

THE ECCLESIASTICAL FIGURAL MOSAICS OF THE TIFFANY STUDIOS  
(1891-1931)

by

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of  
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## **DEDICATION**

This is for Thomas.

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## ABSTRACT

### THE ECCLESIASTICAL FIGURAL MOSAICS OF THE TIFFANY STUDIOS (1891-1931)

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Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) was one of the most significant artists of the twentieth century. Tiffany's artistic *oeuvre* encompassed nearly all mediums, but his passion for color and light reached a synthesis in large-scale ecclesiastical figural mosaics produced from 1891-1931. In these designs, Tiffany employed glass material in new ways to convey dimensionality and movement, ultimately achieving a sense of realism never before accomplished in mosaic. Utilizing glass that was unlimited in color and texture, he developed a modern method that consisted primarily of *sectiliae*, or pieces of glass cut to irregular and special forms. Inspired by early Christian and Renaissance mosaic examples, his efforts brought about a revival of the art form in America and he advanced what he called "the decorative possibilities" of the medium for the ecclesiastical interior. Unfortunately, Tiffany's ecclesiastical figural mosaics have been largely overlooked, perhaps because many remain *in situ*, in locations with limited

access. The purpose of this study is to begin to fill the lack of scholarship regarding this significant portion of his prolific career. This thesis first situates Tiffany's success within the American Renaissance and the larger history of mosaic art; the role of the Tiffany Studios' Ecclesiastical Department is then presented, including a detailed account of how the figural mosaics were fabricated; and lastly, a survey of significant figural commissions highlights the sources of design inspiration utilized in the creation of these artworks. The success of Tiffany's ecclesiastical figural mosaics not only points to their importance within the Tiffany Studios' brand, but also their significance as American religious artworks.

## INTRODUCTION:

The years during the American Renaissance (1876-1917) are among the richest and most opulent in the history of American decorative arts. Within this period of artistic flourishing, Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) emerged as one of the most significant artists of the twentieth century, and certainly one of the most successful. Through his artistic vision and direction, Tiffany's studio produced fashionable decorative objects, and Tiffany gained international acclaim for his developments in glass-making technology. While his *oeuvre* encompassed nearly all mediums, his passion for color and light reached a synthesis in large-scale figural mosaics. In these designs, Tiffany employed glass material in new ways to convey dimensionality, movement, and texture, ultimately achieving a sense of realism never before seen in figural mosaics.

Rather than the exclusive use of tesserae (square and irregular cubes of glass), popularized in Byzantine mosaics, Tiffany pioneered the use of *sectiliae* (pieces cut to special forms).<sup>1</sup> The irregularity of the *sectiliae* allowed for a more realistic and nuanced execution of designs. Various types of glass, immense in color, opalescence, and vibrancy were hand-selected to execute these elaborate mosaics. Tiffany's large-scale mosaic decoration was commissioned for domestic, civic, and ecclesiastical buildings;

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<sup>1</sup> These terms are differentiated and defined by Tiffany. See Tiffany Glass & Decorating Company, *Tiffany Glass Mosaics for Walls, Ceilings, Inlays, and Other Ornamental Work ; Unrestricted in Color, Impervious to Moisture and Absolutely Permanent*. (New York: Tiffany Glass & Decorating Co., 1896), 17.

designs ranged from geometric patterning, to secular subjects such as landscapes, to historical scenes and religious subjects, both symbolic and figural.

In recent decades, scholarship has illuminated Tiffany's life and work, but the primary emphasis has been on his leaded and blown glass objects. An in-depth scholarly study of his mosaics has not yet been undertaken. A visual survey can be found in *The Mosaics of Louis Comfort Tiffany* by Edith Crouch,<sup>2</sup> and Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen's chapter "Louis C. Tiffany and the Dawning of a New Era for Mosaics" in *The Tiffany Chapel at the Morse Museum*<sup>3</sup> provides an excellent historical survey of Tiffany's mosaic work. Yet apart from these two sources, little is available to the scholar on this significant aspect of Tiffany's artistic output. In an effort to begin filling this crucial gap, the following chapters will offer an analysis of Tiffany's ecclesiastical figural mosaics and situate these works within the larger context of the mosaic art tradition and its influence during the American Renaissance.

When looking at the prolific output of Tiffany Studios,<sup>4</sup> the prominent use of mosaic and its influence cannot be denied nor overemphasized. Tiffany incorporated mosaic in his earliest interior designs (1879-1880s), and figural mosaics were among the most expensive products sold by the firm. The question should therefore be raised: why have these works been overlooked for so long? Why is there such a lack of scholarship on the subject?

---

<sup>2</sup> Edith Crouch, *The Mosaics of Louis Comfort Tiffany* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Pub. Ltd, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "Louis C. Tiffany and the Dawning of a New Era for Mosaics" *The Tiffany Chapel at the Morse Museum*, ed. Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen and Nancy Long (Winter Park, FL: Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Throughout his career Louis C. Tiffany operated under different business names at various times. Many works or articles discussed in this paper were produced under these different names. For the purposes of this study, "the Tiffany Studios" will be used consecutively.

There are several reasons for the scarce study of Tiffany's mosaics. The majority of these mosaics remain *in situ*, in locations with limited access, such as in private residences, churches, or government buildings. Some mosaics were, sadly, destroyed when the buildings that housed them were demolished. And with regard to ecclesiastical mosaics, the transitional nature of congregations, with ever-changing leadership, inevitably proves a challenge for scholarship. Over the years, church files are purged and, therefore, original records, such as correspondence and bills of sale, no longer exist. The scholarly presentation of the Tiffany Studios' products has underemphasized mosaics by listing them under the general category of Tiffany's "church decoration;" this has perpetuated a lack of analysis.

Lastly, the study of figural mosaics has been eclipsed by the attention given to Tiffany windows, but why? Perhaps it is their permanence that renders these mosaics problematic. Many windows have been acquired, exhibited, and have received attention in the marketplace. This has created a greater awareness, appreciation, and opportunity for scholarship. Mosaics *in situ*, on the other hand, simply have not received the same exposure at exhibitions or auctions.

Regardless of these reasons, Tiffany's work in mosaic deserves a scholarly examination. As my exploration of individual examples will show, Tiffany revived the mosaic art form and pioneered its prominent use in American ecclesiastical spaces. While existing scholarship has underemphasized the significance of Tiffany's mosaics, scholars have also failed to connect his passion for mosaics with his greater artistic vision.

As the forthcoming chapters will demonstrate, at the time, Tiffany's design and production of windows and wall mosaics was largely viewed as one single endeavor: mosaic revival. According to Tiffany, he was concerned with a return to the "true mosaic principle" which he described as "...the arrangement in juxtaposition of small gem-like pieces of glass having all the brilliancy and depth of color that are found in precious stones."<sup>5</sup> At Tiffany Studios, this principle was applied both to windows and wall mosaics. In period literature of the time, both leaded windows and wall panels were often described simply as "mosaic;"<sup>6</sup> this terminology can be a source of confusion for the reader as to whether the author is discussing a window or a wall mosaic. However, during the period, these works were understood within the context of a mosaic revival that was underway.

To achieve his vision, Tiffany created what was called the "modern method" for figural mosaics: adhering as closely as possible to the design of the artist, cutting the glass to each and every contour.<sup>7</sup> He trained artisans in this method, and provided them with a palette of glass unlimited in color, pattern, and gradation. He incorporated mosaic into interiors, lamps, and fancy goods. Indeed, Tiffany's mosaics were not one product among a variety of goods, but were in fact, a great unifier within the Tiffany brand.

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<sup>5</sup> Louis C. Tiffany, "American Art Supreme in Colored Glass," *Forum* 5, 15 (July 1893), 621.

<sup>6</sup> During the period, the term "mosaic" was used specifically to describe Tiffany's pictorial windows, which were made up of cut pieces of glass and assembled with lead to form a picture. Unlike the typical stained glass of the time, little to no paint was used on Tiffany windows. The term was meant to distinguish this new kind of stained glass. See C. Hanford Henderson, "Glass-Making," *Journal of the Franklin Institute* 124, 3 (September 1887), 214. Tiffany himself used the term "mosaic system" to describe the method in which his windows were produced. See Tiffany Glass & Decorating Company, *A synopsis of the exhibit of the Tiffany Glass and Decorating company in the American section of the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building at the World's Fair, Jackson Park, Chicago, Illinois, 1893, with an appendix on memorial windows* (New York: Tiffany Glass & Decorating Co., 1893), 16.

<sup>7</sup> W. H. Thomas uses the term "modern method" in his article "Glass-Mosaic: An Old Art With A New Distinction" in *The International Studio* 28, 3 (May 1906), 76.



Tiffany's modern method is presented within the broader historical context of the American Renaissance in Chapter One. This chapter also gives a brief history of mosaic art and the materials and methods traditionally used. A survey of Tiffany's early endeavors in mosaic will also be presented to demonstrate how Tiffany fits within that tradition. The general role and aesthetic value of mosaics in liturgical spaces is also discussed.

The Ecclesiastical Department at the Tiffany Studios is the focus of Chapter Two. This section includes a detailed account of the fabrication method, techniques and materials utilized in the production of figural mosaics. Since mosaic memorials comprised a significant portion of the Department's business, the commission process is explained. The chapter also highlights the individual designers and artisans who worked behind the scenes to create these significant artworks under Tiffany's direction.

