

**P.1978.PG.200, Portrait of an Unknown Man, c. 1612,
Roman School**



Figure 1

Portrait of an Unknown Man, c.1612, Roman School

**Research Report for the Courtauld Institute of Art Research Forum's
collaborative project *Technical Analysis and Art Historical Research***

By

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Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	p. 4
Illustrations	pp. 5-17
Introduction	pp. 18-19
Material History	pp. 19-22
Art Historical Context	pp. 23-33
Materials and Techniques	pp. 34-38
References	pp. 38-40
Appendix I: Comparative Images	pp. 41-53
Appendix II: Cross-section Analysis	pp. 54-61

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. General View, Visible Light	p.1
Figure 2. Reverse	p. 5
Figure. 3. Raking Light Left	p. 6
Figure. 4 Raking Light Right	p. 7
Figure. 5. General View, UV	p. 8
Figure 6. General View, Infrared	p. 9
Figure 7. <i>Detail. Inscription on the front</i>	p. 10
Figure 8. <i>Detail. Dark brown retouching on the inscription on the front</i>	p. 10
Figure 9. BT Reverse, UV	p. 11
Figure 10. Digitised X-ray	p. 12
Figure 11. Digitised X-ray, overlay of cusping	p. 13
Figure 12. Digitised X-ray, overlay of palette knife marks	p. 14
Figure 13. <i>Detail. Scratches in the background</i>	p. 15
Figure 14. <i>Detail. Underdrawing in the face, Infrared</i>	p. 15
Figure 15. <i>Detail. Brown paint stroke near collar</i>	p. 16
Figure 16. <i>Detail. Right side of the face</i>	p. 16
Figure 17. <i>Detail. Abrasion in the cloak</i>	p. 17
Figure 18. <i>Detail. Overpaint in the cloak</i>	p. 17

