutal touch. It is necessary to know the Greco spirit that will do it.

Yours very truly

J. F. Willumsen

26 Aug 1912

¹ Evt.

Tintoretto: Sacrifice of Isaac (1550-1555)

Olie på lærred, 138 x 116 cm.

Uffizi Gallery, Firenze

² Ordet er ulæseligt. Willumsen kan have haft til hensigt, at skrive: therefore

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OMTALTE VÆRKER

- El Greco: *Hyrdernes tilbedelse* (ca. 1568-1569) tempera på træ, 63 x 76 cm. F. Willumsen Museum, G.S. 345 El Greco: *Portræt af Giulio Clovio* (ca.1571) olie på træ, 58 x 86 cm. Museo nazionale di Capodimonte, Napoli El Greco: *Le Stimate di San Francesco* (ca. 1571) olie på træ, 29 x 21 cm. Museo d'arte della fondazione Pagliara, Napoli Hans Rottenhammer: *Brylluppet i Kana* (tidl. tilskrevet Tintoretto) olie på lærred, 45 x 58 cm. Statens Museum for Kunst, KMSsp145

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This I very easily can do, as Mr Krohn only was here about five ~~to~~ ten minutes as he seemed to be in a great hurry.

It seems to me that it gave to me the impression to be a work of Greco. When I bought the picture, ^{in Florence} I came from Spain ^{where I again} had seen the Greco pictures in Madrid ^{and} on my journey to Florence. I saw the Greco-pictures in Strasburg and Parma ~~where~~ ^{these} ~~that~~ ^{as nearly} all the early pictures of Greco have some been mistaken for pictures of Tintoretto or Bassano. ~~these~~ ^{and these} ~~from~~ ^{painter} and to lead up to the matter right ^{mean} ~~therefore~~ ^{I started with} asking him if he thought it a Bassano. He answered No. The Bassano

are like a picture factory ^{whose} ~~there reproduce~~ ^{are reproduced} the same subjects over and over again, and this subject cannot be found among the subjects. x) I showed him a photograph of a donkey after a drawing of N. Bassano. ~~the donkey was in the same pose and the treatment of the hair and mane was very much alike that of the donkey~~ and the donkey's pose was 'veralike' the donkey in my picture, but he ^{meant} ~~means~~ that the picture had nothing to do with Bassano.

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x) ~~you know~~ ^{you know} that in Dresden there is a "adoration of the shepherds" of Francesco Bassano.

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At last I asked him: if he thought of a Greco, and he answered that the characters of the head of the kneeling man ~~and~~ on my picture had some resemblance with the ^{great} portrait ~~picture~~ in our gallery. But he did not think that ~~the~~ ^{my} picture was of Greco, as it did not have the same colouring, especially the yellow and blue, as he ~~reminiscent~~ ^{reminiscent} from the pictures he had seen in Dresden, Wien and London.

But, he said, he did not know much about the production of Greco, as he had not seen the pictures in Spain and had not read the Cossio book.

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