Chapter Three offers an in-depth analysis of select figural mosaics, many of Tiffany's most successful works, to identify key sources of inspiration that were central to the design process including historic mosaics, well-known paintings, and the canon of religious iconography. This survey of mosaics also demonstrates the stylistic progression that took place over a forty-year production period. By experimenting with various glass techniques, Tiffany and his designers sought the best way to render an image in mosaic; these efforts culminate in Tiffany's later works with the full expression of his modern mosaic method.

The conclusion of this study looks briefly at the marketing strategies employed by the Studios in the promotion of their figural mosaics. As the new era of modernism

emerged, Tiffany's eclecticism was no longer in fashion. And yet, his innovation and achievements in the art of mosaic remain influential today.

## **CHAPTER ONE: TIFFANY'S MOSAICS: AN ANCIENT ART WITH A MODERN EXPRESSION**

It is necessary to understand the historical context within which Tiffany's mosaics were so successful. In addition to his artistic vision and business savvy, the period in which Tiffany was working was a vortex of art consumption, building expansion, and wealth. Tiffany was at the very center of that vortex, as an artist, an innovator, and a tastemaker.

The American Renaissance (1876-1917) can be difficult to define: it was not a style or art movement. It is better described as a period of significant transition, motivated by a spirit of progress, nationalism, and a new interest in art.<sup>8</sup> The motivating principle of the American Renaissance was similar to that of the Italian Renaissance: synthesizing the best of antiquity and modernity creates the ideal civilization.<sup>9</sup> Both periods used art as a means to display one's wealth and social prestige, but both were also motivated by a higher goal. Art historian Dianne H. Pilgrim explains that, in both periods, "there was a sense of moral obligation to inform and educate the public as to what was good, beautiful, and in correct taste."<sup>10</sup> The American Renaissance held the principle that building a civilization of greatness required "the best of all cultures, including our

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<sup>8</sup> For additional information on the American Renaissance, see *The American Renaissance, 1876-1917* (Brooklyn, N.Y: Brooklyn Museum, Division of Publications and Marketing Services: exclusively distributed to the trade by Pantheon Books, 1979).

<sup>9</sup> Dianne H. Pilgrim, "Decorative Art: The Domestic Environment," *The American Renaissance, 1876-1917*, 111.

<sup>10</sup> Pilgrim, *Ibid.*

own.”<sup>11</sup> America had emerged for the first time as an international power and the American Renaissance provided principles upon which to build a culturally strong civilization. As the nation’s wealth and architectural landscape rapidly expanded, there was a desire to establish a unified aesthetic, and create an American art that would express the liberty and the importance of the young nation.

It was the general consensus during this period that the Centennial International Exhibition of 1876 was the impetus for this new interest in art. In 1904 the *New York Evening Post* commented, “Since the beginning of the Renaissance of Art in America—the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876—the artists and artisans of our country have made tremendous strides in every branch of art and its kindred occupations. In none has the progress been so rapid and so satisfactory as among the producers of glass.”<sup>12</sup> The term “American Renaissance,” first used in 1880, inspired the feeling in many Americans that “the [European] Renaissance spirit had been captured again in the United States.”<sup>13</sup> In this spirit, art schools, clubs, journals, and museums were founded, an unprecedented number of artworks were commissioned, and wealthy patronage became common.<sup>14</sup>

Newly established organizations, institutions, and patrons advanced the Renaissance and its influence encompassed all aspects of society.<sup>15</sup> Architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson describes the ambitious “civilization envisaged for

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Unknown, “Stained Glass and Glass Mosaic,” *Art and Architecture in Current Literature: A Magazine of Record and Review* (1904), 331.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, “Expressions of Identity,” *The American Renaissance, 1876-1917* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Brooklyn Museum, Division of Publications and Marketing Services : exclusively distributed to the trade by Pantheon Books, 1979), 11. Wilson notes that the term “American Renaissance” was first used in *The Californian* 1 (June 1880), pp.1-2.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, “Periods and Organizations,” Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Wilson, “Periods and Organizations,” Ibid.

America” as one of “a public life...of large monuments, memorials, and public buildings in the eternal style.”<sup>16</sup> These structures, he continues, were to be “adorned with murals and sculptures personifying heroes and symbolizing virtue and enterprise.”<sup>17</sup> To realize this grand civilization, architects and artists, craftsmen and decorators, collaborated on domestic, civic, and religious structures alike, often through the patronage of the wealthy elite.<sup>18</sup> These collaborations resulted in a multiplicity of design styles and philosophies. Often criticized as aesthetically incongruent, the various styles of the era can be understood either as eclecticism put forward as new art, or historical revivalism resulting from looking at the past.<sup>19</sup> As we will see, Tiffany’s own work in mosaic was greatly influenced by both the historical mosaic tradition and by his American eclecticism.

The nation’s urban landscape changed drastically during the period. The ever-expanding industrial city, rising wealthy middle class, and increasing immigrant population generated an incredible building boom. According to Professor Peter W. Williams, “In 1880, slightly over one quarter of a population of about fifty million were urbanites; by 1920, over half of America’s 106 million dwelt in cities.”<sup>20</sup> As a result, an unprecedented number of new churches were built to accommodate growing congregations; by 1888 over four thousand church structures were under construction.<sup>21</sup>

The success of Tiffany’s ecclesiastical mosaics coincided directly with this period of

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<sup>16</sup> Wilson, “Expressions of Identity,” *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Peter W. Williams, “American Religion in the Age of the City, 1880-1915,” *Louis C. Tiffany and the Art of Devotion* (New York: Museum of Biblical Art, in association with D Giles Limited, London, 2012), 12.

<sup>21</sup> Patricia Pongracz, “Tiffany Studios’ Business of Religious Art, *Ibid.*, 53. As quoted by Will H. Low, “Old Glass in New Windows,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 4, 6 (December 1888), 675 and quoted by J.B. Bullen, “Louis Comfort Tiffany and Romano-Byzantine Design,” *The Burlington Magazine* 147, 1227 (June 2005), 397.

expansion, and religious communities of various denominations were among his greatest patrons.<sup>22</sup>

Religious buildings were the first collaborative effort between architect, artist, and decorator. For the first time there was a desire to create a “unified decorative scheme” in American churches.<sup>23</sup> The modern decorator, a new and vital profession, was expected to factor in “epoch, style, symbolism, climate, harmony of line and color, light and shade” into a cohesive décor plan, as outlined in an article from 1899.<sup>24</sup>

A unified aesthetic, however, did not preclude the use of various architectural styles. Architectural historian Robert A. M. Stern, explains in the comprehensive work *New York: 1880* (1999), that during the period, “aesthetic experimentation could be seen in the use of Romanesque, Moorish, and Byzantine styles, as well as, on occasion, post-Medieval Classical models.”<sup>25</sup> The Gothic was also considered ideally suited to ecclesiastical architecture. Some churches also mixed these styles “in an effort to evolve, by a process of eclectic hybridization, a distinctly modern expression.”<sup>26</sup>

New church design departed drastically from that of early American church architecture, which was puritanical in principle. While early structures were stark and largely devoid of ornamentation, new churches, by comparison, were highly decorated

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<sup>22</sup> See Williams, “American Religion in the Age of the City, 1880-1915,” for a chart comparing the growth of congregations from 1890 to 1906.

<sup>23</sup> Pilgrim, 116. The earliest church collaborations were Richard Upjohn’s St. Thomas Church (1865-1870) and Henry Hobson Richardson’s Trinity Church (1872-1877). Both feature decoration by artists John LaFarge and Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Pilgrim notes that the ornamentation of ecclesiastical structures in the 1880s influenced that of public and civic buildings. This became widespread following the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition.

<sup>24</sup> Mrs. Monachesi, “Church Decoration,” *The Art Interchange* (December 1899), 43, 6, 144.

<sup>25</sup> Robert A. M. Stern, *New York 1880: architecture and urbanism in the gilded age* (New York: Monacelli Press), 279.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

and incredibly ornate.<sup>27</sup> These structures exemplified a new, proud nation, and were built in a period of “spiritual fervor,”<sup>28</sup> reflected not only in their number and size, but also in the intentionality with which they were decorated. Church decoration was meant to serve a higher purpose than pomp and opulence: as explained in an article from 1899, “all artistic decorations that are beautiful in line and color, harmoniously unite religious emotions with the aesthetic, and the result is a devotional reverential solemnity.”<sup>29</sup> Centers of public worship were an opportunity to express high sacred art, which was “synonymous with culture and refinement” and essential to the establishment of a civilized American society.<sup>30</sup>

Tiffany certainly understood this line of thinking. In 1893 he wrote, “American taste [dictates] the employment of the best resources of the highest art in the construction of future church edifices. In all religious denominations, the desire for beauty is everywhere uppermost.”<sup>31</sup>

The desire for beautiful church decoration caused a revival of religious art and created a demand for artwork and religious objects that were finely crafted, rather than mass-produced. In 1899, the *New York Evangelist* published an article explaining the philosophy behind the religious art revival, and the specific role of the Tiffany Studios in its progression. The article states that Tiffany, along with his staff of trained artists and artisans, “led the way in the revival...guided by sane traditions, but showing greater

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<sup>27</sup> Monachesi, “Church Decoration,” 144.

<sup>28</sup> Stern, *New York 1880*, 275.