Figure 2. Reverse



Figure. 3. Raking Light Left

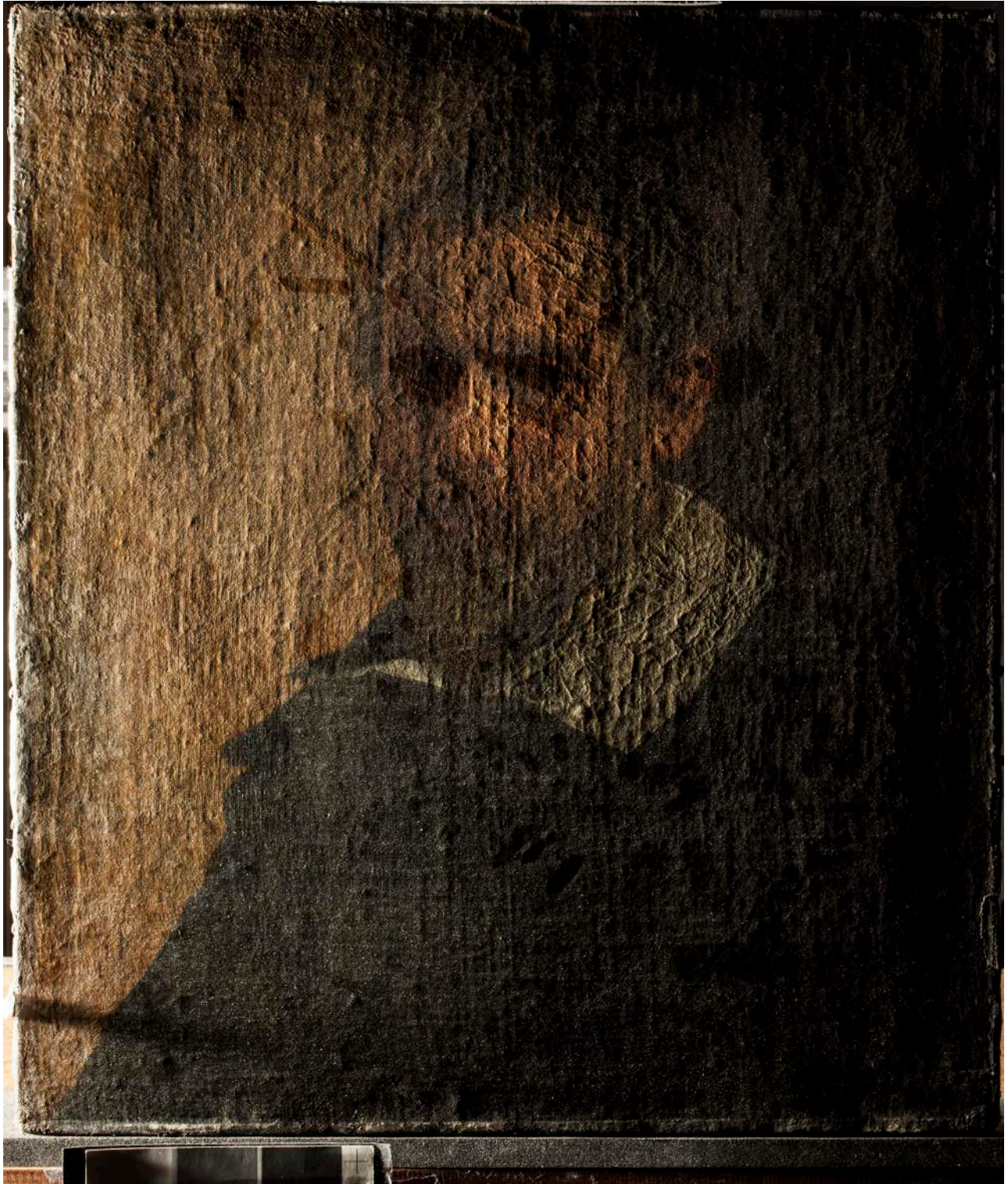


Figure. 4 Raking Light Right



Figure. 5. General View, UV

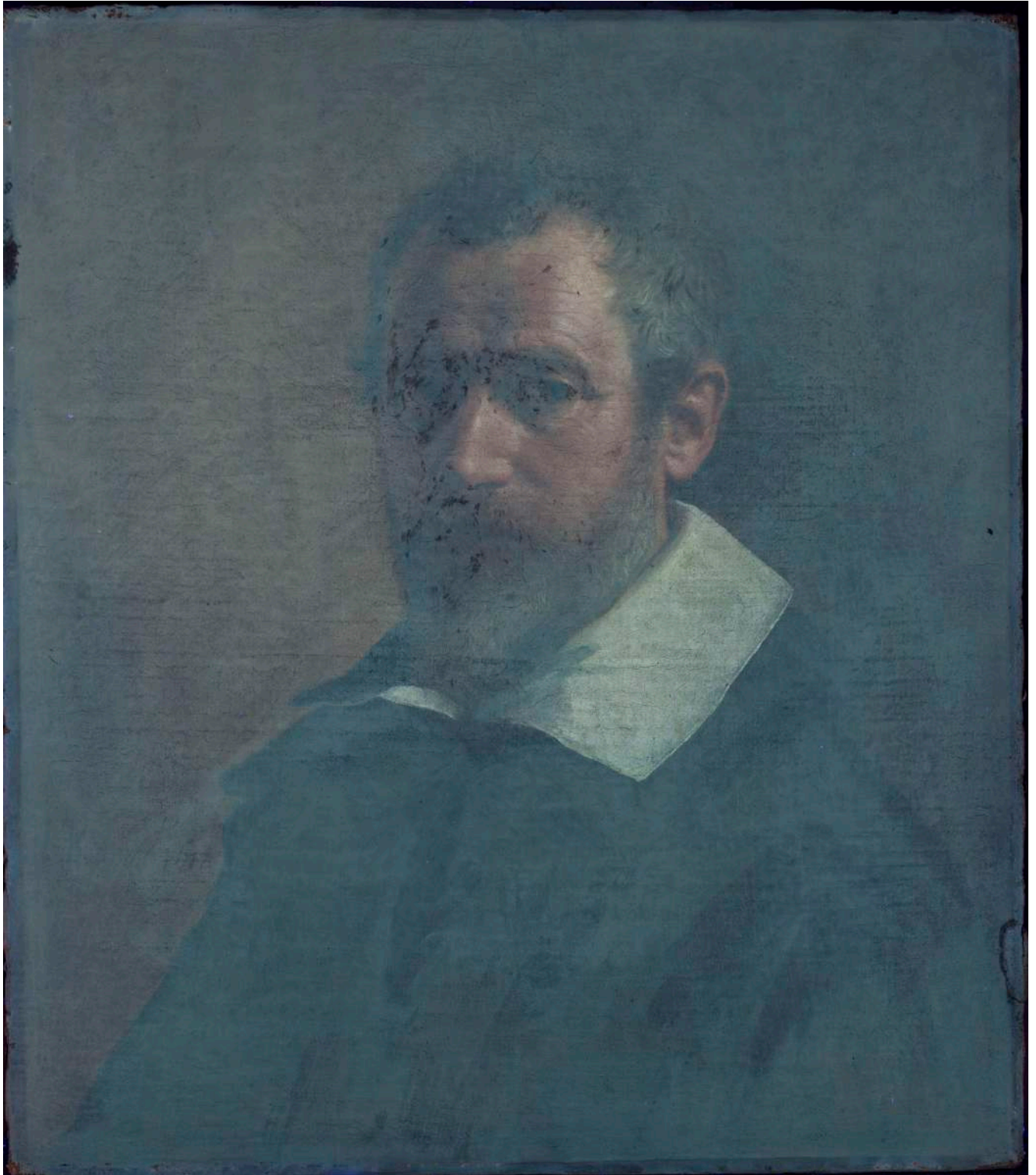


Figure 6. General View, Infrared



Figure 7. *Detail. Inscription on the front*



Figure 8. *Detail. Dark brown retouching on the inscription on the front*



Figure 9. BT Reverse, UV



Figure 10. Digitised X-ray



Figure 11. Digitised X-ray, overlay of cusping

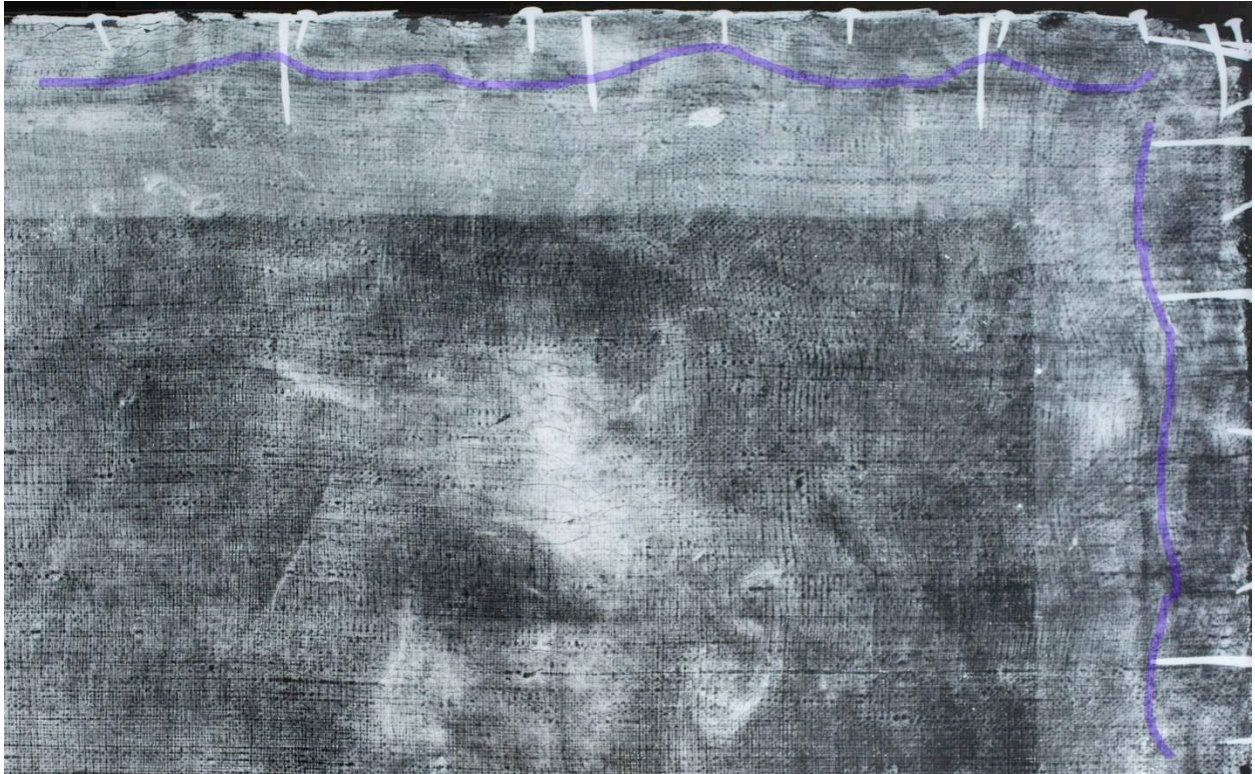


Figure 12. Digitised X-ray, overlay of palette knife marks



Figure 13. *Detail.* Scratches in the background

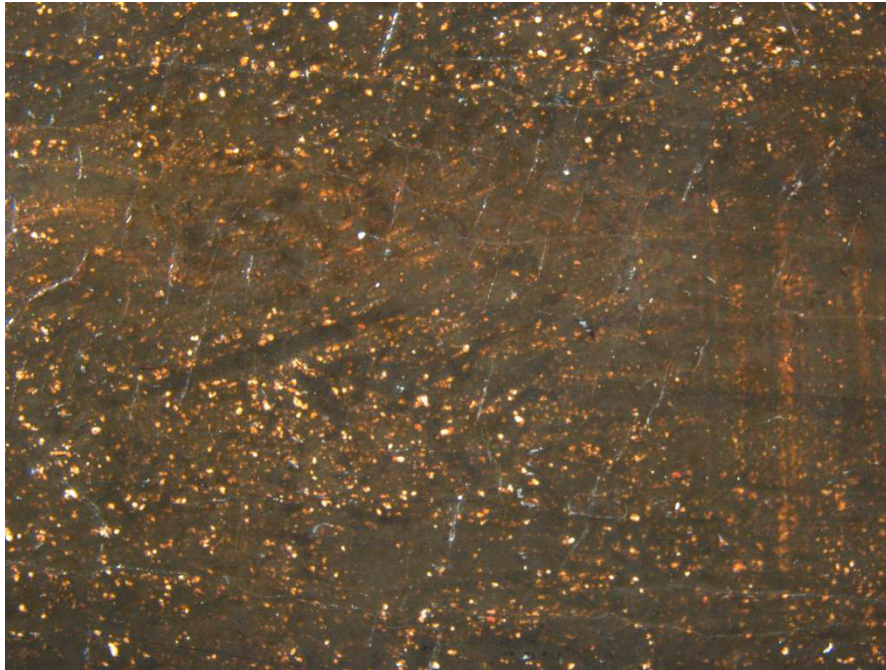


Figure 14. *Detail.* Underdrawing in the face, Infrared

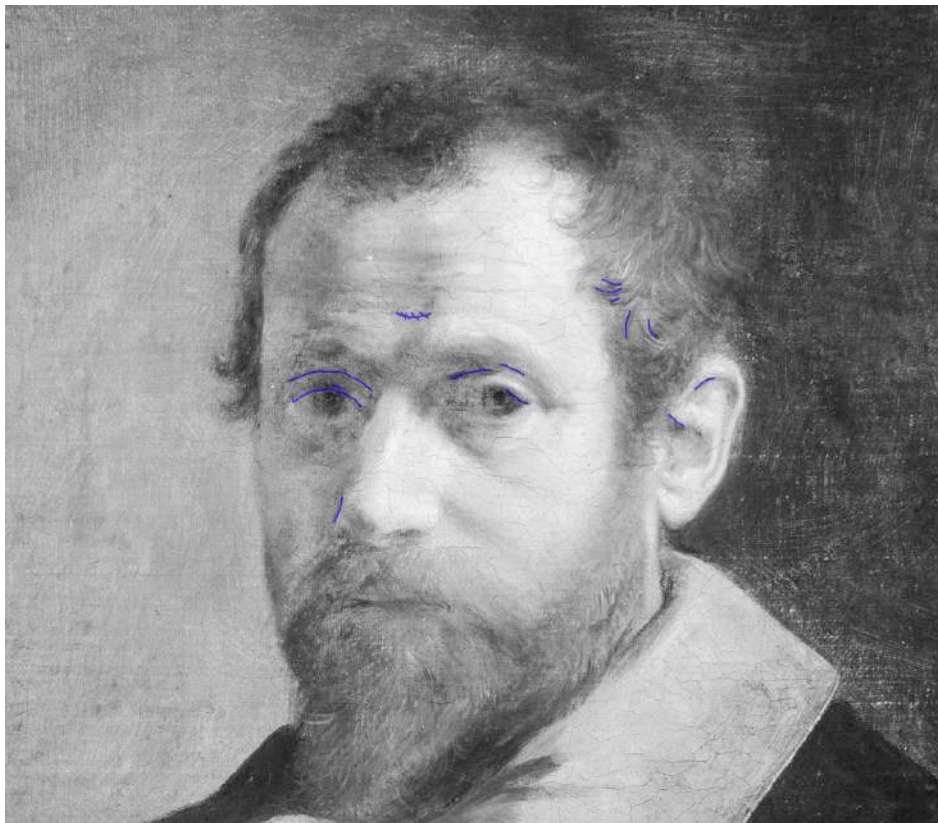


Figure 15. *Detail.* Brown paint stroke near collar, Scraffito in beard



Figure 16. *Detail.* Right Side of the Face

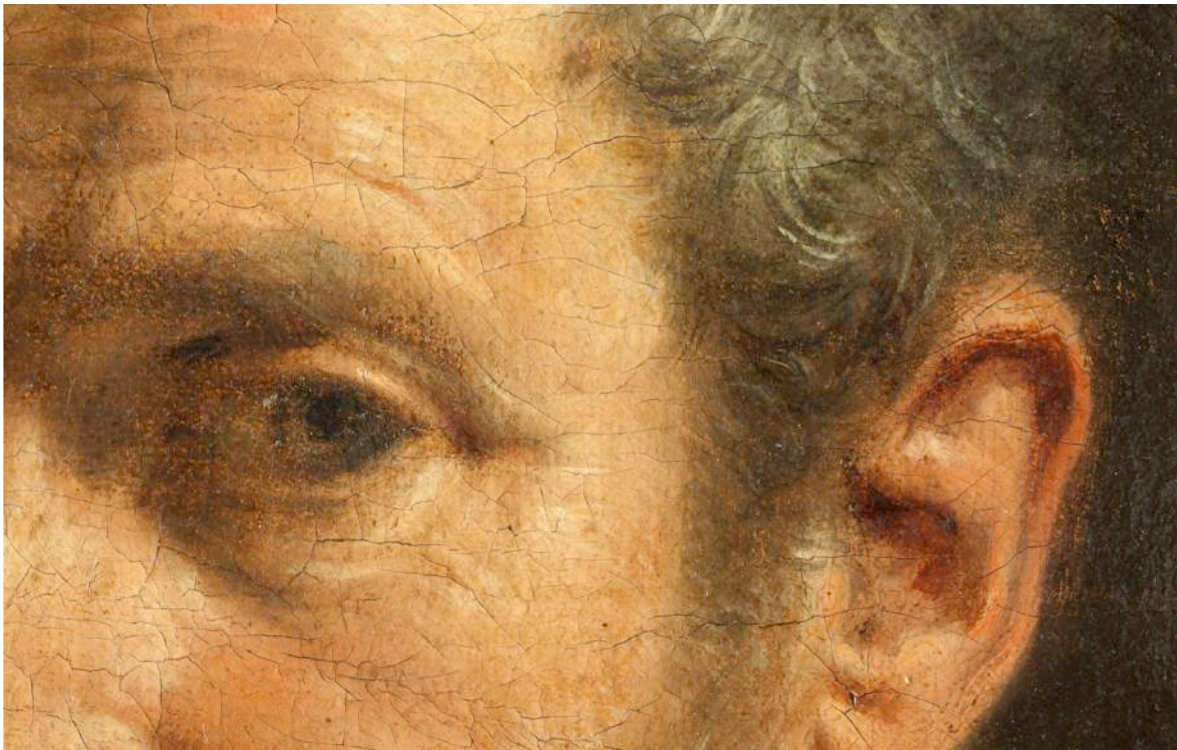


Figure 17. *Detail.* Abrasion in the cloak

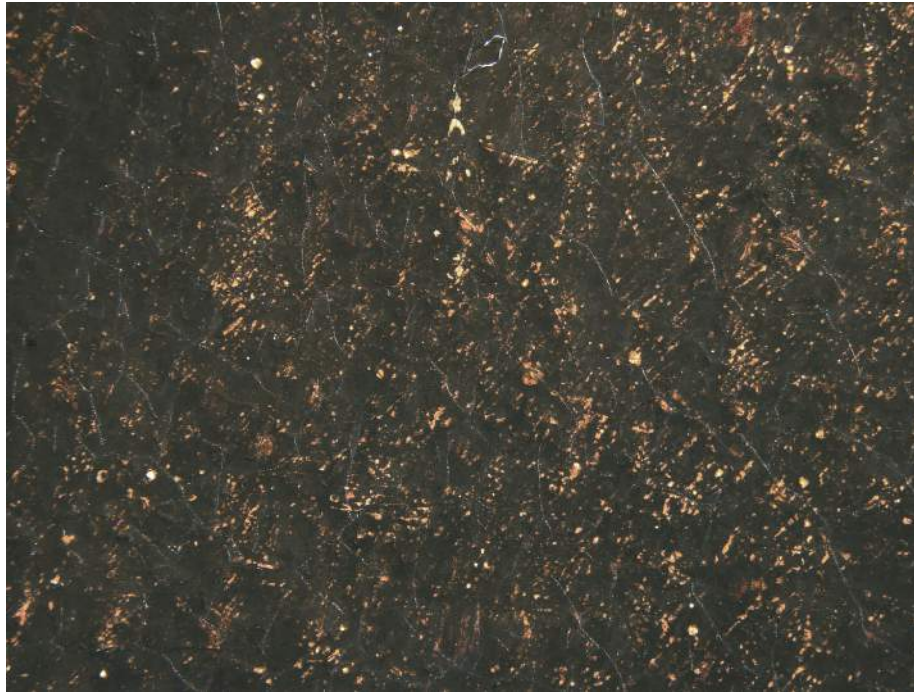
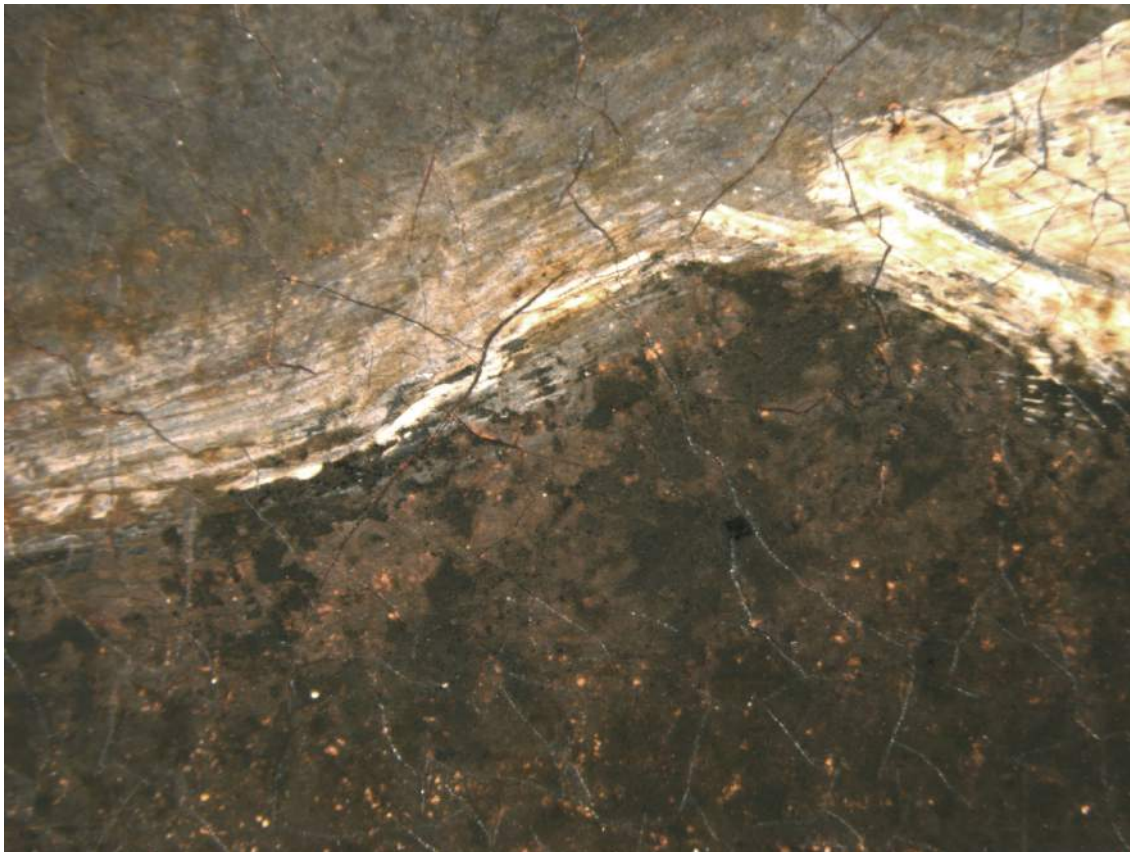


Figure 18. *Detail.* Overpaint in the cloak



Title: *Portrait of an Unknown Man*

Date: c. 1612

Artist: Roman School, unattributed

Collection: Courtauld Gallery of Art

Object: Oil on lined linen canvas (est.)

Dimensions (h) x (w): 56.6cm x 49.8cm

Accession #: P.1978.PG.200

Introduction

Portrait of an Unknown Man (fig. 1) is part of the Courtauld Gallery of Art's Princes Gate Collection, given to the Gallery by Count Antoine Seilern in 1978. It came to the Department of Conservation & Technology (Courtauld Institute of Art) for technical examination as part of the Institute's Research Forum. The sitter and artist are unknown, however, scholars have suggested attributions to Domenico Fetti and Ottavio Leoni.² Margaret Barkovic undertook technical analysis of the painting, and Margaret Sheehan carried out art historical research to place the materials and technique within the context of early seventeenth century Roman portraiture. These two lines of enquiry have informed each other, and the following report is the result of this collaboration.

The primary canvas is stiff and well adhered to the lining canvas. The tacking margins are brittle and vulnerable, with several losses along the turnover edges. There are areas of abraded paint, revealing a red-orange ground layer. The paint is raised and brittle in the pronounced network of cracking in the face and collar. The painting has multiple layers of discoloured, uneven, and degraded varnish; there are two layers across the figure and three layers across the background. The painting appears unsaturated due to both the aged varnish coating and light scattering caused by lead soap protrusions. There is a heavy layer of dust and grime on the front and reverse.

Background Information

The portrait is of a bearded man with a three-quarters pose set against a flat brown-green background. His shoulders and head are angled to the left of the painting and he gazes at the viewer. Much attention to detail has been given the face, while the costume, including the sitter's black cloak, is more sketchily painted. It is likely that the costume indicates the sitter's membership of the professional class, and possibly of one of the Italian academies. The use of the ground as a middle tone, particularly on the left side of his face, has created a strong tenebristic affect that seems to emphasise the pensive quality of the sitter's gaze. The characteristic face and gaze are in keeping with the realist movement at the beginning of the seventeenth century that sought to relax the rigid conventions of the late sixteenth century and provide insight into the personality and emotions of the sitter.³ At this time there

² Livio Manzoni, *Roma 1612: A proposito di un ritratto di autore ignoto della Courtauld Gallery*, PhD Thesis, Università degli Studi Roma Tre, 1999.

³ Richard Schlagman, *The Art Museum*, 2011, 267.

was a division between formal portraits for a public or political purpose and informal portraits of artists, their friends and family; it's possible that this portrait falls into the latter.

The Courtauld Gallery's curatorial file contains no information about the provenance or the work or identification of the sitter prior to its acquisition. Due to its inscription, "Romæ An. 1612" (fig. 7), the painting has been attributed to the Roman school of the early seventeenth century. Some art historical research has been conducted at the Courtauld, and it was also the topic of a doctoral thesis by Livio Mazoni at the Università degli Studi Roma Tre completed in 1999.⁴ Denis Mahon and Manzoni have suggested that it is the work of the draftsman Ottavio Leoni.⁵ However, Count Seilern believed the painting to be by Domenico Fetti based on a comparison to Fetti's *Portrait of a Man with a Silver Vessel* (Appendix I) in the Harrach collection in Vienna.⁶

Part of the purpose of this examination will be to examine the materials and techniques of the painting to determine whether or not it fits into its ascribed Roman provenance and to see where it fits into the context of early seventeenth century Roman workshop practices and artists. The question of attribution is challenging. A recent study of seventeenth century census records that demonstrates that there were roughly two hundred different painters per decade – omitting assistants and copyists. Among this number, only a small proportion belonged to the Accademia San Luca, excluding foreigners.⁷ During the early part of the seventeenth century in Rome, paintings produced during this period by both Italian painters and foreigners strived to emulate or incorporate both the style and technique derived from the Carracci and Caravaggio. Whilst portraiture became an important genre in the Low Countries, portraiture was relegated to a lower place in the hierarchy of Italian seventeenth century painting; the notable exception was that of the Carracci school.⁸ It will be of interest to examine their materials and methods more closely.

Material History

Labels/ Markings/ Inscriptions

The front bears the inscription "Romæ An.1612" in brown paint in the lower left (fig. 7). "An" rests above "Romæ 1612". The inscription appears abraded; the edges of the letters and numbers have been reinforced with dark brown overpaint (fig. 8). Due to the level of abrasion present, it is difficult to discern whether or not the inscription is original to the painting or is a later addition. There is no visible signature on the front or labels on the reverse.

⁴ Manzoni, *Roma 1612*.

⁵ Antoine Seilern, *Princes Gate Collection*, vol. 2 (London: Shenvall Press, 1955-71), 58; Manzoni, *Roma 1612*.

⁶ Antoine Seilern, *Princes Gate Collection*, 57.

⁷ Philip L. Sohm, "Introduction," in *Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of Seventeenth-Century Italian Painters*, edited by Richard Spear and Philip Sohm (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 7.

