

**Painting Pairs 2022-23: Follower of Joos van Cleve, *St. Jerome*, Private Collection**  
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Painting Pairs is an annual initiative at The Courtauld Institute of Art which aims to investigate a given artwork through the combination of art historical and technical research. This report will discuss *Saint Jerome* which came to The Courtauld's Department of Conservation and Technology from a private collector. Attributed to Joos van Cleve (ca. 1485 – 1540) and his workshop through visual comparison, the authorship remains indeterminate, as are the precise date and location of its production. The report will consider the preparation and execution of the oil painting on Baltic oak, as well as its relationship to the source of its composition and the Antwerp art market.

The historical research is primarily focused on identifying the conditions under which this painting may have been created and sold. The establishment of the third twice-yearly fair, the *Childerpand* or Painters' Pand, was a product and cause of the changing landscape of art patronage and signifies the growing importance of painting as a commodity in the 16th century. Due to the rising popularity of paintings, it was not only Joos's workshop which turned to journeymen to expediate the production processes to meet the increased demand. In the case of *Saint Jerome*, clients were not concerned with originality and even expressed interest to buying a specific, already-existing composition.

The painting was heavily restored during previous treatments which masked the artist's original technique and materials. The removal of the yellow natural resin varnish and layers of retouching has revealed the original paint surface. It further showed that the previous restorers took artistic liberties in retouching the damaged and abraded paint passage—specifically in the table, beard, and background. The research on the different copies of *St. Jerome in His Study* helps to inform the ongoing conservation treatment as it aims to present the painting closer to the artist's intention.

Though the materials are consistent with European painting practices of the 16th century, the underdrawing detected by the infrared reflectography shows that it lacks the detail of hatching and washes typically found in paintings made specifically for a patron. Dendrochronology dates the painting to after the lifetime of Joos van Cleve. Though felling date indicates that it could have been created in the workshop under Cornelis, it is unlikely due to its style and Cornelis's later life in London to seek the patronage of Phillip II. In addition to dendrochronology, pigment analysis and identifying the layer structure of the paint has also been useful in dating the painting. The intermediate paint layer of chalk, lead white, bone black, and iron earth pigments is consistent with Karl van Mander's description of *primuersel*, a translucent flesh-coloured wash of oil paint, which indicates the painting was likely made before 1575. XRF and SEM EDX have also provided information about the pigments used.

Though the painting is a copy of an existing image, the underdrawing seems to indicate that it was transferred freehand onto the panel, in contrast to the spolvero and calco methods used by Joos and his workshop. The parts which are unusual in a composition of Saint Jerome in *Saint Jerome in his Study*—ex. the panelling in the windowsill—appear to be modified.

Whilst technical analysis generated a better understanding of *Saint Jerome*, the extent to which it could help determine an attribution was limited by the lack of art historical and technical research on the followers of Joos van Cleve. Despite the lack of definitive authorship, the material properties and art-historical context of *Saint Jerome* offers insight into the influence of Joos van Cleve after his death and the trade and production of paintings in Antwerp's Golden Age.