<sup>29</sup> Monachesi, *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Louis C. Tiffany, “American Art Supreme in Colored Glass,” *Forum* 5, 15 (July 1893), 625.

respect for the spirit than for the letter of the law.”<sup>32</sup> The article continues:

[There is] new evidence of the steady growth of the public demand for the beautifying of our church edifices. The demand has already led to an important revival of religious art. The days are past when it was considered enough to buy of some purely commercial firm; articles manufactured without a trace of religious intent or artistic taste...[we require] a fresh and vital inspiration in the worker, such as no one who depends on encyclopedias and dictionaries for his knowledge of the ecclesiastical art can furnish. [T]here must be at the head of all such undertakings, a man capable of initiating work freely within the bounds set by Christian feeling and tradition. And, too, an army of accomplished artists and workmen, accustomed to follow his guidance. It was under such conditions that the great cathedrals of the old world were built and decorated, and it is only under these same conditions that we can hope to equal or surpass them.<sup>33</sup>

The author concludes, "True Christian art takes a wider view: it looks back to the stately architecture of the Romanesque period, and the splendid mosaics of Ravenna and Byzantine, and forward to a future not less glorious."<sup>34</sup> Such a revival balanced the historical precedent of Europe's artistic tradition with a new working method to achieve religious art with an American aesthetic. Tiffany Studios was a leading manufacturer in this movement and provided clients with a complete design scheme, or artistically crafted items towards the whole, including mosaic, leaded-glass windows, and wall decoration, furniture, vestments, and altar furnishings.

### **A Brief History of Mosaic and its Revival**

"Mosaic is the true painting for eternity."—Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449–94)<sup>35</sup>

Mosaic can be defined simply as a picture or decoration made with small colored pieces. The technique originated with the Greeks who arranged river pebbles—black,

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<sup>32</sup> "The Church Art Department of the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company," *New York Evangelist*, 70, 12 (March 23, 1899), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Umberto Pappalardo, *Greek and Roman Mosaics*, First edition (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 2012), 20.



white, or colored—in geometric patterns for flooring in public spaces and temples.<sup>36</sup>

Surviving examples have been found from “Syria to Greece, from Egypt to Tunisia, from Spain to France, from Britain to Germany, and from Croatia to Italy.”<sup>37</sup> The oldest extant example are the Gordion Mosaics, a floor in Yassihüyük, Turkey, dating to the ninth century BC, composed of red, blue, black and white pebbles (Figure 1).<sup>38</sup> The earliest known figurative mosaics date to the end of the fifth century BC, and are considered the beginning of the Greek mosaic tradition, which reached an artistic peak in the late fourth century BC.<sup>39</sup>

Tessellated mosaic—made from marble, semi and precious stones, or terracotta—began in Alexandria in the early third century BC. Surviving examples have been found “everywhere from Asia Minor to Sicily,”<sup>40</sup> which is evidence of the widespread popularity and functionality of the technique. Stylistically, mosaics were inspired by Hellenistic art of the period, including vivid colors, a sense of naturalism, and a pervading “plasticity” of figural and vegetal motifs.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The etymology of the word *mosaic* is uncertain. In *Greek and Roman Mosaics*, author Umberto Pappalardo explains that in the first century AD Pliny the Elder only *described* it as “pavement composed of tesserae.” Because of the similarity of the words *mosaic* and *muse*, some believe it derived from the latter. In the early fourth century AD, St. Augustine of Hippo refers to mosaic as [*opus*] *musivum* or “work of muses.” Roman grottoes were often dedicated to the Muses and decorated with wall mosaics, so there could be a correlation. But, it was not until the Byzantine era that the terms *mousaikōn* and *musaicus* were used to describe wall mosaics. And from these words the modern term *mosaic* is derived. According to Pappalardo, this term spread among European languages and possibly Arabic *muzauwaq*. In Latin, a mosaicist who created floors was called a *tessellarius* or *tessellator*, while one who created figural designs was called a *musarius* or *musivarius*. See *Greek and Roman Mosaic*, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Pappalardo, *Greek and Roman Mosaics*, 7.

<sup>38</sup> The mosaic measures approximately 32 x 35 feet and originally covered the entire floor of a large house.

<sup>39</sup> Pappalardo, 11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 56.



**Figure 1: Detail of The Gordion Mosaics, c. 9<sup>th</sup> century BC. Pebbles set into cement, approximately 32 x 35 feet. Gordion, Yassihüyük, Turkey. Penn Museum Gordion Archive. <http://www.conlab.org/acl/gordion/mosaic.html>. (accessed February 22, 2015).**

Roman mosaic achieved a pinnacle of sophistication and was widely used throughout the empire, in public and private buildings, on walls, ceilings, and vaulting; “figurative themes, geometric patterns, arabesques, and stylized vegetation” were the most common themes.<sup>42</sup> Mosaic became incredibly popular for its utility, but chiefly to express social prestige and luxury. Indeed, mosaic was included among the fine arts and “participated in the general evolution of art,” reflecting the “iconographic and stylistic trends” of the major arts.<sup>43</sup>

Glass tesserae were developed early in the empire, and were incorporated into wall mosaics alongside pieces of stone. Cut from large plates of glass, and colored via chemical oxides, the tesserae contributed “a marvellous effect of light” and broadened the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 58. Nearly every subject was explored in Roman mosaic including mythology, history, literature, typography, and landscapes. Mosaics often reflected their setting; for example, hunting scenes were popular in dining rooms. Mosaic was also used to reference the life of the owner, whether by portraiture or through symbols of personal wealth. See *Greek and Roman Mosaic*, 77.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 49.

color palette considerably.<sup>44</sup> Gold tesserae—the epitome of luxury—were made by inserting gold leaf between two layers of clear glass and were first used in the ceiling decoration of Nero’s villa Domus Aurea in the first century AD.<sup>45</sup> The largest and most complex surviving example of Roman mosaics are in the Villa Romana del Casale (4<sup>th</sup> century AD), built by Tunisian artisans in Sicily. Located on the walls and floor of the structure, the mosaics depict images from mythology, literature, and Roman life (Figure 2).<sup>46</sup>



Figure 2: Mosaic in the Grande Caccia Corridor, Villa Romana del Casale, 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Polychrome mosaic. Sicily, Italy. Italia.it. <http://www.italia.it/en/home>. (accessed February 22, 2015).

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>46</sup> One of 49 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Italy. The site was abandoned in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and rediscovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The floor mosaics measure 37,000 square feet.

By the late Roman period, mosaic was highly developed and refined. A large-scale project required multiple artisans, each of whom specialized in a particular part of the process. Tesserae were cut in squares and usually measured one centimeter for large surface areas, and four millimetres or less for more detailed work. The ground was prepared by the *pavimentarius* (paver), while the full design was then drawn out—with an “awl, piece of charcoal, or charcoal powder blown through a straw”<sup>47</sup>—on the final layer of plaster by the *pictor* (painter). The *tessellarius* (maker of tesserae for pavements) laid the majority of the mosaic, except for the figures, which were completed by the *musivarius* (mosaic worker).<sup>48</sup>

While the earliest floor mosaics were laid in cement, Romans set tesserae in mortar, inserting each cube by hand or with tweezers.<sup>49</sup> Designs that were especially complex were assembled on a terracotta slab in the workshop and then inserted into the floor.<sup>50</sup> Artisans worked in what is known as the direct method: inserting tesserae directly into the mortar as the design progressed. The indirect and double indirect methods were developed much later.

By the late fourth century AD, Roman mosaics were declining in quality and popularity. Early Christian art gave mosaic “a new impetus,” and figures had “a new sense of naturalism and classicism.”<sup>51</sup> Christian churches were covered with gold and colored glass tesserae depicting Biblical scenes and iconography that could be “read” by

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 19.

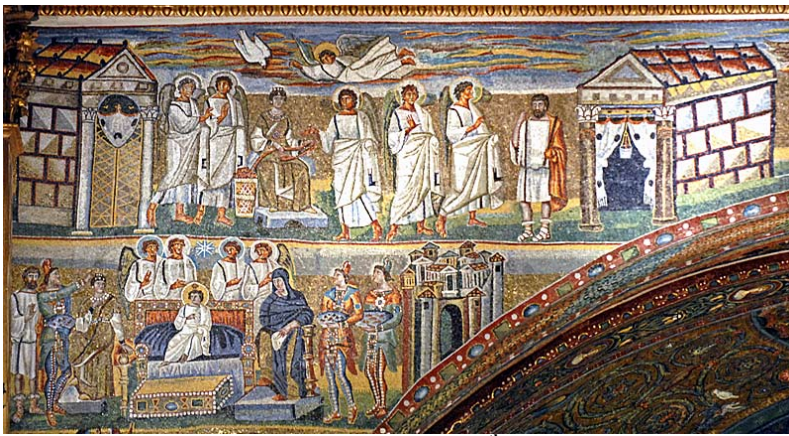
<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 17. Smaller projects were often completed by a single craftsman.

<sup>49</sup> Cement is a powdery substance made of calcined lime and clay. When mixed with water, the cement then hardens. When mixed with sand, gravel, and water, it makes concrete. Mortar is a soft paste made of sand, water, and a binding agent such as cement; it then hardens.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 68.

the faithful. Particularly stunning are those commissioned by Pope Sixtus III in the fifth century AD for the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore (Figure 3). The mosaics, 27 panels that run along the nave and across the apse, represent events from the Old Testament—featuring Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua—and exemplify the artistic range of mosaic art of the period.