⁸ Clare Robertson, "Annibale Carracci and Invenzione: Medium and Function in the Early Drawings", *Master Drawings* 35 (1997): 3-42

Support

Auxiliary support

The frame was removed and stowed in the Courtauld Gallery store prior to examination. The painting is attached to a wooden stretcher composed of four members with a beveled edge and four keys. It is constructed with a closed bridle joint and mitered corners. Thin strips of wood have been nailed to the sides of the main members; this might indicate that the stretcher was recycled and needed to be extended. Evidence that supports this hypothesis includes the presence of adhesive on the members from labels that are no longer attached. The top and bottom members are 6.2cm wide and the left and right are 7.0cm wide. They are 1.0 cm thick. One key has been tightly wedged into each joint to expand the canvas; however, since the members are fixed by the extension, they are not functional. There are knots visible in each member with natural deformations in an otherwise straight grain. The stretcher has visible damage from the framing hardware and a split on the left member (1.2cm from the left, 16.6cm from the bottom) measuring 7.3cm.

Primary support

The primary support is a restively coarse plain-woven canvas that has been lined onto a similar plain weave canvas measuring 8 threads/cm in the vertical direction and 10 threads/cm in the horizontal. The canvas has been attached to the stretcher with nails, some of which are rusted and are no longer affixing the two canvases. It is not clear in which direction the weft and warp run on the primary canvas because there is no selvedge edge. The edges of the canvas, particularly along the left and right, are extremely friable and vulnerable to detachment; the jagged appearance relates to a history of loss. A small piece was detached from the bottom left edge during removal from the frame and will be kept for reattachment if possible. There is a small loss on the front left edge of the painting and a 4.0cm long tear on the lower right edge that has been covered in overpaint.

The thread count for the primary support cannot be determined because it has been lined with an adhesive containing elemental lead. A red lining coating has been applied unevenly on the reverse (fig. 2), forming an oval shape in the middle with thicker application of a grainy adhesive across the corners. The oval area fluoresces slightly orange in UV light (fig. 9). XRF on a scraping from the reverse of the lining canvas (Appendix II) showed strong peaks for lead and iron. In discussion with conservators at the Danish Center for the Conservation and Restoration of Art (Kunstkonserveringen), it was mentioned that this might be an Italian method of applying an isolating barrier against changes in the environment. This method involves the application of red ochre mixed with either wax or oil. Occasionally lead could be part of this mixture.⁹ The open

⁹ Leslie Carlyle, *The Artist's Assistant: Oil Painting Instruction Manuals and Handbooks in Britain, 1800-1900, with Reference to Selected Eighteenth-Century Sources*. (2001).

weave of both the original and lining canvas could allow for the red thick ground of the painting to be pressed through the lining canvas weave; it could be that we are seeing the red ground pressed through the weave during a lining process that used glue as an adhesive. The ground has both lead and iron in the composition, pointing to this alternative possibility.

Overall, the canvas is stiff due to the lining adhesive used; however, there is no visible delamination. The lining process has caused topping where the weave has been pressed against the paint layer, showing abrasion in the paint film. There are two scratches that intersect to the left of the sitter's head; these are visible in raking light (Figs. 3-4) and may relate to previous damage to the primary canvas. Cusping (figs.10, 11) is visible along all of the edges except the bottom; the dimensions of the composition appear to be original however, the tacking margins may have been cut down during a previous treatment.

Ground

The ground is visible in areas of abrasion across the canvas and appears red. There is a double red ground (cross-section 1, appendix II), which has been examined with microscopy and elemental analysis using SEM-EDX. The first layer is a dark orange-red and contains calcium carbonate, aluminosilicates, lead white, red and yellow iron oxide pigment and a small amount of charcoal black. The upper layer is beige in colour, composed of calcium sulphate, red, yellow, and green iron oxide pigments, aluminosilicates, charcoal black, and a much larger proportion of coarse particles of lead white. Indications that the ground was applied with a palette knife are illustrated by characteristic tool marks visible in the X-radiograph (figs. 10, 12). There are slubs of canvas visible in the x-ray, indicating a more uneven application of ground. The canvas slubs, coarsely pigmented ground, and presence of lead soaps have created a bumpy surface texture.

Paint Layer

Microchemical tests with Rhodamine-B and amido black (cross-section 2, appendix II) showed a positive stain test for oil. Overall, the paint surface is well adhered to the ground. There are some pinpoint losses relating to damage and abrasion. The abrasion is particularly noticeable in the background, the left part of the face, and black cloak where paint has been applied economically. There is a prominent crack line around the left eye, visible in raking light (figs. 3-4), which does not appear to be related to a preparatory incision. There are several scratches into the background (fig. 13) These scratches do not appear to relate to damage; they appear to have been made with a round tipped object such as the back of a brush and are covered by the background paint. They may relate to the application of the ground. The paint is slightly raised and brittle in the pronounced network of cracking in the face and collar.

Retouching is present in parts of the background, face, and along the right edge of the black cloak; it mostly relates to areas that have been abraded. The overpaint in the background reaches the turnover edge of the lining canvas. Some of it appears to be more recent and is visible in UV light (fig. 5). The entire cloak is abraded and has been repainted (cross-section 2, appendix II). It is not certain when this retouching took place, as SEM-

EDX did not assist in finding pigments that would have concluded a specific time frame. Cross-section analysis shows that areas of overpaint are isolated from the original layer of paint by a layer of varnish. There appears to be more layers of overpaint near the damage along the lower right edge visible through optical microscopy (cross-section 1, appendix II).

Surface Coating

The paint sampled from flesh and hair of the sitter revealed two layers of varnish separated by a layer of dirt (cross-sections 3-4, appendix II) while the background and cloak exhibited three layers separated by dirt and retouching. Each layer fluoresces green in UV light (fig.5), indicating that it is an aged natural resin varnish. The extra layer of varnish in the background and cloak could relate to previous selective cleaning; this seems plausible since these areas have the most abrasion and are particularly sensitive to cleaning. There is a distinct difference in fluorescence along the edges of the composition; it's possible that the second layer of varnish was applied whilst the painting was in its frame. The uppermost layer of varnish has yellowed and been abraded over time and is covered in a thick layer of grime contributing to an unsaturated and dirty surface.

Art Historical Context

Previous Scholarship

There has been little previous scholarly attention given to the portrait, one of the reasons that it was chosen for this collaboration. The Princes Gate Collection catalogue entry gives us Count Seilern's own thoughts about the painting, and a 1999 doctoral thesis by Livio Manzoni from the Università degli Studi Roma Tre is the only in depth consideration of the portrait to date, besides the present study.

Previous scholarship has focused on making an attribution for the painting. Seilern initially believed the painting to be by Domenico Fetti. He compares the portrait to Fetti's *Portrait of Vincenzo Avogadro* at Hampton Court Palace (Appendix I) and *Portrait of a Man with a Silver Vessel* in the Harrach Collection, Vienna.¹⁰ Seilern notes differences in execution, writing that the plasticity of the Courtauld portrait is more pronounced, but states that this could be due to the time and place in which it was painted rather than a different hand.¹¹ In his catalogue entry, however, he states that without further research to prove that attribution, it can only be speculation.¹²

Seilern includes the suggestion made to him by Denis Mahon that the portrait is by Ottavio Leoni. Leoni is known for his prolific output as a draughtsman. He made hundreds of portrait drawings of Roman society (Appendix I). The portraits have a mostly formulaic composition that is similar to that of the Courtauld portrait. However, Seilern discounts Leoni as a possibility in his Addenda, based on the few paintings that are known with certainty to be by the artist and their differences from the portrait under discussion here.¹³

Manzoni, on the other hand, argues that Leoni is in fact the author of the portrait. In addition to the tempting compositional similarities between the Courtauld portrait and Leoni's portrait drawings, the artist's biographical details make him a possible candidate for attribution. He is first recorded in the Roman Accademia San Luca in 1607, and was active as an artist from about 1600. Carmen Roxane Robbin's research on the artist has shown that at his death in 1630 there were over 150 painted portraits in his home.¹⁴ In 1612, Leoni had established a prominent career, having cemented what would become a long and successful relationship with the Borghese family.¹⁵ In 1612 Cardinal Scipione Borghese purchased four portraits by the artist.¹⁶ Leoni is best known to us today for his two engraved portrait series of illustrious ecclesiastical figures and artists, and the drawings he made (often in preparation for these series). From 1615 Leoni began to sequentially number his drawings, and to record the year, sitter, and his own name. Portraits without these details generally fall into his earlier period. Baglione states that Leoni painted as many portraits as he drew,¹⁷ which seems to be confirmed by Robbin's research. Based on these details the attribution of the Courtauld portrait to Leoni is attractive.

¹⁰ Seilern, *Princes Gate Catalogue*, 57.

¹¹ Seilern, *Princes Gate Catalogue*, 58.

¹² Seilern, *Princes Gate Catalogue*, 58.

¹³ Seilern, *Princes Gate Catalogue*, 58.

¹⁴ Carmen Roxane Robbin, "Leoni as a painter: new evidence from an inventory of his house," 2000, n.p.

¹⁵ Carmen Roxane Robbin, "Scipione Borghese's Acquisition of Paintings and Drawings by Ottavio Leoni," *The Burlington Magazine* 138 (1996): 454-5.

¹⁶ Robbin, "Scipione Borghese's Acquisition," 456.

¹⁷ Robbin, "Scipione Borghese's Acquisition," 453.

It is an understandable conclusion to draw from his portrait drawings, which all share a similar format with the Courtauld portrait. However, the evidence remains circumstantial. Leoni was not the only artist using this format. The Courtauld portrait appeared in a 1999 exhibition at the Courtauld Gallery titled *The Value of Art*. The catalogue entry states that this portrait is one of over a hundred painted between the 1610s and 1620s by a number of painters that use a similar style and format, influenced by the Carracci, Caravaggio, and Rubens.¹⁸

In her doctoral thesis, Robbin suggests the likelihood that Leoni categorised facial features into types, which he could then draw upon in creating his sketches.¹⁹ This would explain the somewhat generalised features of his sitters, and also account for Baglione's description of Leoni's portraits '*alla macchia*', 'so called because they are done after having seen the subject only once, and rapidly, in which field he was renowned'.²⁰ This method of working does not seem to have been the case with the Courtauld portrait. By contrast to the drawings, it shows individualised features that have been closely observed. There are fewer than twenty paintings attributed to Leoni, and only two of these are documented.²¹ A comparison with these two, of Cardinal Scipione Borghese (Appendix I) and Cardinal Ludovisi (Appendix I), shows a dissimilarity of style. The portraits of the Cardinals do not have the same modulation of light in the background to create contrast within the painting. There is skilful modelling and attentive detail in the silk and lace of the Cardinals' clothing, however their features are somewhat less finely observed. The skin of their faces is rendered very smooth, particularly in the case of Cardinal Borghese, and display the kind of generic features found in Leoni's drawings. These factors all accord with the working method described above. His portrait drawings, likely made from life, show highly finished features with hastily sketched in clothing. If made in preparation for a painted portrait, the artist would not have required the sitter's presence to finish the clothing. The drawings could be taken back to the studio, where the facial features could be translated to canvas, and the painstaking details of the clothing, such as the crushed silk and fine lace of Cardinal Borghese's vestments, could be completed without hurry. The portraits certainly seem to reflect this method of work.

By contrast, the features of the sitter in the Courtauld portrait are more detailed, with a greater degree of interest in the wrinkles, ridges, and contours of his face. Again in contrast to the cardinal portraits his clothing is only cursorily recorded. Though this area has been heavily overpainted, it does not appear that his black cloak was ever as finely and laboriously painted as the clothing of the other two portraits. As Robbin notes, due to Leoni's prolific output as a portrait draughtsman, his painted works are often confused with others.²² However, a comparison of the Courtauld portrait with his documented painted portraits would seem to exclude the painting from this group.

This attribution however, is the one pursued by Manzoni in his thesis. Manzoni's thesis demonstrates the difficulties in researching and writing about this portrait. Because there is so little information about the painting, his research gives a very broad historical perspective, and it is not always clear how this is related to the painting in question. The thesis has been useful to us in his analysis of general artistic trends and schools prominent in Rome in the early seventeenth century, and in giving us an idea of where we might focus our own research. Manzoni focused his research on attempting to make an attribution for the portrait, which, ultimately, is not wholly convincing. According to Richard Spear, in the early decades

¹⁸ *The Value of Art*, exh. cat., Courtauld Gallery, June-August 1999, n.p.

¹⁹ Carmen Roxane Robbin, *Ottavio Leoni and Early Baroque Portraiture*, PhD Thesis, University of California Santa Barbara (1990), 11.

²⁰ John Spike, "Ottavio Leoni's Portrait's *alla macchia*," *Baroque Portraiture in Italy*, exh. cat., John And Mable Ringling Museum of Art and Wadsworth Atheneum, 1985, 12.

²¹ Robbin, "Leoni as a painter," n.p.

²² Robbin, "Ottavio Leoni and Early Baroque Portraiture," vii.

of the seventeenth century there could be as many as two hundred working artists in Rome at any one time, including many modest artists who made a reasonable living but 'without the benefit of much fame'.²³ Further, Philip Sohm's writes that there could be up to twice as many working artists in a city as are recorded on the census, therefore for many there is little surviving record.²⁴ We have investigated the suggested artists in order to have points of comparison to our portrait, but not with a view to saying whether or not the portrait falls within their *oeuvre*.

The focus of this research touched on several themes, including artistic trends, the function of and market for portraiture, preparatory methods, and an investigation of the painting's provenance. Some of these areas of research overlap with the approach taken by Manzoni, however we hope to avoid the shortcomings of his study by ensuring that we investigate these themes with a view to their direct relevance to the portrait. We can also avoid some of the problems by focusing our research beyond attribution, choosing to invest our energy in avenues of investigation that we believed to be the most fruitful for a greater understanding of the painting.

Provenance

As stated above, the portrait forms part of the Princes Gate Collection. The collection is named for the home of Count Antoine Seilern at 56 Princes Gate, as he wished to dissociate his own name from his bequest. Seilern was born in Surrey in 1901, the third son of Austrian Count Carl Seilern und Aspang and his American born first wife Antoinette Woerishoffer.²⁵ He spent his childhood between England, Vienna, and New York, and later travelled widely in Europe, Africa, Mongolia, and Indochina, making a round the world trip in 1930-31.²⁶ In his thirties he took up the study of art in Belgium and Italy. From 1937 he was a student of Johannes Wilde, who at that time was working at the Kunsthistorisches Museum and would become deputy director of the Courtauld Institute after the war.²⁷ It was this connection that eventually led to Seilern's generous bequest to the Gallery.

Seilern moved to England in 1939 and brought his collection with him. The focus of his collecting was Rubens. The collection included 23 drawings and 32 paintings (including several studies) by the artist. He bought the first of his Rubens paintings in 1933, but the most intense period of his collecting of the artist was during the 1950s; he purchased eight Rubens paintings between 1948 and 1960.²⁸

Seilern purchased *Portrait of an Unknown Man* from Colnaghi art dealers on December 21st 1951 for £200.²⁹ Colnaghi was at the time under the direction of James Byam Shaw, a close friend of Seilern's though he usually eschewed the company of dealers. Given that the purchase took place during the Count's most intense period of Rubens collecting, we might speculate that Seilern chose the portrait because it appealed to his taste for that artist. There are certainly

²³ Richard Spear, "Rome: Setting the Stage," in *Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of Seventeenth-Century Italian Painters*, edited by Richard Spear and Philip Sohm (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 41, 43.

²⁴ Sohm, "Introduction," 7-8.

²⁵ Helen Braham, "Introduction," in *The Princes Gate Collection* (London: Trustees of the Home House Society for the Courtauld Institute of Art, 1981), ix.

²⁶ Braham, "Introduction," x.

