

KLAAS MULLER

STUDIO OF JAN SANDERS VAN

Saint Jerome

This evocative depiction of Saint Jerome in contemplation is a refined work from the studio of Jan Sanders van Hemessen, one of the leading masters of the Flemish Renaissance. The saint, draped in a deep red robe, kneels in a rocky, cave-like setting, his hands clasped in prayer. A skull and wooden cross beside him underscore themes of mortality, penitence, and spiritual devotion. The softly blurred features of his face draw the viewer's attention to the emotional intensity and inward focus of the scene.

The composition reflects the powerful influence of Van Hemessen's style: dramatic contrasts of light and shadow, a heightened psychological presence, and a theatrical sense of immediacy. These qualities were hallmarks of the master's workshop, where pupils and assistants worked closely under his direction to produce religious scenes of striking emotional depth.

In keeping with the humanist tradition, Saint Jerome is not shown as a cardinal but as a penitent hermit, withdrawn from worldly concerns and devoted to study, prayer, and self-reflection. This interpretation, popular in mid-sixteenth-century Antwerp, allowed artists to explore both the physical austerity and the spiritual intensity of the saint.

This rare and atmospheric panel demonstrates the workshop's ability to translate Van Hemessen's expressive language into a compelling devotional image—one that captures the raw humanity and contemplative power at the heart of the Jerome tradition.

Oil on panel, 49,5 x 64,5cm