**Figure 3: Nave mosaic, *Adoration of the Magi*, 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Polychrome and gold leaf mosaic. Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome. Image by Adrian Fletcher for Paradoxplace.com, <http://www.paradoxplace.com> (accessed February 22, 2015).**

Byzantine art came to greatly influence Roman mosaics throughout the seventh and ninth centuries. However, in the last great period of Roman mosaic art (12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries), many examples have a distinctive Roman style that is once again classical rather than Byzantine. Mosaics by Pietro Cavallini (1259–c. 1330) in the basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere are among the most significant of the period, specifically his six scenes from the life of the Virgin (1290) that are praised for their realism (Figure 4).





Figure 4: Pietro Cavallini, *Nativity of the Virgin*, 1296-1300. Polychrome and gold leaf mosaic. Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Web Gallery of Art. <http://www.wga.hu>. (accessed February 22, 2015).

In the Byzantine period (6<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries), the art of mosaic achieved its greatest splendor, reflecting the shift of world power from Rome to Byzantium. Byzantine mosaics are regarded as “the ultimate triumph of spirituality in art,”<sup>52</sup> and elaborate a “new canon of art.”<sup>53</sup> The sixth century mosaics in the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy, demonstrate the artistic development of the medium. In a profusion of symbolic imagery, the presbytery mosaics depict the Lamb of God, supported by angels. Above the arch are angels flanked by representations of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, while the entire surface is covered by a plethora of flowers, birds (including peacocks), animals, and stars (Figure 5).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>53</sup> Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Christian Mosaics, from the Fourth to the Seventh Centuries, Rome, Naples, Milan, Ravenna*, Iris Books (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 10.

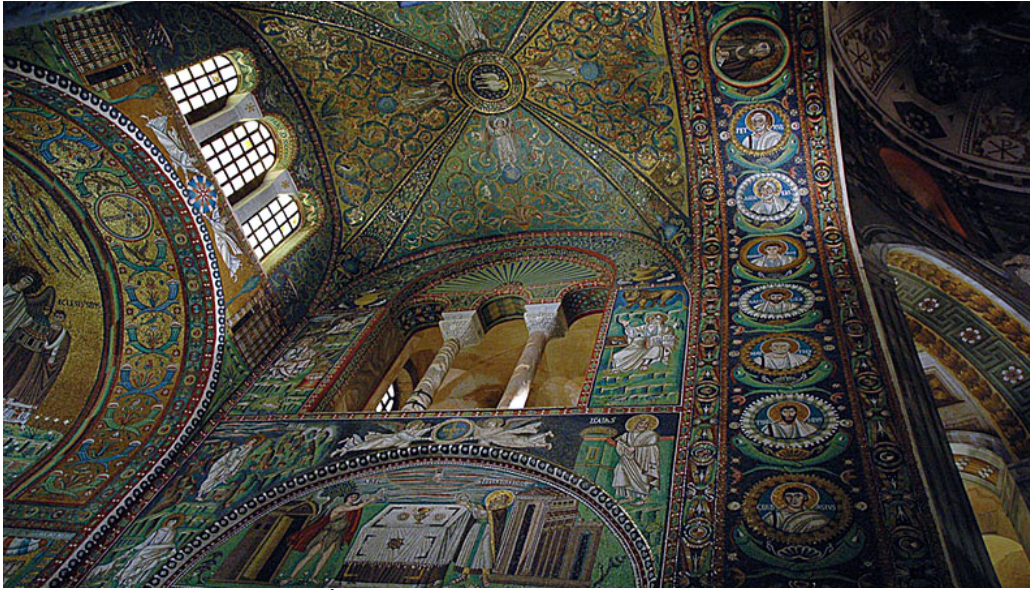


Figure 5: Presbytery mosaics, 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Polychrome and gold leaf mosaic. Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy. Opera di Religione della Diocesi di Ravenna. <http://www.ravennamosaici.it>. (accessed February 22, 2015).

Where Roman mosaic decorated part of a wall, now mosaics covered the entire architectural space, in order to convey an “insubstantial world of pure spirit.”<sup>54</sup> All spatial depth is abandoned, alluding to infinity, free of time and space; this concept was often conveyed by the use of a solid gold background. Figures are abstracted and illusionistic, as if “passing through this world, on their way to eternal life elsewhere,”<sup>55</sup> and their size reflects their importance within the hierarchy, therefore, “principle figures are generally larger than others.”<sup>56</sup> With the fall of the Byzantine Empire following the Turkish conquest (15<sup>th</sup> cen), the art of mosaic largely disappeared and wall fresco became the popular choice for decoration.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Meyer, *Byzantine Mosaics* (London, New York: B. T. Batsford, 1952), 6.

<sup>55</sup> Pappalardo, 75

<sup>56</sup> Meyer, 7.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the archaeological discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum sparked a new interest in ancient mosaics, but it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that any notable efforts were made to revive the art form. In his popular aesthetic treatise, *The Stones of Venice* (1851), John Ruskin praises twelfth and thirteenth-century Byzantine mosaics, specifically those of St. Mark's in Venice, as "the most effective works of religious art whatsoever."<sup>57</sup> These great mosaics, Ruskin continues, "covered the walls and roofs of the churches with inevitable lustre; they could not be ignored or escaped from; their size rendered them majestic, their distance mysterious, their colour attractive."<sup>58</sup> Underlying his treatise was a petition for the restoration of Venice, which had fallen into a state of ruin; even at St. Mark's, mosaics were falling off the walls and being sold.<sup>59</sup>

Influenced by Ruskin, Antonio Salviati (1816-1890) sought to revive the mosaic-making industry in Venice, and was initially concerned with the restoration of mosaic works, although he later went on to produce figural mosaics as well.<sup>60</sup> With the help of a technician, he began manufacturing colored and metallic smalti.<sup>61</sup> Through his efforts, he "virtually single-handedly, facilitated the rebirth of mosaic making in Venice."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> John Ruskin, *The Stones Of Venice*, ed. J. G. Links (New York: Da Capo Press, 2003), 155.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>59</sup> Sheldon Barr, *Venetian Glass Mosaics, 1860-1917* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2008), 9.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Smalti, sometimes referred to as Byzantine glass mosaic tile, were developed for use in mosaics during the Byzantine Empire. Smalti are opaque glass tiles made by mixing molten glass with metal oxides for color; the mixture is poured into flat slabs, cooled, and broken into individual pieces. The molten mixture can also be topped with gold leaf, followed by a thin glass film to protect against tarnishing.

<sup>62</sup> Barr, 10.



Salviati's mosaics were successful in England<sup>63</sup> and widely exhibited at international expositions, including the World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago, 1893). In the influential *Hints on Household Taste* (1862), author Charles Locke Eastlake cites Salviati's mosaics for St. Paul's Cathedral and notes that mosaic had "advantages in mural decoration over fresco, in such climate as that of England."<sup>64</sup> Salviati's work predates Tiffany's and is stylistically very different, characterized by the use of the tiny smalti that he manufactured. Salviati's method, however, was criticized by many of his contemporaries; for example, the artist Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) objected to the tesserae being "too regular and too mechanical."<sup>65</sup> It is important to note that, in addition to the work of Salviati and the revivalists in England, mosaic art was also being practiced at the Pontifical Studio in Rome, the Imperial Studio in St. Petersburg, and the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.<sup>66</sup> Overall, the efforts of these mosaic centers failed to bring the medium into a modern expression.

It was American artists, most notably Tiffany, who realized and expanded the decorative possibilities of mosaic in the modern era. Until this development, the art of

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<sup>63</sup> According to Sheldon Barr, by 1867 Salviati's Venetian mosaics were in more than 50 churches in England (both Catholic and Protestant), installed "on the altars, the walls, the choirs, the pavements, the baptismal fonts, etc." See p.28.

<sup>64</sup> Charles Locke Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1872), 254. As cited in "Louis C. Tiffany and the Dawning of a New Era for Mosaics," *The Tiffany Chapel at the Morse Museum*. Eastlake's book was popular in America and was reprinted several times beginning in 1868.

<sup>65</sup> Barr, 70.

<sup>66</sup> C. Harrison Townsend, *Cantor Lectures on Mosaic: Its History and Practice*, Cantor Lectures (London: Printed by W. Trousce, 1893), 21.

mosaic simply had “not kept pace [with] the course of its sister arts.”<sup>67</sup> Tiffany’s vision was modern and inspired by an admiration of the great artworks of the past.

To create something new, Tiffany first wanted to return to what he called “the true mosaic principle,”<sup>68</sup> that is, “the arrangement in juxtaposition of small gem-like pieces of glass having...brilliancy and depth in color.”<sup>69</sup> In 1893 he wrote, “in reviving old motives we have no doubt discovered new possibilities in methods and materials.”<sup>70</sup> These new possibilities were explored simultaneously in his development of glass mosaics and windows. His friend Siegfried Bing (1838-1905), famed art dealer and founder of the L’Art Nouveau gallery in Paris, recounted that Tiffany’s task was “actually a dual one”: requiring the use of “material equal in quality to beautiful early glass” and “the use of new techniques.”<sup>71</sup> Tiffany’s so-called “modern method” advanced mosaic art beyond its “tessaraic lines.”<sup>72</sup>

Historically, figures and designs appear as flat on the mosaic surface. Tiffany sought to create mosaics with dimensionality and perspective, an entirely new concept and a significant departure from traditional methods.<sup>73</sup> To achieve this, he devoted a great deal of research to the selection and combination of materials. Tiffany explains, “I have been studying the effects of different glasses to accomplish perspective, and effects

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<sup>67</sup> W. H. Thomas, “Glass-Mosaic: An Old Art With A New Distinction,” *The International Studio* 28, 3 (May 1906), 75.