²⁷ Braham, "Introduction," x.

²⁸ Braham, "Introduction," xiii.

²⁹ Email correspondence with Colnaghi dealers, February 2, 2015.

similarities to Rubens' technique in the portrait, most notably the skilful use of the red ground as a midtone, and the psychological characterisation of the sitter.

While at Princes Gate the painting clearly presented some problems to Seilern in terms of display. According to his biographer and former assistant Helen Braham, Seilern arranged his collection himself. The portrait was hung in the third floor bedroom, partly because it was too small to be appropriate for the picture gallery, but it was also hung alongside other works that didn't quite belong anywhere else. Also in this bedroom were two Fetti, which underscores Seilern's belief in the attribution of the painting, as well as several small paintings and sketches by Tiepolo, Jacobsz, and Paris Bordone.³⁰

While at Colnaghi, the portrait was exhibited in July 1948 in an exhibition of Old Master paintings. The catalogue entry reads:

'Formerly attributed to Bernardo Strozzi, but hardly by him. The picture has the look of a self-portrait, it is much in the style of portrait drawings by Ottavio Leoni. He is known to have painted portraits, but none are at present identifiable.'³¹

The attribution to Strozzi is interesting, but though the portrait bears some superficial similarities to that artist's work the suggestion is no more or less convincing than the others previously discussed.

Colnaghi purchased the painting from Christie's on June 6th 1947.³² How the painting arrived at Christie's is unknown. Until at least 1926 however it was in the collection of the Earls of Jersey at Osterley Park, just outside London. The house was advertised for lease in *Country Life* magazine in that year, and the painting can be seen hanging in the drawing room in the photographs accompanying the article (Appendix I). It can be seen in the same position in a photograph dated 1898 (Appendix I).

It is possible that Christie's purchased the painting directly from that collection. During the 1930s and 40s Osterley Park was in a period of transition. George Child Villiers, the 9th Earl of Jersey, had opened the House to the public in 1939. His grandmother, Margaret, Countess of Jersey, who had been responsible for a great deal of work to the house and for making it something of a social hub in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, passed away in 1945. Eventually Osterley Park was gifted to the National Trust in 1949 and placed in the care of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The archives of the Child Villiers family are now at the London Metropolitan Archives. Included in the archives are several inventories, only one of which includes a list of paintings at the house.³³ This inventory, made in 1925, presumably in preparation for letting the house, does not, however, include the Courtauld portrait. How to explain this omission? Possibly the painting had been hung elsewhere or moved during maintenance. Several paintings that appear in the 1926 photograph do not appear in the earlier photograph, so it is possible that the portrait had been moved and then rehung in the Drawing Room. It is not, however, recorded as being at Osterley at all in the inventory, and the inventory does appear

³⁰ Personal communication with Helen Braham, February 4, 2015.

³¹ Email correspondence with Colnaghi dealers, February 2, 2015.

³² *Catalogue of Old Pictures and Drawings from Various Sources which will be sold at Auction* (London: Christie, Mason & Wood, June 6 1947), 5.

³³ LMA/4446/02/03/005.

to include paintings that were in storage at the house. Possibly it was moved to another of the family's properties. An inventory of Middleton Park, Bicester, also 1925, lists several paintings that had come from Osterley, Upton, and Vernon Houses.³⁴ The Courtauld portrait is not among them, but the inventory does show a considerable amount of movement of artworks between the Jersey properties at this time.

In the nineteenth century the Drawing Room was hung with family portraits centred on Sarah Sophia, Countess of Jersey.³⁵ However between Sarah Sophia's death in 1867 and the photograph of 1898 there was a great deal of work done to the House, specifically in 1871 before it was let to Grace Caroline, Dowager Duchess of Cleveland. The Dowager Duchess herself is recorded as having done "much to beautify and keep it up".³⁶ It would seem unlikely that with all this work and possible rearrangement of the collection that the Courtauld portrait would have been among Sarah Sophia's family portraits, though we need not completely discount it as a possibility.

Prior to its presence at Osterley Park in 1898, the painting cannot be traced. The work and movement at Osterley, as well as the painting having changed hands a number of times during the twentieth century, could account for the previous conservation treatments performed on the portrait and for the retouching. One treatment in particular has been identified as being practiced in Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so it seems likely that the painting spent much of its early life in Italy (see page 16).

Inscription

At the lower left on the front, the painting bears the inscription "Romæ 1612" in brown paint (Appendix I). The inscription appears abraded; the edges of the letters and numbers have been reinforced with dark brown overpaint (Appendix I). There is no visible signature on the front or labels on the reverse.

Inscriptions on paintings indicate information of significance to the sitter or artist. Most frequently inscriptions on portraits from the early seventeenth century would give information such as the name and age of the sitter, the name of the artist, the year of production, or the nationality of the sitter. The inscription on the Courtauld portrait gives a year and a place. This seems to be a rare combination of information for Italian portraits at this time; we have yet to come across another that gives the same. It is likely that the inscription indicates simply the place and date of production. It is informative, however, to look at inscriptions on other portraits to understand why the sitter or commissioner chose to record this information specifically.

Ottavio Leoni's portrait engravings provide a wealth of inscriptions for comparison. In his series of engravings of famous men Leoni most often recorded the name and occupation of the sitter, the year of execution, and his own name. In the context of this series, the name and occupation are important for differentiating between the men depicted, while the artist's name and the year authenticate the published engravings. On his chalk drawings, particularly his earlier works as noted above, there is rarely the same amount of information provided. In his well-known portrait of Caravaggio, Leoni does not record any information (Appendix I). Meanwhile his drawing of Guido Reni records the sitter's name, nationality, and the year in the lower left corner of the page. The drawing was made in 1614, during Reni's time in Rome. His national

³⁴ LMA/4446/02/03/003.

³⁵ Eileen Harris, *Osterley Park, Middlesex* (London: National Trust, 1994), 60.

³⁶ Harris, *Osterley Park*, 32.

identity – ‘bolognese’ – was considered noteworthy as a point of difference. It would perhaps be unnecessary to record such information for a Roman sitter in Rome, and indeed Leoni does not appear to have done so for natives of that city.

The same information is found in the series of portrait paintings made for the Accademia San Luca in the seventeenth century, most likely shortly after 1665 (Appendix I).³⁷ For several artist academicians foreign to Rome, their nationality is recorded. Among these are “Carlo Saraceni Venetiano,” “Francesco Fiamingo” (François du Quesnoy), “Giacomo Stella Bresciano,” and “Nicolo Pussino Normano” (Nicholas Poussin). Meanwhile for central and southern Italian artists no indication is given of their nationality. A record of the sitter’s nationality, then, is usually made to identify a point of difference.

The place inscription on the Courtauld portrait, however, does not indicate the sitter’s nationality. The inscription ‘Romae’ should be understood as more than a simple indication of the place of production. The Latin formulation ‘Romae’ should be read as ‘at Rome’ or ‘in Rome’. If an inscription giving a sitter’s nationality can be taken to describe a point of difference of that sitter among others, perhaps this inscription indicates a point worth remarking on for this sitter. Namely, that being ‘at Rome’ is out of the ordinary for this sitter, perhaps because he is a visitor to the city. That the portrait may be of a visitor to Rome has been suggested in the 1999 *The Value of Art* catalogue mentioned earlier.³⁸

Similarly, we should question the significance of ‘1612’ before we take it at face value as the year of production. In the Accademia portrait series the years on each portrait indicate the death date of the depicted academician. These portraits, however, seem to be almost exclusively copies after painted or drawn portraits already in existence. The Courtauld portrait does not appear to be a copy, for reasons outlined later in this report.

Combined with the place name, it does seem most likely that the year is intended to commemorate a notable moment for the sitter – the year of a visit to Rome perhaps. A self-portrait by Annibale Carracci made when the artist was at Parma, records the date of production (Appendix I). As noted by Gian Carlo Cavalli, the portrait was likely given as a gift to commemorate a journey, in other words a specific moment.³⁹ Further, the hand of the inscription is entirely consistent with early sixteenth century script. It is comparable, for instance, to the script used by Ottavio Leoni in his engravings (although, with respect to the Leoni attribution it is worth noting that it does not appear to be the same hand).

Based on the inscription and comparisons with others, it seems plausible that the portrait was made to record a visit by the sitter to Rome in 1612. Of course, plausible though it may be, this assertion can only be taken as speculation.

Roman Schools and Artistic Trends

As noted by several scholars, perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of Roman artistic culture in the seventeenth century was a willingness of artists to draw stylistic inspiration from many others to create their own style.⁴⁰ For instance, Michael Jaffé has shown how Rubens studied the Carracci and Tintoretto, making drawings from their works that he could

³⁷ The latest portrait in the group has a death date for Nicholas Poussin as 1665.

³⁸ *The Value of Art*, n.p.

³⁹ Quoted in Morgan Feely, *Annibale Carracci and Self-Portraiture*, MA dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art (2002), 16.

⁴⁰ Voss and Manzoni both give this impression in their broad ranging narratives of the period. Manzoni, *Roma 1612*; Hermann Voss, *Baroque Painting in Rome I: Caravaggio, Carracci, Domenichino and their followers 1585-1640* (San Francisco: Alan Wolfsy Fine Arts, 1997).

then adapt for his own.⁴¹ It seems Annibale was particularly adept at this kind of practice. As Robertson writes, it involved 'a complexity, more than mere eclecticism'.⁴² According to Agucchi in his *Treatise on Painting* (1615), Annibale first looked to Titian and Correggio, whose works were 'easily seen in Bologna', and then purposefully went to Venice and Lombardy 'to see other paintings in great quantity'. Later, in Rome, he was most impressed by Raphael and Michelangelo, and, with his brother Agostino, 'judged that to achieve a manner of sovereign perfection they had to combine the *disegno* of Rome with the beauty of the *colore* of Lombardy'.⁴³ Malvasia also reproduced letters from Annibale to his uncle back in Bologna where he describes the merits of each artist whose work he sees, and compares them to one another.⁴⁴ This is indicative of the kind of deliberate practice that Robertson mentions. The painter of the Courtauld portrait seems also to have practiced this collecting of various artist's styles and techniques. We will develop this assertion in relation to a fuller investigation of the artistic trends present in Rome in the early seventeenth century.

Bellori posed Caravaggio and Il Cavaliere d'Arpino as the two extremes of realism and imagination.⁴⁵ Agucchi also identified the perceived tension between these two extremes. Agucchi was on the side of the idealists, believing that the painter's role should be to improve on nature. He wrote,

'We do not wish to deny the proper praise to painters who paint excellent portraits. True, the most perfect practice calls not for seeking to depict what the face of Alexander or Caesar might have been but rather for seeking to depict what a king and a magnanimous and strong captain should be. Nonetheless, the most valiant painters, without straying from likeness, have aided nature by art and represented faces more beautifully and more comely than the truth, showing that even in this sort of work they can determine how nature would have added more beauty to their subject in order to perfect it.'⁴⁶

Meanwhile, Agucchi felt that Caravaggio's commitment to realism was his downfall,

'...Caravaggio, who was so excellent in coloring and who can be compared to Demetrius because he left behind the idea of beauty in order to follow similitude entirely.'⁴⁷

Bellori felt that harmony between the two extremes was found by Annibale Carracci. He combined the two to return to 'the glory of the High Renaissance by his combination of ideal beauty and naturalism'.⁴⁸ It's possible that this method of creativity found favour particularly in Rome because the Accademia San Luca, unlike contemporary artists' academies in

⁴¹ Michael Jaffe, "The Interest of Ruben in Annibale and Agostino Carracci: Further Notes," *The Burlington Magazine* 99 (1957), 376, 416.

⁴² Robertson, "Annibale Carracci and Invenzione," 4.

⁴³ Brendan Dooley, "Agucchi Treatise on Painting (1615)," in *Italy in the Baroque: Selected Readings* (New York: Garland, 1995), 431-433.

⁴⁴ Anne Summerscale, *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci: translation and commentary* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2000), 95-100.

⁴⁵ Diane De Grazia, "Drawings as a Means to an End: Preparatory Methods in the Carracci School," in *The Craft of Art: Originality and Industry in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque Workshop* (Atlanta: Georgia Museum of Art, 1995), 165.

⁴⁶ Dooley, "Agucchi Treatise on Painting (1615)," 429.

⁴⁷ Dooley, "Agucchi Treatise on Painting (1615)," 435.

⁴⁸ De Grazia, "Drawings as a Means to an End," 165.

other cities, had an apathy to art theory generally, or at least did not promote any one school of thought in relation to artistic style.

The Courtauld portrait, in the vein of this eclecticism, reflects several trends present in early seventeenth century Rome. The modulating tones of the background and the bright directional light in the painting create strong points of contrast. This technique was developed by Caravaggio in the later sixteenth century and carried on by his followers after his death. The painting also has a double red ground, which the artist has used as a midtone in several passages, mostly on the right hand side of the sitter's face. This was also a technique that Caravaggio employed,⁴⁹ and which was picked up and skilfully used later by Rubens and others. Caravaggio also used *abozzi*, which are thick raised brushstrokes concealed beneath the surface of the painting which help to map out key points of the composition.⁵⁰ Several *abozzi* can be seen in the Courtauld portrait. One marks a defined wrinkle on the sitter's forehead, and others can be seen marking out strands of hair above the sitter's left ear.

From the Carracci, the portraitist has borrowed a psychological intensity in the depiction of the sitter. The Carracci, particularly Annibale, were interested in *affetti*. As defined by Alberti, *affetti* are 'the movements of the soul...made known by the movements of the body'.⁵¹ There was a developed interest at the time in physiognomy, or assessing a person's character based on their outer features. A melancholy character was of particular interest. As Feely has written,

'Melancholics were seen as eccentric, contemplative, antisocial, scholarly, reticent, but also above all capable of scaling the highest peaks of intellectual achievement, just as they were also prone to insanity.'⁵²

As Alberti writes, 'In the melancholy the forehead is wrinkled, the head dropping, all members fall as if tired and neglected'.⁵³ Pamela Askew has also written about this trend. She has investigated it in relation to Domenico Fetti's *Portrait of an Actor* (Appendix I), of which she writes that his 'loosely furrowed forehead and nervous intensity of glance communicates an inner sadness'.⁵⁴ In the depiction of the unknown sitter in the Courtauld portrait this investigation of psychology through facial features is evident. Like the melancholics described above, the forehead is wrinkled, the shoulders slope, the eyes, recessed in shadow, stare intently at the viewer.

The Significance of Dress

The sitter's dress in *Portrait of an Unknown Man* is standard of an academician or professional artist in the early seventeenth century. The square white collar and black cloak was, according to Christopher Marshall, an austere Spanish

⁴⁹ Marco Ciatti and Carlo Valli, "Beheading of St John the Baptist," in *Caravaggio's Painting Technique: Proceedings of the CHARISMA workshop*, edited by Marco Ciatti and Brunetto Giovanni Brunetti (Florence: Nardini Editore, 2012), 13; Claudio Falucci, "Practices and Processes," in *Caravaggio's Painting Technique: Proceedings of the CHARISMA workshop*, edited by Marco Ciatti and Brunetto Giovanni Brunetti (Florence: Nardini Editore, 2012), 36.

⁵⁰ Larry Keith, "Caravaggio's Painting Technique: a brief survey based on paintings in the National Gallery," in *Caravaggio's Painting Technique: Proceedings of the CHARISMA workshop*, edited by Marco Ciatti and Brunetto Giovanni Brunetti (Florence: Nardini Editore, 2012), 27.

