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If we closely examine an architectural work, we can often see evidence of not only functionality but also artistic achievement. For, while the architect may exhibit a scientist's attention to detail and form, he is, in essence, a creator; his canvas, a city street or countryside. The best architectural works rise above the level of the ordinary to the extraordinary; they reflect a sense of grace and style which make them true artistic works. It is not surprising, then, that we can clearly see similarities between paintings and buildings, for they are often inspired by the same artistic techniques and themes. The architect is an artist with a blueprint, the artist an architect with a paintbrush.

With this in mind, we will explore the relationship between what ordinarily might be seen as two disparate works: St. Jerome in His Study by Antonello da Messina and Christ Church, Spitalfields. We can enumerate similarities between the two in terms of style and structure. The two works also seem to share a common underlying theme: the transcendence of the sacred over the ordinary. Finally, the artist's (or architect's) means of representation appears to be similar in both. By examining the commonalities between the two works, we can achieve greater understanding of the merits of each individual effort.

Both St. Jerome and Christ Church embrace the concept of realism over impressionism. St. Jerome is almost photographic in its sense of detail; the viewer feels as if he can almost reach out and touch the saint and his library. The painting provides a "you are there" type of quality; it is as if the viewer is an invisible angel in the rafters, gazing down at a brilliant man engrossed in study. The details are not fuzzy, but rather are clearly drawn; it's been

said that some 30 books are visible in the work. St. Jerome is a portrait of a man in concentration; his features are clear, his visage realistic. Similarly, Christ Church is a work of simple lines and forms; even a cursory view reveals it to be a highly-functional building. Where other, more modern architectural works may express a sense of whimsy in non-linear renderings, Christ Church expresses a traditional sense of balance and proportion. Its geometric simplicity clearly works to its advantage; it is as inviting as St. Jerome, encouraging the passer-by to come in and pray for a while.

Moreover, both the painting and the built work seem to share a sense of grandeur, a feeling of majesty. In looking at St. Jerome, the viewer is likely to surmise that St. Jerome's study is far more vast than what appears on the canvas. In the background, outdoor scenery is visible in a distant window, suggesting that the study is far larger than what appears within the frame. We may be left with the feeling that St. Jerome is at work in a small alcove which is part of an impressive building. In Christ Church, we see a monumental steeple rising from behind a grand portico; the structure is regal and, in a sense, imposing. It is the type of building that one could gaze at for hours; it is vast in its rendering and majestic in its scope. The church is truly greater than the sum of its parts; it imparts a sense of grandeur and elegance, despite what might be described as a fairly simple design.

Undeniably, the most striking similarity between the painting and the building lies in the arches that can be seen in each one. In St. Jerome, windows are accented by arches, giving the painting a sense of openness. An arch is visible in the background, suggesting that the architectural device runs as a theme throughout the building St. Jerome occupies. Arches are

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intriguing in that they provide a kind of artistic framework for windows and doorways; they are not only functional, but aesthetically pleasing as well. The arch theme is repeated in Christ Church; the arches over the building's semi-circular windows bring a sense of splendor to the place of worship. If circles are a symbol of the divine and the perfect, arches give the impression that human beings are somehow incomplete and they only find completion in God, Who can round out the edges and bring a sense of closure.

This brings us to the underlying theme of both works; namely, the preservation and celebration of the sacred. St. Jerome suggests a man who is apart from the world, occupying a spiritual space that serves as a backdrop for his communion with God. The painting conveys the feeling that St. Jerome is holed up in a special place, one that might best be described as holy ground. The fact that the saint appears to be sitting on a platform indicates that he has reached new heights through his study; his body and, in turn, his soul, are elevated. While his study is somewhat enclosed, it also articulates a feeling of openness, suggesting that, in shutting oneself off from the rest of the world, one can become more open to the inspirations of God.

While St. Jerome's study is a scholarly place, it is also a spiritual one; hence, it is depicted as being a place shielded from worldly cares. Similarly, it is not difficult to see the sense of the divine suggested by the structure of Christ Church. It appears "larger than life," a monumental edifice whose steeple seems to be attempting to reach up and touch the face of God. Its columns convey a sense of import and transcendence; it has the structure of some imposing government building, but the sensibility of a work of art. It is both

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inviting and awe-inspiring, suggesting the relationship between mortal man and his God. While man can sense the personal intensity of God's love, he is often left awe-struck by the sheer wonder of it.

In examining St. Jerome, it is interesting to try to delve into the means of representation employed by the artist, Antonello da Messina. St. Jerome is depicted as the penultimate scholar, hunched over his work, surrounded by the books that serve as his lifeline to God. The painting makes effective use of both the concepts of space and enclosure. St. Jerome is semi-enclosed in his study, and yet we see clearly the expansiveness of the building he occupies. In essence, it appears as if, while St. Jerome may be holed up in his scholarly abode, there is a vast world in which he operates, symbolized by the nature scene which appears in one of the distant windows. The painter uses light to portray a sense of hopefulness; it is entirely fitting that St. Jerome studies in a well-lit area, since he is seeking the light of truth. The building of St. Jerome appears inviting because of its light, sandy color; it is the type of place one would not only like to visit, but also linger.

Christ Church is similarly fashioned with the aid of an artist's sensitivity. It is classic in styling, reflecting the regal nature of Georgian English Baroque design. Its pure white facade helps to cement its standing as a place of holiness and purity. Despite the impressiveness of its design, it is not the kind of building that one simply admires from afar. It is an engaging place, a place where worshippers can feel welcomed. Like St. Jerome's study, Christ Church seems to be, upon initial viewing, a structure where important things take place, an appropriate venue for contemplating the mysteries of God.

Nonetheless, despite the apparent similarities between the two works, it would be presumptuous to say that one is based upon the other. The two are obviously not carbon copies of each other; each retains a uniqueness in style and presentation. However, it is entirely possible that both share similar inspirations. Antonello da Messina renders St. Jerome in a powerful way; we can almost hear St. Jerome tapping his foot as he studies the great works of literature.

The painter is sympathetic toward his subject, portraying both St. Jerome and his study as completely approachable. It is as if da Messina is saying that the human and the divine can comfortably co-exist, and that the viewer is welcome to "step inside" the painting and rest awhile. In like manner, Christ Church appears to represent the marriage of the human and the divine; it is obvious that the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor was interested in translating the transcendent into a language the average mortal could understand. It is a towering edifice, to be sure; yet, it seems to engender not only awe and amazement but quiet contemplation as well.

To conclude, then, St. Jerome in His Study and Christ Church are two works that share a commonality of form, function, and emotion. The arches present in both seem to suggest a clever combination of the spiritual and the material. The classic designs of both the painting and the building suggest a traditional approach which is at once both impressive and inviting. Both works suggest an attempt to reach up in an effort to approach God; St. Jerome sits elevated in his study, while Christ Church boasts a steeple which stretches up to the heavens. The painting and the building also share a common theme: the search for the divine amidst the ordinary. It is a tribute

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to both artists that they are able to instill a sense of the sacred in what might otherwise be quite ordinary space. In gazing at St. Jerome and Christ Church, we are taken to a finer place—a place of light and refreshment.