<sup>68</sup> Tiffany, “American Art Supreme in Colored Glass,” 1.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Siegfried Bing, *Artistic America, Tiffany Glass, and Art Nouveau* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1970), 136.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas, 76.

<sup>73</sup> *Dream Garden* (Philadelphia, PA: The Curtis Publishing Company, 1957), 6.

of colors of different textures—opaque and transparent, of lustrous and nonlustrous, of absorbing and reflecting glasses.”<sup>74</sup>

Using various glass types with different textures, transparencies, and opacities, Tiffany sought to give his mosaics depth and movement and, ultimately, perspective. No longer adhering to tessaraic forms, the glass was irregularly cut to the specifications of the design, further emphasizing the intended realism. The effect of light on the textural mix produced an effect that Tiffany described as “the most remarkable and beautiful.”<sup>75</sup> The result of the completed mosaic, he continues, “[illustrates] the mystery; and it tells the story, giving play to imagination, which is the message it seeks to convey.”<sup>76</sup> In his glass experiments for window production, Tiffany said he was “untrammelled by tradition” and “moved solely by a desire to produce a thing of beauty, irrespective of any rule, doctrine, or theory beyond that governing good taste and true artistic judgement.”<sup>77</sup> There can be little doubt that the same desire motivated him in his work in glass mosaics.

### **Tiffany and Mosaic**

Tiffany made numerous trips abroad to many locations that are renowned for having the most famous extant mosaics in the world. Surely, these experiences sparked his passion for mosaic decoration. His first trip abroad was in 1865, at the young age of seventeen. During five months of travel, he visited England, Ireland, France, and Italy. His sketches from the trip indicate he made stops in Paris, Rome, Naples, Palermo and

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Tiffany, “American Art Supreme in Colored Glass.” 623.

Pompeii, Sorrento, and Florence.<sup>78</sup> Four years later, in 1870, he spent over six months traveling abroad with fellow painter Robert Swain Gifford (1840-1905). During the extensive trip, the two artists visited London, Paris, Madrid, Gibraltar, Tangier, Malta, Sicily, Naples, Amalfi, Sorrento, Alexandria, Cairo, Tunisia, Algeria, Rome, and Florence.<sup>79</sup> Tiffany continued traveling to Italy throughout his career. It is reasonable to assume that during his travels he would have seen many of the world's finest mosaics, including those at Palermo and Monreale, San Vitale in Ravenna, and San Marco's in Venice.<sup>80</sup> In his personal archives, Tiffany had photographs of historic mosaic examples in both the Italian and Byzantine methods. In the following survey of his mosaic work, both of these styles can be identified as sources of influence throughout his career.

When writing of Tiffany, Bing recounted, "What impressed the young artist and filled his heart with a transport of emotion never felt before was the sight of the Byzantine basilicas, with their dazzling mosaics, wherein were synthesized all the essential laws and all the imaginable possibilities of the great art of decoration."<sup>81</sup> Trained as a landscape painter, Tiffany possessed a "passionate enthusiasm for color"<sup>82</sup> and a keen sense of its subtle interactions with light. It is of little surprise then that he was deeply struck by the mosaics' "dazzling" effect as he watched the light stream across the colorful tesserae and illuminate the space. Tiffany recognized the potential of the

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<sup>78</sup> For a chronology of the life of Louis C. Tiffany, see Barbara Veith's, "Chronology," in *Louis Comfort Tiffany and Laurelton Hall: An Artist's Country Estate* (New York: New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2006), 225-233. I am grateful to the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art for providing me with the itinerary details from Tiffany's sketchbook, created during his first European trip.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> J. B. Bullen, "Louis Comfort Tiffany and Romano-Byzantine Design," *The Burlington Magazine*, (June 2005), 390. Tiffany's first trip to Europe included stops in England, Ireland, France, and Italy.

<sup>81</sup> Bing, 195.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

material as ideal for decorating interiors of all types and he began “employing it wherever he could, endeavoring to make manifest to all its color-decorative possibilities.”<sup>83</sup>

As a decorative element, mosaic was also a durable and relatively permanent choice. A brochure on mosaic, published by his firm in 1896, emphasized the durability of the material, noting it “would resist effectually the corrosion of natural and artificial decay...It is non-absorbent, fireproof, and practically indestructible except by direct violence.”<sup>84</sup> Mosaic would become, therefore, an ideal choice for the monumental building of the period, being preferred over murals in public and religious spaces.<sup>85</sup>

Tiffany incorporated mosaic into his earliest decorative schemes for interiors of all types. In his early projects, mosaics were used for geometric patterning on walls and ceilings, but soon after he began producing figural and landscape scenes that were far more complex in design and execution. This artistic progression is not surprising; the intricacies of the art form had to first be learned, and then practiced, before attempting more challenging works.

Tiffany first used glass mosaic to decorate the main hall and stairways of New York’s prestigious Union League Club (c. 1879).<sup>86</sup> The project was in collaboration with other artists, including John LaFarge, Cottier & Company, and Frank Hill Smith. In his treatment of the grand staircase and halls, Tiffany embellished the surfaces “with small

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<sup>83</sup> Tiffany Glass & Decorating Company, *Glass Mosaic*, 14.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>85</sup> Pilgrim, 135.

<sup>86</sup> Stern, *New York 1880*, 204. The building and its decoration no longer survive. Tiffany and various authors have dated this project to 1879; however, it is more likely that it was around 1881 or 1882. According to Stern, architects Peabody & Sterns won the architectural competition for the project in 1879, but The Union League Club did not move into the clubhouse until 1881.

triangles of silver leaf [with] an Oriental effect.”<sup>87</sup> He also incorporated “peacocks treated in the Venetian manner with glass mosaic,”<sup>88</sup> a motif that would reoccur in his work. In praise of the completed work, the *New York Times* wrote, “[the Club] has taken the lead [in arranging] for itself a habitation beautiful within and without.”<sup>89</sup> Soon after, Tiffany included mosaics in a lavish design for the drawing room of Cornelius Vanderbilt II’s new estate on Fifth Avenue (1881). The ceiling was composed of glass mosaic in small panels, at the center of which there was “a Moorish design” surrounded by a circle of cherubs; the glass panels were subdivided by “demarcations of woodwork in geometrical designs.”<sup>90</sup> The ceiling mosaics depicted butterflies, orchids, and other flora and fauna and had an “iridescent” effect similar to that of ancient Roman glass.<sup>91</sup>

In 1885 Tiffany included mosaic decoration in the eclectic interior of his own apartment, which occupied the top two floors of his father’s Romanesque-style house. The house was located on 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and Madison Avenue and was designed by the prominent architectural firm of McKim, Meade and White. The decoration was described as “deep blue glass mosaics studded with jewels which sparkle in the dull light

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<sup>87</sup> Frelinghuysen, “Louis C. Tiffany and the Dawning of a New Era for Mosaics,” 43. Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art and Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, *The Tiffany Chapel at the Morse Museum*. As cited in “The Architectural Progress of New York City,” *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly*, 15 (April 1883), 387.

<sup>88</sup> Frelinghuysen, 43.

<sup>89</sup> Stern, *New York 1880*, 213.

<sup>90</sup> Amelia Peck, Carol Irish, and N.Y. Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Candace Wheeler: The Art and Enterprise of American Design, 1875-1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 131. As cited in “Building Intelligence,” *Manufacture and Builder*, 14 (April 1882), 90. The drawing room was completed in 1883 and cost fifty thousand dollars, an incredible sum at the time. Other rooms in the home featured work by John LaFarge, J.A. Holzer, and Candace Wheeler.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

of day, and which at night must be resplendent above the pendant gas-light.”<sup>92</sup> By this description one can imagine that, in his own home, Tiffany captured a “dazzling” mosaic effect similar to what he had experienced in his travels abroad twenty years earlier. From 1886 onward, glass mosaic was featured prominently in Tiffany Studios advertisements and promotional material.

In these early projects, Tiffany’s use of mosaic decoration had been confined to a select area within a commission; these spaces were part of a broader aesthetic that also included the work of other artists. In 1886 he was given creative license to decorate the new home of his wealthy patrons Louisine (1855-1925) and Henry Osborne (1847-1907) Havemeyer. The Havemeyers were avid and prolific art collectors, and were chiefly responsible for bringing the work of Impressionist artists to America. Not surprisingly, their new residence on Fifth Avenue was to be a work of art in itself, with an interior décor that would best showcase their collection of Asian art, Islamic pottery, and Dutch and Impressionist paintings. The Havemeyer residence was Tiffany’s first opportunity to create an entire story with a unified aesthetic and he chose mosaic as the primary medium with which to execute his vision.

While the exterior of the Havermeier house was conservative Romanesque-revival, the whole interior was like a jewel box, encrusted with Tiffany’s colorful glass mosaics.<sup>93</sup> Describing the ceiling in the Rembrandt Room, Louisine wrote, “[it] glows like the rich mosaic of the East, like Saint Sophia and the splendid tombs of

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<sup>92</sup> Frelinghuysen, 44. As quoted from Mary Gay Humphreys, “Bits in the Tiffany House,” *Art Amateur*, 16, 2 (1887), 40.