⁵¹ Feely, *Annibale Carracci and Self-Portraiture*, 19.

⁵² Feely, *Annibale Carracci and Self-Portraiture*, 25.

⁵³ Feely, *Annibale Carracci and Self-Portraiture*, 19.

⁵⁴ Pamela Askew, "Fetti's Portrait of an Actor Reconsidered," *The Burlington Magazine* 120 (1978): 65.

type that found favour in Italy at this time among the professional classes.⁵⁵ This was a moment of the professionalisation of painting. Artists of the Italian academies at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century wanted respectability and the recognition of the essential dignity of their craft, even as they pursued intellectual artistic ideals.⁵⁶ This desire was reflected in their chosen dress. This was not only a professional ideal but an economic one. Sohm writes, 'Public performance – including clothes, residence, studio, personal hygiene, and social manners – could affect the price of a painting as much as the material, visual, or reputational qualities.'⁵⁷ Given the saturation of the Roman art market, marketing oneself was important for an artist.⁵⁸ Spear writes that sartorial display could improve the chances of obtaining commissions from elite patrons.⁵⁹

By contrast Annibale Carracci was more interested in establishing the basic dignity of the craft, than in claiming it's respectability based on intellectual ideals.⁶⁰ This is reflected in his self-portrait with his father and his nephew Antonio (Appendix I). Annibale paints himself in the studio, surrounded by other figures who are engaged in activity, and he wears the soft, loose collar of an artisan.⁶¹ From Parma in 1587, Annibale wrote a letter to his uncle Ludovico in Bologna in which he mentions his patron, the 'big corporal,' and notes, 'He also wants to give me a black city outfit that he will deduct from the value of some painting I make.'⁶² Even if Annibale didn't realise it, certainly his patron recognised the importance of the young newly independent artist looking the part in the city. Clothes could make a statement for artists, and more than that, affect their professional success. The sitter in the Courtauld portrait, likely an artist or other professional academician from his dress, wanted to show himself to be a member of this intellectual class. This self-presentation is strengthened by the artist's depiction of the sitter as a melancholic, who were thought, as mentioned earlier, to be capable of 'scaling the highest peaks of intellectual achievement.'⁶³

Market and Function for Portraiture

In the intellectual hierarchy of painting genres current in the seventeenth century, portraiture was at the bottom, along with landscape.⁶⁴ However, Richard Spear has shown by looking at several aristocratic collections that portraits were second only to history paintings in terms of numbers.⁶⁵ Portraiture was a popular genre, and understanding the place and function of portraits in the economy can provide some insight into *Portrait of an Unknown Man* as an economic and social object.

⁵⁵ David Marshall, "A Bernini self-portrait?" *Art Journal* 41 (2002), n.p.

⁵⁶ Georgina French, *The Role of Portraiture Caricature in the Carracci Academy*, MA dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art (2005), 10.

⁵⁷ Sohm, "Introduction," 13.

⁵⁸ Spear, "Rome: Setting the Stage," 77.

⁵⁹ Spear, "Rome: Setting the Stage," 73.

⁶⁰ French, *The Role of Portrait Caricature*, 4.

⁶¹ French, *The Role of Portrait Caricature*, 20; Feely, *Annibale Carracci and Self-Portraiture*, 6.

⁶² Summerscale, *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci*, 96-97.

⁶³ Feely, *Annibale Carracci and Self-Portraiture*, 25.

⁶⁴ Sohm, "Introduction," 2.

⁶⁵ Spear, "Rome: Setting the Stage," 91.

Portraits were available for a variety of budgets. Portraits and landscapes were the categories of paintings that could show the greatest variation in price.⁶⁶ At one end of the scale portraits could be sold cheaply, along with landscapes, still-lives, and devotional images, in the marketplace either by merchants or artists themselves.⁶⁷ At the other end of the scale were commissions from wealthy patrons where the price could also reflect the reputation of the artist as well as the labour and materials that went into making the painting.⁶⁸ The Accademia tried to limit painters selling their work in shops, as it was considered beneath the dignity of a professional artist. However painters who were members of the Accademia found ways to sell their paintings outside the commissioning process. Robbin has discussed how Ottavio Leoni, who was president of the Accademia San Luca several times in his life, may have sold finished works directly to buyers. As mentioned earlier, he had roughly 150 paintings and hundreds of drawings in the public or formal rooms of his house when he died.⁶⁹ Robbin suggests that Leoni would have received patrons and buyers in his home, where he could either sell them finished works, or show them examples of his work to secure new commissions.⁷⁰

Portraits could also function as part of the barter economy. Spear has shown that there is evidence that paintings were paid for in-kind with goods and services, and that paintings could be bartered for the same.⁷¹ Annibale Carracci, was known to give small portraits to people who performed services for him.⁷² According to Bellori, Annibale was friendly with masons and other craftsmen,⁷³ for whom a self-portrait would be an appropriate payment and token of friendship.

Portraits could also be given as gifts between friends. Gian Carlo Cavalli wrote of Annibale's Parma self-portrait, which is inscribed with the date in the top left corner, that it might have been made to record a special occasion, or made as a gift to a '*persona cara*'.⁷⁴ Feely suggests that, compared to other of Annibale's self-portraits in which the viewer feels they have intruded on the artist's self-examination, the Parma portrait downplays this aspect, making it more accessible for a viewer who is 'not the painter himself, but another who views him with a certain tenderness'.⁷⁵ This ability to act as a token of friendship is, as Feely writes, 'one of the fundamental functions of portraiture'.⁷⁶

Though different in scale and composition, the Courtauld portrait holds similar qualities to Annibale's Parma portrait. The position of the sitter is consistent with that of a painter observing himself in a mirror. Combined with the psychological interest in the painting, discussed above, there is the possibility that this is a self-portrait in which the artist has undertaken some self-examination, while leaving the painting accessible to a viewer-friend. However, the absence of telling self-portraiture details such as the presence of an easel or raised hand, might also be due to the desire to keep the cost of a painting down for the commissioner. Such details could affect the price of the painting. For instance, artists charged more for one or two hands, or for additional details such as books or other items, and for half or full-length

⁶⁶ Sohm, "Introduction," 23.

⁶⁷ Sohm, "Introduction," 2; Spear, 34.

⁶⁸ Sohm, "Introduction," 2.

⁶⁹ Robbin, "Leoni as a painter," n.p.

⁷⁰ Robbin, "Leoni as a painter," n.p.

⁷¹ Spear, "Rome: Setting the Stage," 34.

⁷² Robertson, "Annibale Carracci and Invenzione," 23.

⁷³ French, *The Role of Portrait Caricature*, 19.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Feely, *Annibale Carracci and Self-Portraiture*, 16.

⁷⁵ Feely, *Annibale Carracci and Self-Portraiture*, 17-18.

⁷⁶ Feely, *Annibale Carracci and Self-Portraiture*, 18.

portraits.⁷⁷ The composition of this portrait, a simple head and shoulders, would be the cheapest option, especially with the lack of attention given to the sitter's dress. Additionally, the materials of the painting are all inexpensive. As described above, the pigments include some of the cheapest available: brown, red, and green earth pigments, and lead white.

In conclusion, it seems clear that the portrait would have been inexpensive to make. This would have made it appropriate to give as a gift in friendship, perhaps as a self-portrait or made by one artist for another (see the discussion on academic dress above) to commemorate a visit to Rome. Another possibility is that it was commissioned and paid for by a visitor to the city in memory of the journey or another significant event. It seems likely that the unusual inscription, *Romae 1612*, indicates such an event and a desire to mark it in some way.

⁷⁷ Sohm, "Introduction," 24.

Materials and Techniques

The Order of Painting and Style

A reserve was left for the figure while the background was painted first. The background appears to have been applied with a wide thick brush, as the brush marks are visible and show a quick and gestural application without a consistent direction. It is possible that a preparatory drawing was made before painting the background. There is little evidence of underdrawing in the portrait, however a small amount of carbon based preparatory drawing was detected with infrared reflectography. This drawing relates to the placement of the eyes and a few details of the sitter's hair (fig. 10, plate 5). There is evidence that a dark brown wash was possibly used to sketch in the contours of the figure. A dark brown line dividing the neck from the collar is visible in normal light (fig. 11). This could have been the main method used by the artist to map out the details of the sitter, but is not detected by infrared. Caravaggio and several other artists from this period were known to have used preparatory methods that are undetectable in infrared such as the use of a dark brown wash, *abozzi* (raised brush strokes), and incisions into the ground to mark out parts of his composition, enabling him to reposition models for multiple sittings.⁷⁸

There is no certainty as to whether the painting was made from life or preparatory drawings. It is possible that the artist additionally referred to a preparatory sketch while he painted. The Carracci were known to have used this method, keeping drawings and engravings in the studio as a repertoire of poses to rework for paintings.⁷⁹ However such a method would not account for the keenly observed effects of light on the sitter's face, the immediacy of the depiction, or the sketchy rendering of the black cloak. It is worth noting here that such a rendering does not indicate a poor quality picture. As Keith notes, loose handling can often be an indication of other considerations, such as 'pragmatic expediency,' rather than of the skill of the artist.⁸⁰ If the portrait was made from life it is not unlikely that the dress was quickly indicated once the sitter's features had been painted.

The less defining features of the face and neck were blocked in after the background, and the dress was painted. The overlap of the details of the beard over the collar indicates that the final facial details were painted last.

There is a distinct difference in handling between the sitter's face, dress, and background. The face is extremely well painted with careful attention paid to the sitter's facial features, providing individualised and psychological introspection—the emphatic tenebrism and heavy use of the ground as a middle tone for a stark contrast was popular by both northern and Italian artists in the seventeenth century—not unlike you see with Annibale Carracci's *Head of an Old Man* and Domenico Fetti's *An Actor* (Appendix I).

⁷⁸ Marco Ciatti, Brunetto Giovanni Brunetti, and Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. *Caravaggio's painting technique: proceedings of the CHARISMA workshop*, 2012.

⁷⁹ Robertson, 21.

⁸⁰ Keith, 29.

As a whole, the portrait is thinly painted with evidence of wet-into-wet application. Small thicker applications of paint have been used to execute the white highlights in the wrinkles of the face, ear, and nose (fig.11). A very small brush and scraffito technique were employed to create details of texture in the beard (fig. 12). I wanted to compare these techniques to both Italian and Northern artists working in or influence by Rome, such as Domenico Fetti, Domenichino, the Carracci, Rubens, and Anthony van Dyck. Six portraits selected amongst these artists were chosen (Appendix I) for style comparison. As a whole, these portraits are all very different, however I looked smaller details to see if an individual style could be established within a period style. I focused on aspects such as the ears in each of these portraits to compare the way a small discrete detail was handled (appendix I). With the exception of the *Portrait of Monsignor Agucchi* by Domenichino, they all share similar gestural construction with a build of shadows and highlights to create a three dimensional form. However, the brushstrokes in the Fetti and the Courtauld painting are much more discrete and blended. It is interesting to see how the rendering has changed between the two portraits by van Dyck, illustrating how it may be difficult to establish an individual style. The shape and placement of the dark red shadows and highlights between the Fetti and the Courtauld portrait are very close–this might relate to a standardised Italian workshop practice of constructing anatomy.

The handling of the face stands in stark contrast to the flat and loosely painted background and dress; while it consists of gestural paint strokes, they are much finer and more deliberate than the thick and loose strokes in the rest of the composition. Though the clothing of the sitter is in poor condition and has suffered extensive abrasion (fig. 13) and overpaint (fig. 14), it seems unlikely that it was ever any more that cursorily painted in and appears to have been painted with broader strokes. The dress has no more detail than a shadow on the collar and a button, appearing generic, emphasising the need to research seventeenth century dress and how it has been portrayed during this period.

Palette and Layer Structure

The priming consists of a double red oil ground upon a proteinous size layer. This was detected by staining cross-sections with Amido Black and Rhodamine B (cross-section*-appendix II). The ground was examined using optical microscopy and SEM-EDX. The presence of calcium, iron, silicon, lead, and aluminum in both layers indicated a composition of chalk, alumino and magnesium silicates, lead white, and a small amount of carbon black. A larger proportion of coarsely ground lead white was found in the top layer of the ground along with some random green earth, siliceous blue pigments, and yellow ochre particles, possibly suggesting that palette scrapings were used. The first layer of the ground is a deep orange red in comparison to the much lighter beige second layer.

The upper layer seems paler than what has been found in other paintings from the period; however it is similar to the upper ground layer to Annibale Carracci's *The Montalto Madonna* (Appendix I).⁸¹ The coarsely ground lead white would present a less absorbent ground, but it would scatter more light, obscuring detail and

⁸¹ This suggestion was made by communication with Helen Howard, National Gallery, London.

flattening composition. This is apparent particularly in passages of thinly applied paint. The second layer of flesh coloured ground appears to be thicker in face and ear compared to other areas of the composition, which are still being investigated; treatises record that flesh coloured ground or imprimatura layers would be applied evenly or in a streaky manner in terms of composition; for example, it could be applied more thickly in areas that represented flesh for a more economic application of paint.

Together, these findings were expected as all Italian seventeenth century paintings, regardless of school, typically have red/brown grounds comprising of silica-rich earth pigments often combines with lead white, a little chalk, and carbon black. Records such as Padre Francesco Lana's transcriptions of seventeenth painting conventions and Richard Symonds Italian Notebooks 1649-1651 have provided details on the painters' workrooms in seventeenth century Italy such as equipment, oil painting techniques, drawing, and ground preparation. Symonds lived in Rome and while writing twenty years after our painting was supposedly made, provides useful information regarding preparatory methods used by artists practicing within the Roman School. He discusses the type of canvas and ground compositions used by the Carracci and their followers. Symonds writes that the Carracci used 'terra rossa, biacca da corpo, creta, e un tantino negro carbone'⁸² or in their ground preparation. This translates to red earth, lead white, carbon black, and clay or what has been considered sicilicious earths. Padre Lana's notes mention the use of red ochre with charcoal black and lead white to make a warm coloured ground. The colour of the ground could be exploited as a middle tone, emphasising chiaroscuro through an economic application of paint. We would anticipate the presence of these materials in our own painting along with the possible presence of Calcium sulphate or gypsum, which is unique to Italian grounds.

Elemental mapping (Appendix II) was useful in discerning whether the ground was made with chalk or calcium sulphate. While the presence of calcium sulphate would have reaffirmed the portrait's place in Italy, the presence of chalk in the ground neither confirms nor refutes the geographical provenance of the painting. Helen Howard carried out a study on Italian grounds from 1600-1800, where almost every sample showed the presence of chalk in varying but significant proportions.⁸³ SEM-EDX analysis was sent to the National Gallery in London; Helen Howard identified the presence of chalk and stated that they have used x-ray diffraction (XRD) to identify calcium carbonate in all of their ground samples from a number of Italian seventeenth century paintings. Other recent studies on various red grounds from both Western and Eastern Europe have associated Italian grounds with potassium and magnesium rich earths with silicates, chlorites, and calcium carbonate, and dolomite.⁸⁴ The dolomite relates to redeposited weathering products and carbonates; SEM-EDX peaks for calcium and magnesium may be associated with this.

⁸² Mary Beal, *A Study of Richard Symonds: His Italian Notebooks and Their Relevance to Seventeenth Century-Painting Techniques*.