<sup>93</sup> Charles Coolidge Haight designed the house and the project took seven years to complete. Tiffany’s mosaics in the hall are dated 1890-91.

Constantinople, like the Palatine Chapel of Palermo.”<sup>94</sup> The entrance hall (Figure 6) where guests were received, was particularly magnificent, and set the theme for the entire decorative scheme. The floors were composed of over one million Hispano-Moresque tiles and the walls were covered in geometric patterning of glass mosaic in soft shades of opalescent green and gold. The room was surrounded by a frieze inset with mosaic panels of Islamic-inspired *pavonine* (peacock) motifs set against a deep blue background (Figure 7).



**Figure 6:** Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, Entrance hall of H.O. Havemeyer House, 1892. 1 East 66<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City. Archival photograph, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. From *The Tiffany Chapel at the Morse Museum* by Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, et. al., Winter Park, Florida: The Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, 2002, 36, pg. 45.

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<sup>94</sup> Bullen, 396. As cited in L. W. Havemeyer, *Sixteen to Sixty: Memoirs of a Collector*, New York, 1961, 16.



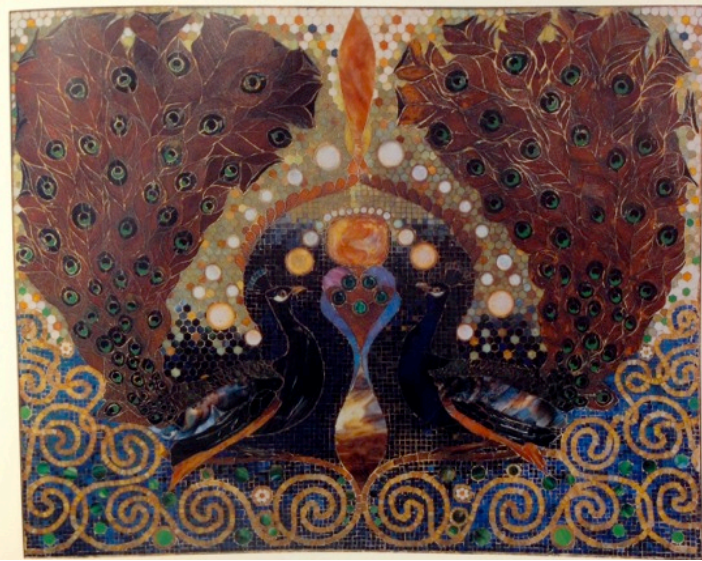


Figure 7: Louis Comfort Tiffany, *Pavonine Mosaic Frieze* from H.O. Havemeyer House, 1890-91. Glass mosaic. University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, Michigan. From *The Tiffany Chapel at the Morse Museum* by Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, et. al., Winter Park, Florida: The Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, 2002, 37, pg. 46.

At the central focal point of the room, above the mantel, Tiffany once again included the installation of a pair of peacocks in gold and midnight blue mosaic, surrounded by golden scrolls and glass “gems” (Figure 8). Tiffany’s peacocks for the Union League no longer survive, but when looking at the pair for the Havemeyer’s hall it is clear that by this time he was successfully working with sectiliae, which lend dimensionality to the birds’ plumage and a graceful curvature to their bodies. In his earliest endeavors in mosaic, Tiffany “discovered how to adopt the lofty character of Byzantine splendour to contemporary taste.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Bing, 141.



**Figure 8:** Louis Comfort Tiffany, *Peacock Mosaic* from H.O. Havemeyer House, 1890-91. Glass mosaic. University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, Michigan. From *The Tiffany Chapel at the Morse Museum* by Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, et. al., Winter Park, Florida: The Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, 2002, 38, pg. 47.

### **Mosaics in the Ecclesiastical Interior**

Tiffany first utilized mosaic in an ecclesiastical interior in 1886, when he decorated St. Hubert Chapel (Figure 9) located on the estate of tobacco tycoon Francis S. Kinney in New Jersey. For the décor of the diminutive, rustic space, Tiffany drew inspiration from St. Hubert's own medieval era, which is reflected in the richly colored mosaic, leaded glass windows, sculpted bronze relief, and furnishings. The project took just over three years to complete and remains relatively intact today.



**Figure 9: Louis C. Tiffany and Company, interior decoration, 1886. St. Hubert's Chapel, Kinnelon, New Jersey. From the booklet "St Hubert's Chapel 1886," provided during tours of the chapel, n.p.**

Tiffany was assisted in the project by a team of artists under the direction of Jacob A. Holzer (1858-1938),<sup>96</sup> who had officially joined the firm that same year. Together with Tiffany, the team of artists traveled abroad to study original artifacts, including mosaic floors and furnishings.<sup>97</sup> The mosaic floor of St. Hubert's was especially intricate; it was composed of three hundred thousand pieces of marble in patterns inspired by thirteenth-century designs, and included birds and grapes.<sup>98</sup> Glass mosaic and glass jewels encrusted the numidian marble altar and gilded tabernacle; glass gems were also used in a lighting fixture above the altar. The entire scheme shimmered in tones of gold, salmon, and green.

<sup>96</sup> He is usually referred to as J.A. Holzer.

<sup>97</sup> Booklet "St Hubert's Chapel 1886," provided during tours of the chapel.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

Following St. Hubert's, Tiffany integrated mosaic into the decoration of numerous churches, each aesthetically distinct, whereby proving the versatility of the medium. One particularly noteworthy example is St. Agnes Chapel (1890-92), which was designed by the prominent New York architect William A. Potter (1842-1909) in the Romanesque style and featured Byzantine and Roman-inspired mosaics.<sup>99</sup> The brochure *Tiffany Glass Mosaics for Walls, Ceilings, Inlays and Other Ornamental Work*, published by the Tiffany Studios, notes that the decorative scheme included a "white marble altar, reredos, pulpit, chancel rail, sedilia, and baptismal font enriched with inlays of glass mosaic."<sup>100</sup> The extent to which mosaic was used is rather ambiguous from this list, but period photographs show that mosaic was a key decorative element throughout the nave and chancel (Figure 10).

The mosaics in St. Agnes Chapel featured complex geometric patterning in a style that is similar to Italian Cosmatesque mosaics, known as Cosmati after the family of medieval artisans who produced it. Cosmati work was used prominently in Italian churches during the medieval and Renaissance periods. Tiffany was very familiar with the method, collecting souvenir photographs of Cosmati for his personal archives, and most likely inspired his work at St. Agnes Chapel. Upon its completion, the *New York Times* praised the "magnificent" structure as "the finest church structure barring the cathedral in New York City [and] perhaps the most perfectly equipped structure for

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<sup>99</sup> The chapel was located between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> avenues in New York City. The rector was Rev. William Manning who later became rector of Trinity and bishop of York. In addition to the chapel, there was also a school, kindergarten, and active guilds. The chapel prospered until around 1930 when the church moved to the Upper East Side. Due to declining numbers, the chapel was officially closed in 1943 and demolished in 1944. None of its contents are known to survive.

<sup>100</sup> *Glass Mosaic*, 22.

religious work of all sorts in the United States.”<sup>101</sup>



**Figure 10: Tiffany Glass Company, mosaics and interior decoration, 1889. St. Agnes Chapel, New York City. From the Collections of the Museum of the City of New York.**  
<http://daytoninmanhattan.blogspot.com/2013/01/the-lost-st-agnes-chapel-w-91st-street>. (accessed June 4, 2015).

Two years later, Tiffany and his firm were hired to redecorate the Gothic revival interior of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church (built 1827-28) in Troy, New York (Figure 11). The church is a rare surviving example of a fully integrated design executed by the firm.<sup>102</sup> The redecoration included mosaics, woodwork and wall treatments, hymnal boards, leaded glass windows, hanging lamps, and an acoustic canopy over the pulpit.

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<sup>101</sup> Stern, 782.

<sup>102</sup> Other fully integrated interiors include those at St. Michael’s Church, New York City (1895); All Hallows’ Church, Wyncote, Pennsylvania (ca. 1896); First Presbyterian Church, Bath, New York (1897); Church of the Covenant, Boston, Massachusetts (1890s); St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Paterson, New Jersey (ca. 1897); Advent Lutheran Church, New York City (1900); and Christ Church Cobble Hill, Brooklyn (1916).

Structural repairs were also completed.<sup>103</sup>



Figure 11: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, glass mosaics and interior decoration, 1891-93. St. Paul Episcopal Church, Troy, New York. Image © 2013 FRIENDS OF ST. PAULS.

A surviving bill from the firm lists the cost of “glass mosaic and relief work over reredos, also wooden frame, \$575.00” and “marble work and mosaic floor, \$1,671.60.”<sup>104</sup> An article in the *Troy Daily Press* noted, “The cost of the new interior is about \$70,000, not including windows and other memorials yet to be put in.”<sup>105</sup> The chancel floor is composed of marble mosaic in green, gold, and tan, with central motif of “the sword of the spirit encircled with palms, the emblem of St. Paul as a martyr.”<sup>106</sup> The tall dado on

<sup>103</sup> According to the church’s Friends of St. Paul’s, prior to the renovations, the walls were no longer bearing the weight of the roof. The firm was instrumental in making the structural repairs necessary to correct these problems.

<sup>104</sup> *In Account with Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company / 331 to 341 Fourth Avenue, New York*, (February 25, 1894), an itemized bill, from the archives of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. In 2015 these line items would cost approximately \$15,134.00 and \$44,000.00, respectively.