⁸³ Communicated by Helen Howard, National Gallery, London

⁸⁴ David Hradil and Janka Hradilová, *Acta Artis Academica 2010: Příběh Umění : Proměny Výtvarného Díla V Čase: Sborník 3. Mezioborové Konference Alma the Story of Art: Artwork Changes in Time: Proceedings of the 3rd Interdisciplinary Conference of Alma*.

Like the ground, the palette for the composition consists of coarsely ground cheap materials consisting of charcoal black, carbon black, lead white, umber, iron oxides, and aluminosilicates. According to Spear's research into the prices of pigments in Rome between 1614 and 1617, brown, yellow and red earth pigments were the least expensive, behind only white lead.⁸⁵ These were analysed using SEM-EDX analysis, elemental mapping, and optical microscopy (appendix II). Optical microscopy shows an economic application of one layer of paint over the ground in most areas. The background consists of green earth, umber, lead white, and carbon black. The cloak is composed of carbon black and various iron oxide earth pigments while the collar has been painted with lead white and charcoal black. The use of charcoal blue, which Symonds and other treatises refer to as "blue black",⁸⁶ has cast a bluish hue to the shadows on the collar. The face incorporates the ground in the modeling of the flesh. Samples from the ear and left of the eye show that flesh shadows were created by applying a mixture of raw umber, aluminosilicates, charcoal black, and iron oxides (red and yellow ochre) directly onto the second ground layer. These pigments were mentioned in Symonds notebook on how to paint shadows for the flesh, emphasising that this exhibits standard workshop practices. The same pigments are present in the hair, however these paint strokes consist of a higher proportion of lead white and charcoal black. Highlights have been created by applying layers of red iron oxides aluminosilicates with varying amounts of lead white.

The pigments that make up the ground composition are drawn from raw materials; Chalk and ochres are drawn from natural resources and occur very broadly in nature; their use in paintings is extensive. Several recent studies that have attempted to use the ratio of trace elements found in these raw materials to identify the geographic location of their resource;⁸⁷ the analysis utilised in these studies is out of the scope of our project and materials were traded across Europe, precluding affirmative geographic attribution.

It may be possible to visually compare the stratigraphy of the ground to other paintings from this period. The National Gallery's comparisons of grounds by Van Dyck⁸⁸ compared to that of Poussin⁸⁹ (Appendix III) and other Roman artists show a similarity in chemical composition, rather than visual composition. Comparisons of visual compositions would point to differences in workshop practices and may be useful if compared where as there are no similarities between Italian grounds and those produced in London or Brussels. The Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna and the Capotolini Roma are assisting in this attempt; they will provide cross-sections from similar paintings within their collection so that comparisons can be made.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Spear, 66.

⁸⁶ Beal, *A Study of Richard Symonds*.

⁸⁷ Hradil and Hradilová. *Acta Artis Academica* 2010.

⁸⁸ Ashok Roy, "The National Gallery Van Dycks: Technique and Development," *The National Gallery technical bulletin*. Vol. 20. (1999).

⁸⁹ Adele Wright, "A technical study of Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well, a copy after Nicolas Poussin," *Hamilton Kerr Institute Bulletin*, No. 5, 2014.

⁹⁰ Currently not available in this report; this is an ongoing correspondence and it was communicated by both sources that their materials and resources may be delayed.

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Appendix I: Comparative Images



Domenico Fetti, *Portrait of Vincenzo Avogadro*

c. 1620

Oil on Canvas, 115.4cm x 90.3cm

Hampton Court, Richmond



Ottavio Leoni, *Cristoforo Roncalli*

c. 1623

Engraving, 14.5cm x 11.4cm

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Ottavio Leoni, *Cardinal Scipione Borghese*
17th century
Oil on Canvas, 110cm x 84cm
Palais Fesch Musée des Beaux-Art, Ajaccio



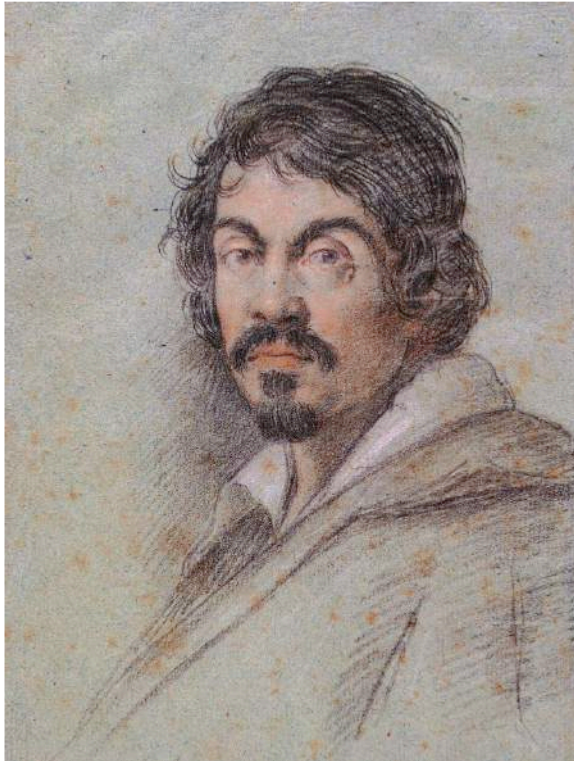
Ottavio Leoni, *Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi*
1621
Oil on Canvas, 200cm x 112cm
Palazzo Braschi, Rome



Drawing Room at Osterley Park, 1926
Country Life Magazine



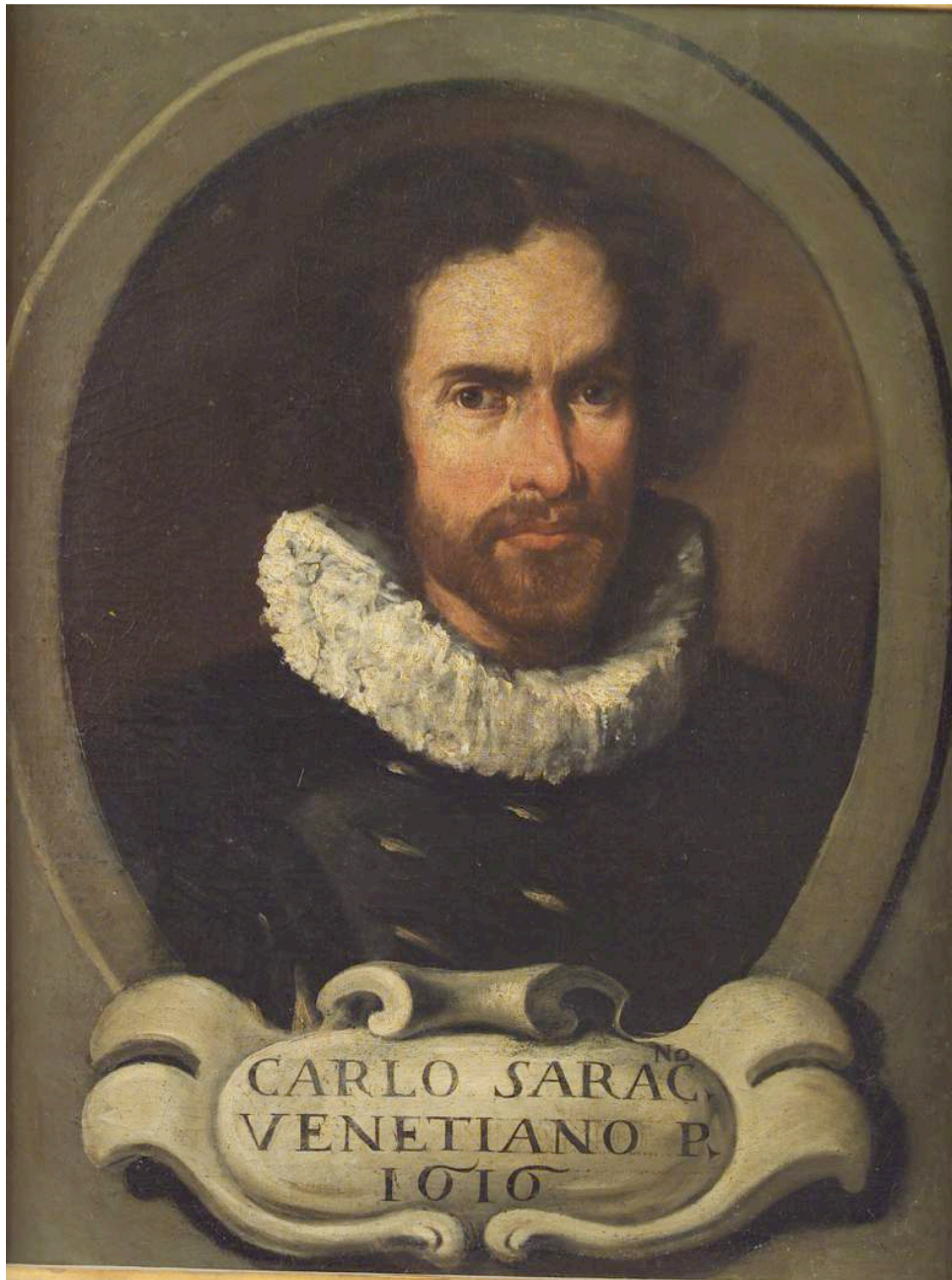
Drawing Room at Osterley Park, 1898



Ottavio Leoni, *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio*
c. 1621
Coloured chalk on canvas
Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence



Ottavio Leoni, *Guido Reni*
1614
Chalk on paper, 24.4cm x 17cm
Private Collection



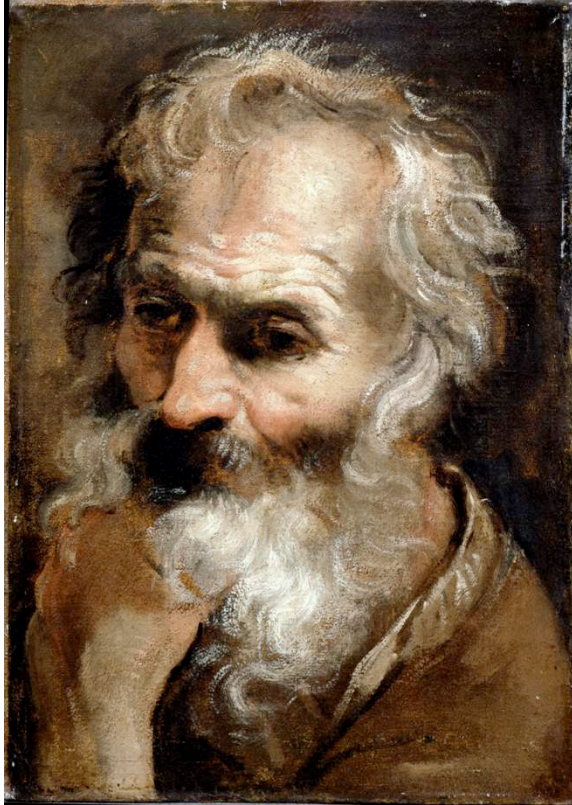
Unknown artist, *Carlo Saraceni*
Before 1665
Oil on Canvas, 105.5cm x 81cm
Hermitage Museum, Russia



Annibale Carracci, *Self-portrait*
1593
Oil on Canvas, 24cm x 20cm
Galleria Nazionale, Parma



Annibale Carracci, *Self-portrait with other figures*
1585
Oil on Canvas, 60cm x 48cm
Pinacoteca di Brera



Annibale Carracci, *Study of an Old Man*
c. 1590-92
Oil on Canvas, 39.4cm x 27.9cm
Dulwich Picture Gallery



Domenico Fetti, *An Actor*
c. 1621-22
Oil on canvas, 105.5 x 81cm
Hermitage Museum, Russia



Domenichino, *Portrait of Monsignor Agucci*
c. 1603-04
Oil on canvas, 60.3cm x 46.3cm
National Gallery, London



Study of an Old Man

Annibale Carracci

c. 1590-92

Oil on canvas
39.4cm x 27.9cm

Dulwich Picture Gallery



Portrait of an Unknown Man

c. 1612, Roman School

Oil on lined linen canvas
56.6cm x 49.8cm



Portrait of an Actor

Domenico Fetti

c. 1621-1622

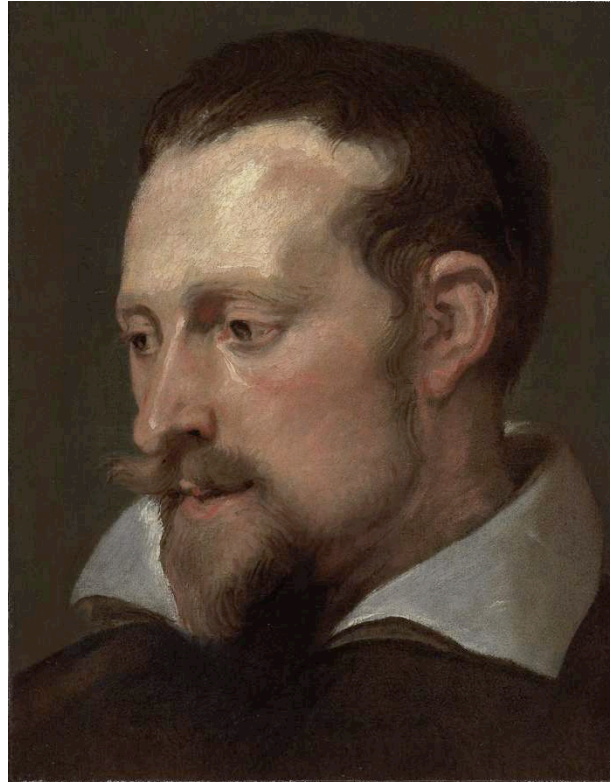
Oil on canvas
105.5cm x 81cm

Hermitage Museum, Russia

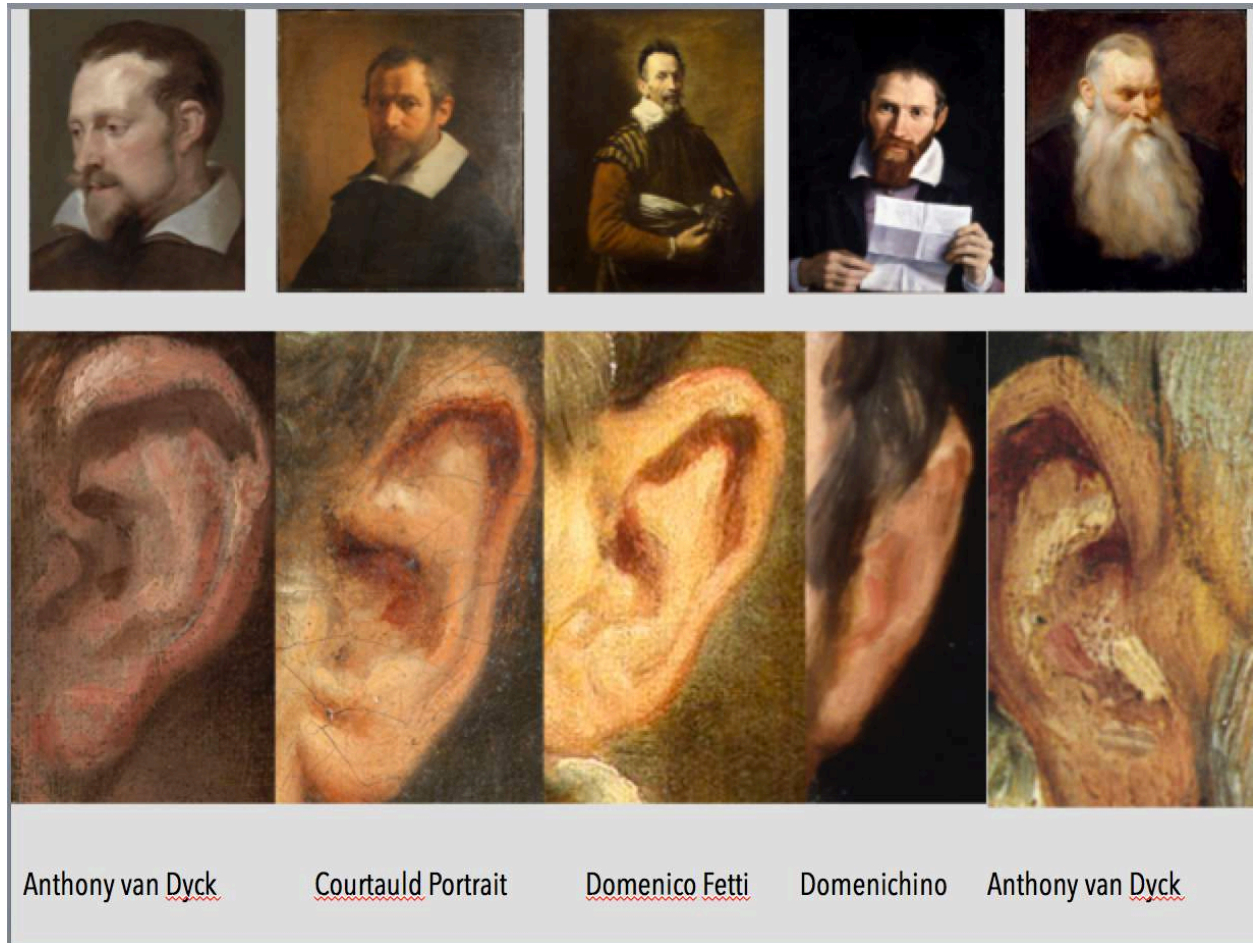
Comparative analysis of the use of red grounds