<sup>105</sup> “A Beautified Sanctuary—The Rich Interior Ornamentation of St. Paul’s Church,” *The Troy Daily Press*, (September 13, 1893).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*



both sides of the Sienna marble altar is solid mosaic in “gold mottled with green.”<sup>107</sup>

The reredos at St. Paul’s was enriched with colorful glass figural mosaics depicting the Archangel Michael, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Beloved, and the Archangel Gabriel, with a central crucifix backed by solid gold mosaic (Figure 12).<sup>108</sup> The reredos constitutes one of the earliest ecclesiastical figural mosaics produced by the firm. Compared to later, more developed works, the reredos is far less exquisite in the composition, treatment of figures, and color palette (Figure 13). Nevertheless, this example marks a significant starting point for the firm.



**Figure 12: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, reredos, 1891. Glass mosaic. St. Paul Episcopal Church, Troy, New York. Image courtesy of St. Paul Episcopal Church.**

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> The reredos is described in *Glass Mosaic* (1896) as “Pictures of Saints, in the Reredos, made of glass mosaic.”



**Figure 13: Detail of Archangel Gabriel from the reredos, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, 1891. Glass mosaic. St. Paul Episcopal Church, Troy, New York. Image courtesy of St. Paul Episcopal Church.**

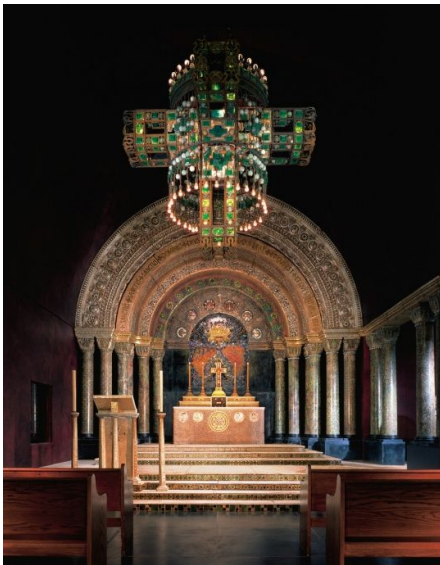
The completed interior was heralded as a great success. In the rector's sermon, given at the re-opening of the church, he specifically praised the contributions of Holzer, who oversaw the construction and ornamentation of the project: "J. A. Holzer has wrought for us that fullness of religious feeling, that absolute fidelity to the demands of his art, that freedom from a sordid and commercial spirit which characterized the ancient builders of Italy."<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> "Dr. Edgar Enos' Sermon [about the New Work by the Tiffany Company]," *The Troy Daily Press*, (November 13, 1893), 4. In the sermon Dr. Enos states that Tiffany's first contribution was the mosaic reredos (1891) and while working on the project, "representatives of the firm, at their own insistence and expense, furnished an elevation drawing of a new, possible interior for St. Paul's church. The drawing was placed on exhibition at the Martha Memorial house, and attracted a wide and favorable interest." When the vestry decided to rebuild the interior, several architects bid on the project, but many did so on the condition that the so-called Tiffany plans would be accepted (the plans had been admired by many while on exhibition). This instance demonstrates Tiffany's business savvy, but also how well esteemed his work was during the period.



Tiffany's early efforts in mosaic reached a point of culmination in the mosaic-encrusted chapel that he exhibited at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 (Figure 14). The impact of this major work cannot be overemphasized. Compared to the mosaics completed for St. Agnes Chapel the previous year, which were extensive in their own right, the mosaics for the Tiffany Chapel were profuse, brilliantly colored, and incorporated into nearly every surface of the interior and its furnishings. The Byzantine model, rather than the Cosmati style, inspired the design of the mosaics. The addition of mother-of-pearl, glass gems, semi-precious stones, and gold inlay added texture and brilliancy.<sup>110</sup>



**Figure 14: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, *Tiffany Chapel*, 1893. Glass mosaic, marble, and interior decoration. The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida. Image ©2015 Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, Inc.**

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<sup>110</sup> Tiffany Glass & Decorating Company, *A Synopsis of the Exhibit of the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company in the American Section of the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building at the World's Fair, Jackson Park, Chicago, Illinois, 1893, with an Appendix on Memorial Windows* (New York: Tiffany Glass & Decorating Co, 1893), 11-13.

The mosaics in the Tiffany Chapel feature intricate patterning and imagery derived from Christian symbolism. At the center of the sanctuary, the white Carrera marble altar was covered with one hundred and fifty thousand pieces of white glass tesserae, “relieved and ornamented” with emblems of the Four Evangelists and monogram of the Holy Name.<sup>111</sup> The reredos depicts the Vine, (alluding to the Sacrament of the Eucharist) and central pair of peacocks with a heavenly crown, which symbolizes immortality (Figure 15).<sup>112</sup> The entire design is composed of polished black marble and glass mosaic of deep blues, gold, and reddish brown. According to the firm, the symbolism of the design is two-fold: “first, to convey to the minds of the spectators that the joys of immortality are dependent upon the Vine of the New Testament, and, secondly, to illustrate by symbols the sacred texts which are inscribed upon the retables.”<sup>113</sup>

The ecclesiastical design and feeling of the space was incredibly reverent; the execution and luster of the mosaic decoration was resplendent. Many newspaper articles of the period remarked that the chapel was “so perfect in its appointment” that it was not uncommon for men to “remove their hats upon entering.”<sup>114</sup> During the exhibition, *The Decorator and Furnisher* praised the chapel for being “entirely original in its decorative details” and for illustrating the “world-wide possibilities of American decorative art.”<sup>115</sup> Romanesque in its architecture and Byzantine-inspired in its decoration, the chapel was a

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<sup>111</sup> *A Synopsis*, 11.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> “Chicago,” *The American Architect and Building News*, 42, 933 (November 11, 1893), 73.

<sup>115</sup> “Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company’s Exhibit at the Columbian Exposition,” *The Decorator and Furnisher*, 23, 1 (October 1893), 10-11.

work of true American eclecticism.<sup>116</sup> More than one-and-a-half million people visited the chapel, and for many, the experience and splendor of mosaic art was entirely new.



Figure 15: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, *Tiffany Chapel Reredos*, 1893. Glass mosaic, 90 x 72 inches. Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida. Image ©2015 Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, Inc.

The Tiffany Studios won fifty-four awards for their display at the Columbian Exposition, the largest number granted to any single exhibitor. The success of the chapel gained the firm international recognition, and Tiffany's name became synonymous with modern mosaic production, both in America and abroad.<sup>117</sup> By exhibiting a work that was largely composed of mosaic decoration, Tiffany made a statement about the role and aesthetic value of mosaic art. The chapel brilliantly showcased the firm's abilities in ecclesiastical mosaic decoration, and numerous commissions subsequently followed as a

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<sup>116</sup> Romanesque architecture was incredibly popular during the American Renaissance, particularly in New York City, and was thought to be especially well suited to church design.

<sup>117</sup> *Glass Mosaic*, p. 27.

result of its success. Mosaic was well on its way to being en vogue in American ecclesiastical spaces.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE ECCLESIASTICAL DEPARTMENT AT THE TIFFANY STUDIOS

Ecclesiastical objects, memorials, and church decoration in a variety of media were included in the Studios' earliest repertoire (Figure 16). As the church building boom in America escalated, the firm met the growing demand for artistic ecclesiastical goods, and religious denominations were among their most consistent patrons. The Tiffany Studios' name quickly became synonymous with fashionable church decoration and their ecclesiastical products were so successful that a department devoted to this production was established in 1889.<sup>118</sup> The new Ecclesiastical Department was responsible for the design and marketing of "all forms of church decoration and *instrumenta ecclesiastica*."<sup>119</sup> The department was a financially successful unit within the brand, so much so that, by 1910 it was reported, "the ecclesiastical work of the Studios [is] practically the foundation of the whole business structure."<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> The department was in operation until the company filed bankruptcy in 1932.

<sup>119</sup> Jennifer Perry Thalheimer, "Louis Comfort Tiffany's Gospel of good Taste," in *Louis C. Tiffany and the Art of Devotion*, 28. As quoted in "Special Mention," *Building*, trade supplement in back of Vol. XI (August 31, 1889), 2.

<sup>120</sup> John A. Offord, "True Expression of Industrial Art: The Highest Artistic Skill Practically Applied in Producing Beautiful Examples of Handicraft," *New York Observer and Chronicle*, 88, 3 (January 20, 1910), 90.



Figure 16: Advertisement, The Tiffany Glass Company, July 1887. From *Art Amateur: A Monthly Journal Devoted to Art in the Household*, July 1887, pg. 51.

The department was a large enterprise and efficiently structured. In 1895 Siegfried Bing described the overall organization as “a vast central workshop” with “an army of craftsmen...all working to give shape to the carefully planned concepts of a group of directing artists, themselves united by a common current of ideas.”<sup>121</sup> While Tiffany’s progressive spirit as artistic director pervaded all aspects of the business, the creativity of individual artists was highly encouraged. This structure was described at the time as being “so skillfully organized, that it allows for the personal interest on the part of the worker, as well as obedience to the inspiration from the fountainhead.”<sup>122</sup> Within the

<sup>121</sup> Bing, *Artistic America, Tiffany Glass, and Art Nouveau*, 146.