Anthony van Dyck
Study of an Old Man with a White Beard
c. 1617-20, Oil on panel, 66 cm x 51.4cm
MET. New York



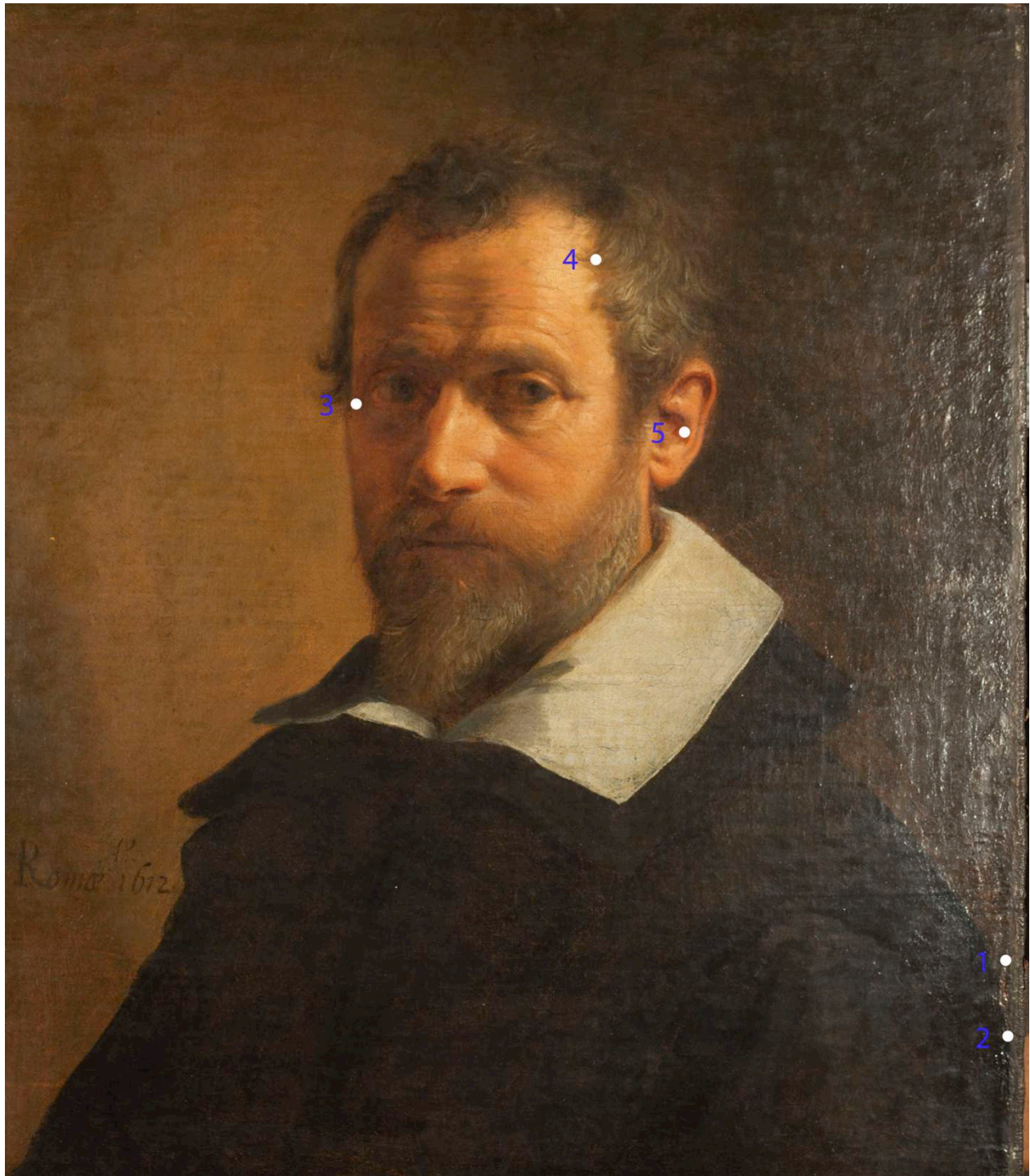
Anthony van Dyck
Portrait of a Man
c. 1618-20, Oil on canvas, 31.7cm x 23.6cm
Private Collection



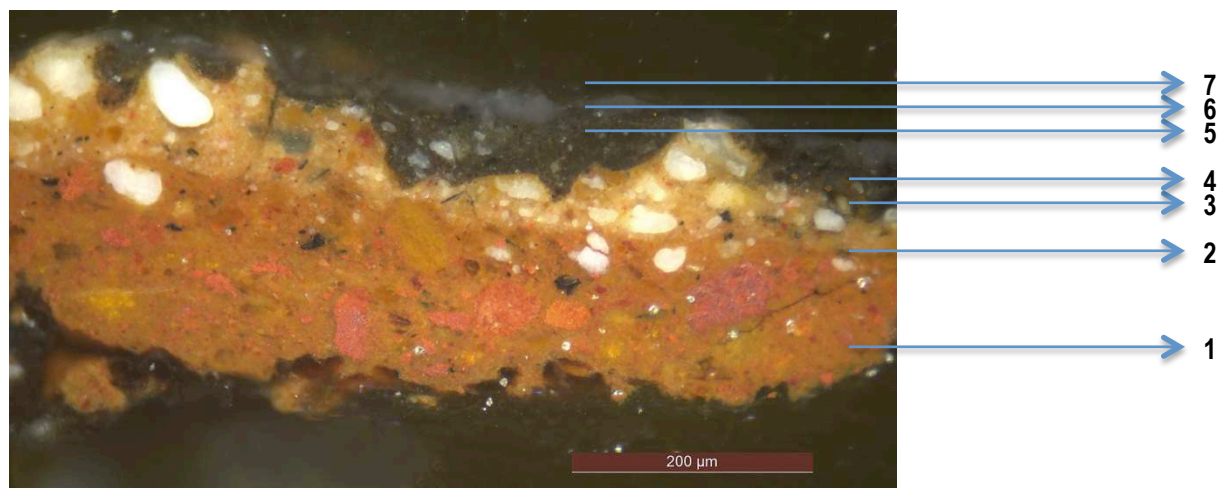
Comparison of the stratigraphy in ears from 17th c. paintings

Appendix II

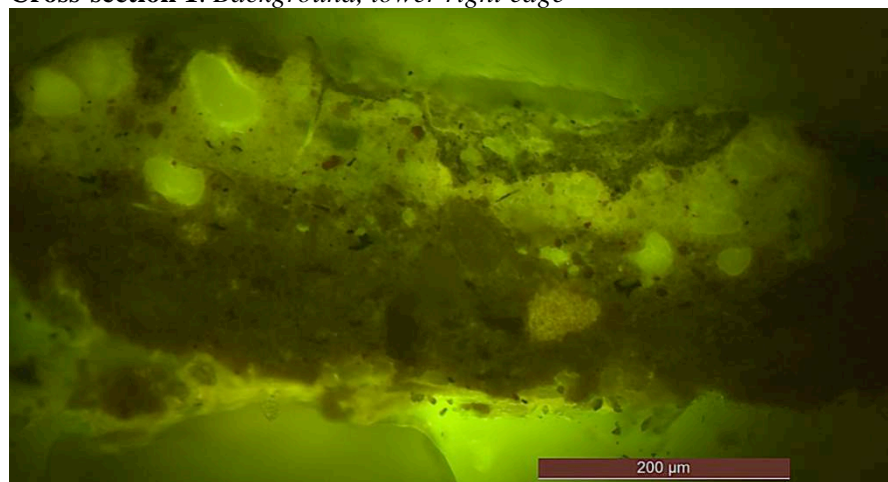
Map of Cross-section Sample Sites



Cross-section Analysis

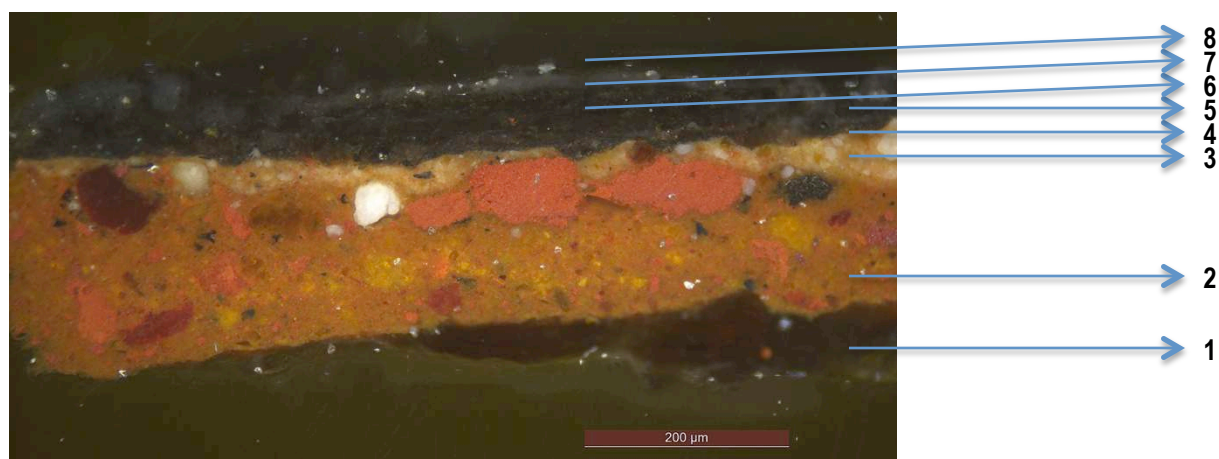


Cross-section 1. Background, lower right edge

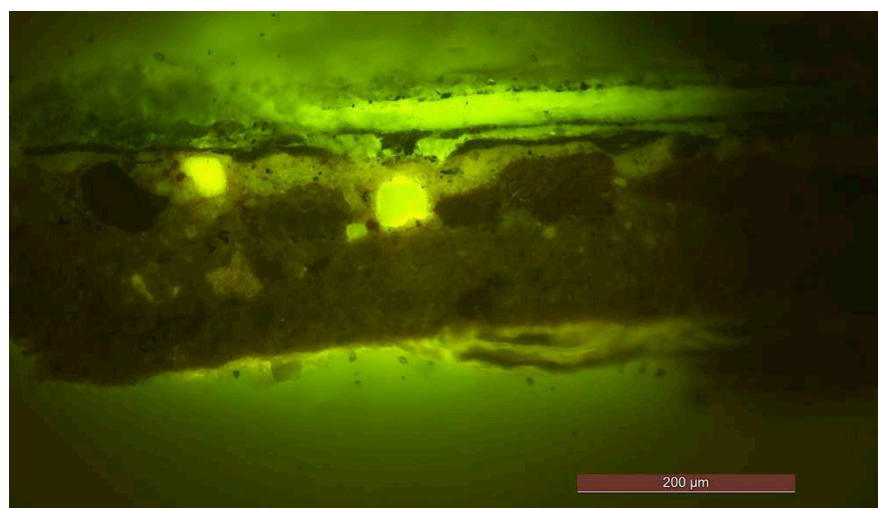


Cross-section1. UV. Background, lower right edge

Layer	Appearance/Pigments Used	SEM-EDS	Other Characteristics (UV, staining tests)
1	Dark Orange/Red ground calcium carbonate, alumin- and magnesium silicates, lead white, and yellow ochre, iron oxides with a small amount of charcoal black	Ca, Fe, Si, Pb, Al, C, P, Cu	Some areas fluoresce that may relate to lead carboxylate aggregates
2	Beige/Second ground layer Calcium carbonate, larger proportion of lead white, red yellow and green iron oxides/ silicates aluminosilicates charcoal black	Ca, Mg, Si, Fe, Pb, C	
3	Green/brown paint layer Green earth, possibly umber, lead white, charcoal black	Pb, Fe, Si, C, Mn, Br, Cl	
4	Varnish		
5	Green/brown Retouching		
6	Varnish		
7	Varnish		

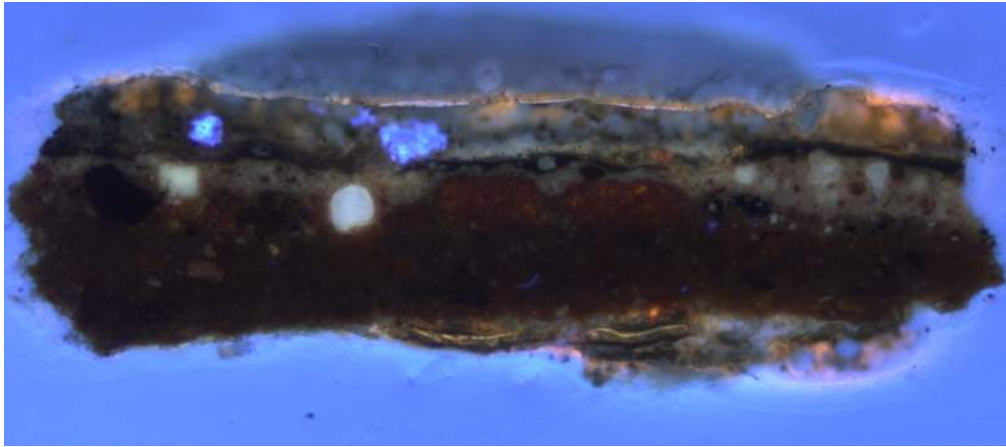


Cross-section 2. *Black cloak, lower right damage*

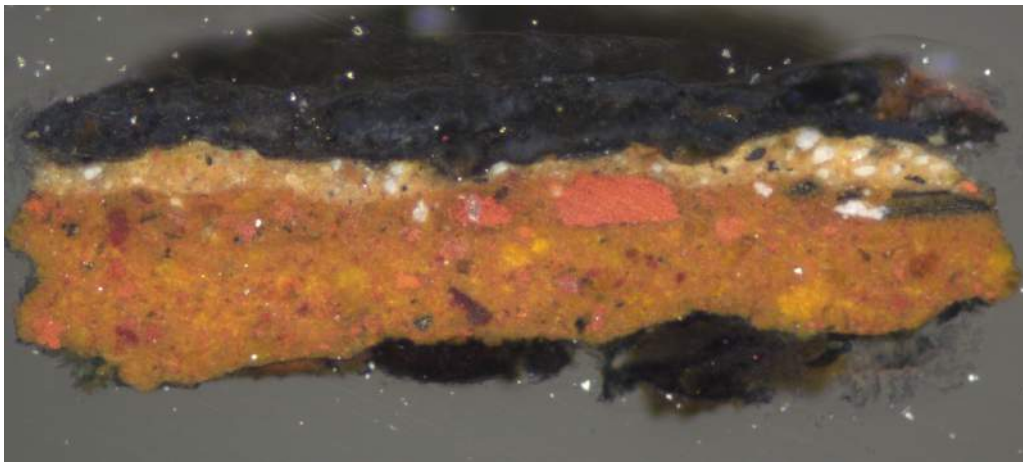


Cross-section 2. *UV. Black cloak, lower right damage*

Layer	Appearance/Pigments Used	SEM-EDS	Other Characteristics (UV, staining tests)
1	Size		
2	Dark Orange/Red ground Calcium carbonate, aluminosilicates, lead white, and yellow ochre, iron oxides with a small amount of charcoal black	Ca, Fe, Si, Pb, Al, C, P, Mg, K, Br, Cu, S	Some areas fluoresce that may relate to lead carboxylate aggregates
3	Light Orange/Second ground layer Beige/Second ground layer Calcium carbonate, larger proportion of lead white, red yellow and green iron oxides/silicates aluminosilicates charcoal black	Ca, Mg, Si, Fe, Pb, C	
4	Black paint layer Bone black, earth pigments	Pb, Fe, Si, C, P, Ca, Mn, Br	
5	Varnish		
6	Black Retouching		
7	Varnish		Dirt visible above layer
8	Varnish		



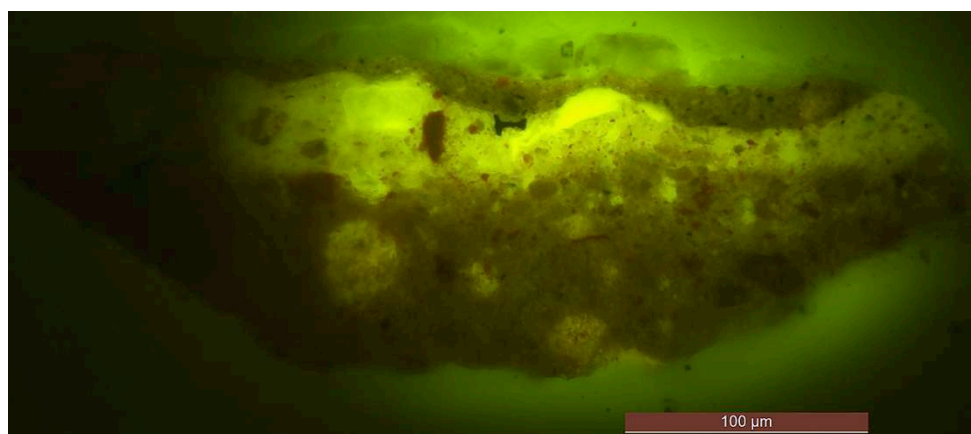
Cross-section 2. UV, after staining with Rhodamine B for the presence of oil.



Cross-section 2. After staining with Amido Black for the presence of protein

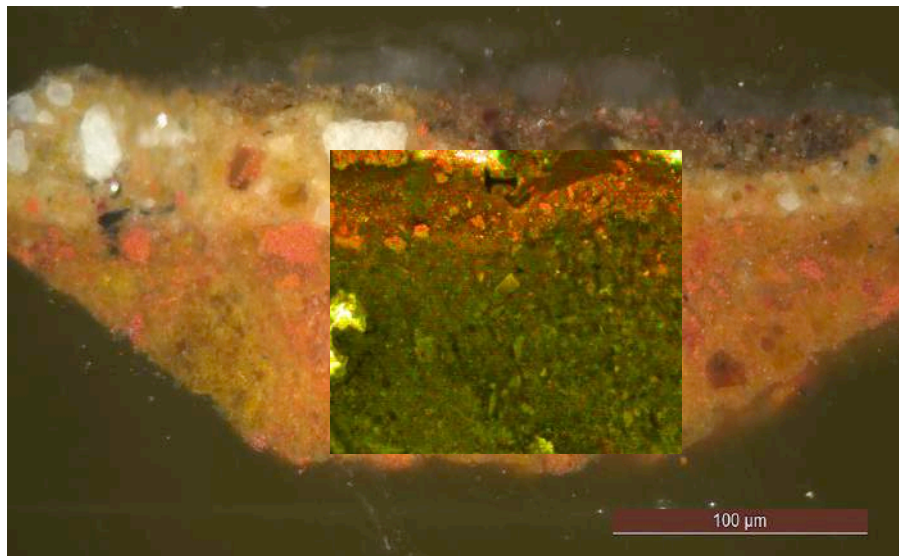


Cross-section 3. *To the left of the left eye*

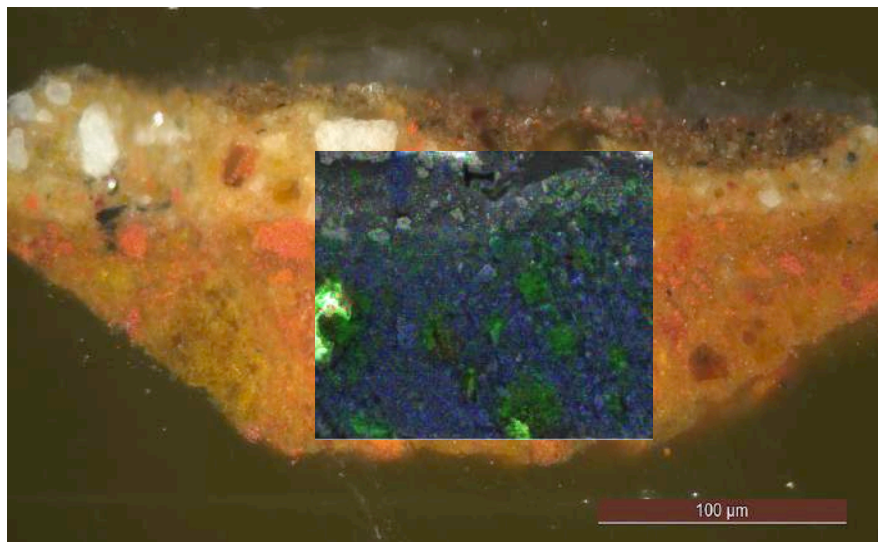


Cross-section 3. UV. *To the left of the left eye*

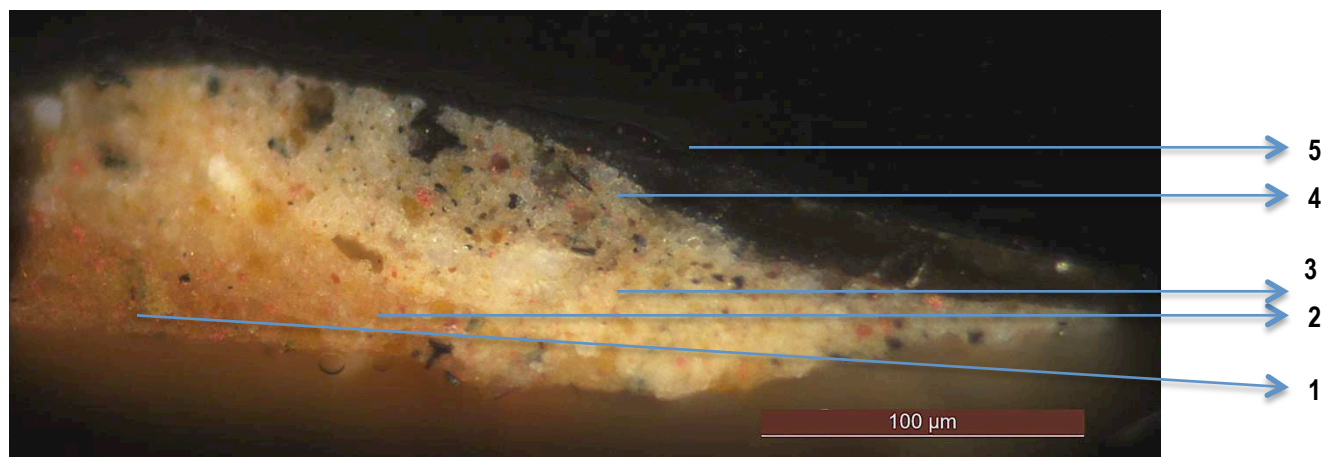
Layer	Appearance/Pigments Used	SEM-EDS	Other Characteristics (UV, staining tests)
1	Dark Orange/Red ground calcium carbonate, aluminosilicates, lead white, and yellow ochre, iron oxides with a small amount of charcoal black	Ca, Fe, Si, Pb, Al, C, P, Mg, K, Br, Cl, Ti, Tb, S	Some areas fluoresce that may relate to lead carboxylate aggregates
2	Beige/Second ground layer Calcium carbonate, larger proportion of lead white, red yellow and green iron oxides/silicates aluminosilicates charcoal black	Ca, Si, Fe, Pb, C, Mn, Al	
3	Brown paint layer Raw Umber, aluminosilicates, charcoal black, iron oxides (red and yellow ochre), lead white	C, Ca, Mn, Fe, Si, P, Pb, K, Cl	
4	Varnish		



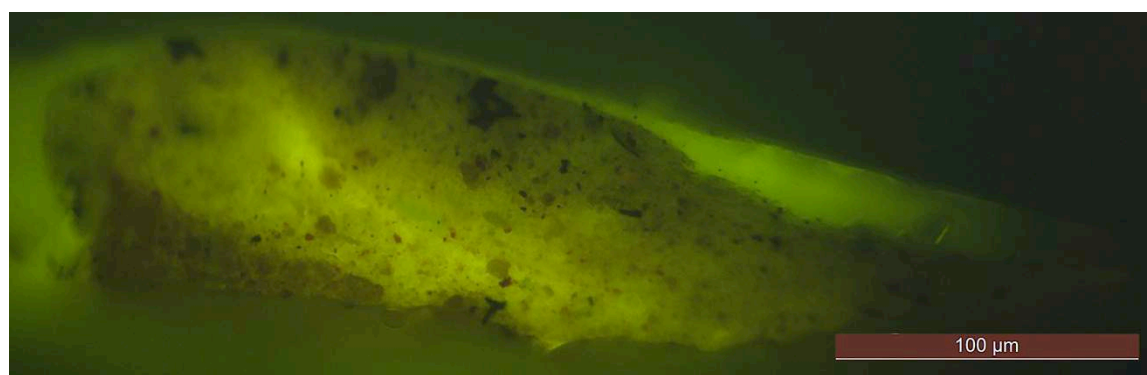
Cross-section 3. Elemental Mapping showing Calcium (green) and Sulphur (red) distribution



Cross-section 3. Elemental Mapping showing Aluminum (red) Silicon (green), Iron (blue) distribution

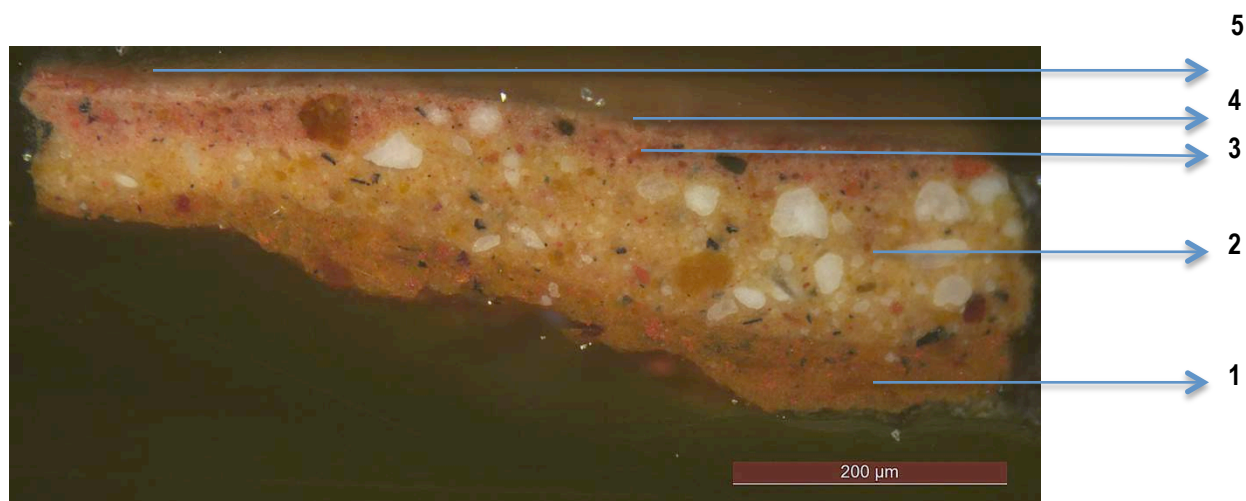


Cross-section 4. *Hair, near the right side of the sitter's forehead*



Cross-section 4. *UV. Hair, near the right side of the sitter's forehead*

Layer	Appearance/Pigments Used	SEM-EDS	Other Characteristics (UV, staining tests)
1	Dark Orange/Red ground calcium carbonate, aluminosilicates, lead white, and yellow ochre, iron oxides with a small amount of charcoal black	Ca, Fe, Si, Pb, Al, C, P, Mg, K, Cl, Cu	
2	Beige/Second ground layer Calcium carbonate, larger proportion of lead white, red yellow and green iron oxides/ sillicates aluminosilicates charcoal black	Ca, Si, Fe, Pb, C, Al	
3	Flesh coloured paint layer Lead white, iron oxides, aluminosilicates	C, Ca, Fe, Si, Al, P, Pb	
4	Light brown paint layer Raw umber, lead white, charcoal black, iron oxides (red and yellow ochre), and aluminosilicates	Pb, Fe, Al, Fe, C, P, Ca, Cl, Na, K, Mn, Mg, Si, Cu	
5	Varnish		



Cross-section 5. The right ear



Cross-section 5. UV. The right ear

Layer	Appearance/Pigments Used	SEM-EDS	Other Characteristics (UV, staining tests)
1	Dark Orange/Red ground calcium carbonate, aluminosilicates, lead white, and yellow ochre, iron oxides with a small amount of charcoal black	Ca, Fe, Si, Pb, Al, C, P, Mg, K, Cl, Cu	
2	Beige/Second ground layer Calcium carbonate, larger proportion of lead white, red yellow and green iron oxides/silicates aluminosilicates charcoal black	Ca, Si, Fe, Pb, C, Al	
3	Light pink paint layer Iron oxides, aluminosilicates, lead white	Si, K, C, Fe, Mg, Pb, Al, P	
4	Flesh coloured paint layer Iron oxides and aluminosilicates with a larger amount of lead white		
5	Red-pink glaze Iron oxides and aluminosilicates with a lesser amount of lead white		
6	Varnish		