<sup>122</sup> Cecilia Waern, “The Industrial Arts of America: The Tiffany Glass and Decorating Co.,” *International Studio*, 2, 53 (August 1897), 157.

department was a hierarchy comprised of business managers, upper-level artists and designers, artisans and apprentices, with a leading artist at the head.<sup>123</sup>

The department was full-service for ecclesiastical needs. In addition to interior decoration, they produced memorial mosaics and windows, bronze tablets, monuments, and furnishings for church and altar. A variety of mediums, including metal, wood, glass, stone, and textile, were employed with the finest skill in the making of these objects. By offering an expansive variety of products, at various price points, the firm was able to reach a greater market; a patron could purchase anything from a single chalice to a custom memorial to an entire decorated interior.

Mosaic decoration constituted a significant portion of the department's output. The medium was employed on a range of products, from mosaic-encrusted candlesticks to full-scale figural murals and flooring. The promotional brochure, *Memorials in Glass and Stone*, published by the department in 1913, advertised "products executed in glass," including "glass mosaic tablets, figure mosaics, decorative mosaics, ornamental mosaics, [and] architectural mosaics," as well as altars, fonts, lecterns, and baptisteries encrusted with glass and marble mosaic.<sup>124</sup> As this listing indicates, the medium was widely used and very versatile.

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<sup>123</sup> Edwin Stanton George (1868-after 1940) was the business manager and served as Vice President, as noted on the 1930 United States Federal Census. It is very likely that artist Caryl Coleman (1840-1928) was head of the department for the first decade until 1899 when he left to become the president of the Church Glass and Decorating Company. That same year Frederick Wilson was promoted to head of the department. Joseph Briggs (1873-1937) also came to have an important role in the department, although those details are not yet clear.

<sup>124</sup> Tiffany Studios, *Memorials in Glass and Stone*. (Baltimore, MD: Munder Thomsen Company, 1913), 22. The department often included windows under the description of mosaic because they were created utilizing the "mosaic principle" and Tiffany's "modern mosaic method."

The variety of large-scale mosaics produced by the Ecclesiastical Department can be classified as ornamental, symbolic or landscape (non-figural), and figural. It is important to have a general sense of the variety of Tiffany's large-scale mosaic work in order to understand the artistry in the figural panels and the artistic contribution they made to church interiors. Ornamental mosaics were frequently integrated into ecclesiastical designs to embellish church furnishings—altars, baptisteries, and pulpits—as well as expansive flooring designs and wall coverings. Typical of such furnishings is the altar at All Hallows Church in Wyncote, Pennsylvania (Figure 17), composed of green opalescent sectiliae and creamy-golden tesserae, and the baptismal font at Christ Church in Pomfret, Connecticut (Figure 18) with its inlay of iridescent glass mosaic in a geometric pattern. Among the most extensive ornamental mosaics were those that adorned the interior of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church (1907) in New York City (Figure 19).<sup>125</sup> The elaborate mosaics in gold and iridescent glass glittered on nearly every surface and illuminated the cavernous space. The chancel wall featured an inlay of the Ten Commandments, spelled out in iridescent glass against a white mosaic background.

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<sup>125</sup> Tiffany and his family worshipped at Madison Square Presbyterian and Tiffany served on the building committee. The church was destroyed in 1918.





Figure 17: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, front of altar, c. 1896. Marble inlaid with glass mosaic. All Hallows Church, Wyncote, Pennsylvania. Image by Linda Gunn, church archivist, courtesy of All Hallows Church.



Figure 18: Tiffany Studios, Detail of base of Baptismal Font, Memorial to George Bradley and Emma Pendelton Bradley, 1908. Marble inlaid with glass mosaic. Christ Church, Pomfret, Connecticut. Image by Doug McClure, <http://zylopho.blogspot.com/2014/03/tiffany-exhibit-at-mobia-remembered.html> (accessed June 4, 2015).



Figure 19: Wurts Bros., New York, *Madison Square Presbyterian Church Dr. Parkhurst's church, interior at organ*, ca. 1905. Gelatin dry plate negative, 14 x 11 inches. From the Collections of the Museum of the City of New York.

A particularly elegant non-figural example is the “Peacock Mosaic” (Figure 20), installed above the altar in St. Paul Episcopal Church in Baltimore (1902). Consisting of three distinct panels, the large mosaic is composed of vibrant jewel tones against a solid gold background. The center panel depicts an intricate pair of peacocks, flanking a jewelled cross, and surrounded by a sinuous grapevine; the grapevine imagery is continued in the side panels. The theme of this mosaic recalls the peacock reredos designed for Tiffany’s Chapel at the Columbian Exposition (Figure 15), and once again, repeats the beloved Christian symbolism of the Eucharist and immortality. Less typical of non-figural mosaics is the *Wheel of Elijah* (1916) in Christ Church Cobble Hill in Brooklyn, New York (Figure 21).<sup>126</sup> The neutral color palette, dominant use of mother-

<sup>126</sup> The design for the mosaic was probably inspired by the Biblical account (see 2 Kings 2) of the prophet Elijah being taken up into heaven in a whirlwind, after the appearance of a chariot of fire.

of-pearl, and the abstract quality of the design are unusual, but also demonstrate the variety of artworks being produced.



Figure 20: Tiffany Studios, Detail of Peacock Reredos, 1902. Glass mosaic. St. Paul Episcopal Church, Baltimore, Maryland. Image courtesy of St. Paul Episcopal Church.

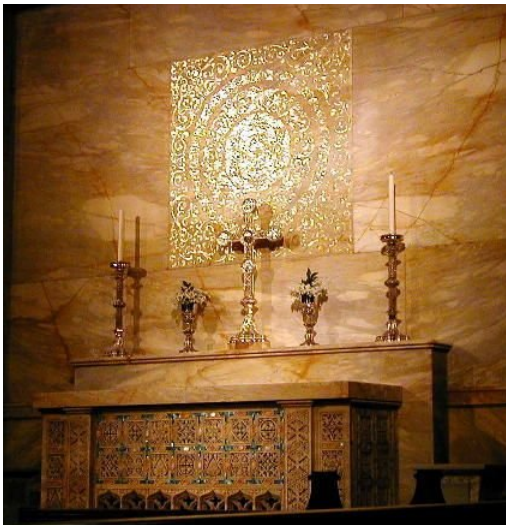


Figure 21: Tiffany Studios, *Wheel of Elijah*, 1916. Glass mosaic and mother of pearl. Christ Church Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, New York. Image [http://www.yelp.com/biz\\_photos/christ-church-cobble-hill-brooklyn?select=wpYdEgi6ZaEiBhcGLpS1g](http://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/christ-church-cobble-hill-brooklyn?select=wpYdEgi6ZaEiBhcGLpS1g) (accessed June 3, 2015).

The exceptional skill of the mosaic artisans, and the quality of the materials they employed, is best demonstrated by the scale and intricacy of the large, figural mosaics produced by the Ecclesiastical Department. These artworks exhibit a variety of subject matter and were fabricated from hand-cut tesserae and sectiliae, unlimited in color and naturalistic textures. Figural mosaics became a popular type of church decoration, in part due to their longevity when compared to fresco or mural painting. Architecturally, their reflective surfaces were a source of illumination; decoratively, their significant imagery was a means of contemplation and reflection for the congregation. The majority of figural mosaics were purchased by Christian churches, but Tiffany also produced mosaics for Jewish synagogues, as well as for mausoleums and memorial chapels.

Figural works range in size from framed tablets, to reredos, to larger-than-life-size panels. Framed tablets were popular for memorials and had the advantage of movability when compared to larger wall installations. Tablets were typically framed with bronze and included a memorial inscription. For the memorial mosaic *Truth* (1899), the accompanying inscription “THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE” relates appropriately to the figural representation of the virtue, which is depicted with a sword, flaming torch, and a key around its neck (Figure 22).<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> The Society, *The Second Church in Boston: Commemorative Services Held on the Completion of Two Hundred and Fifty Years Since Its Foundation, 1649-1899* (Boston, MA: The Standing Committee of the Second Church in Boston, 1900), 192. The mosaic is a memorial to John William Leighton and was given to Boston’s Second Church by his wife and daughter. It was originally set in a “massive frame of bronze” and hung over the pulpit. It was the first Tiffany Studios figural mosaic erected in the New England States. The church relocated in 1914 and the mosaic was installed in the reredos of the new building. In 1970, Second Church was sold to the Ruggles Baptist Church and the panel was put into storage. The Ruggles Church consigned the mosaic to Skinner’s auction in Boston in 1983 and it was sold into a private collection. A sketch of the Second Church *Truth* mosaic was included in William H. Thomas’ article “The Art of Mosaics” published in *Munsey’s Magazine* (December 1902) but is mistitled “Knowledge.” This design was reproduced multiple times in leaded glass.



Figure 22: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, *Truth*, 1899. Glass mosaic, 8 x 4 feet. Private Collection. Image courtesy of owner.

Reredos with figural mosaics were especially popular given the prominence and liturgical significance of their location. The reredos further emphasizes and ornaments the altar; therefore common imagery includes themes of worship, heaven, and the Eucharist. An exquisite example is the reredos in St. Matthew Church (1895) in Worcester, Massachusetts, which depicts six adoring angles gazing upward to heaven (Figure 23).<sup>128</sup> The devotional feeling of the mosaic is further enhanced by the shimmering, brilliant hues of the iridescent glass. Many figural mosaics were executed in a scale that was larger-than-life-size, such as the *Spirit of Light* (1915), which represents

<sup>128</sup> Unknown, "An Altar and Reredos of Marble and Mosaic," *The Churchman*, 71, 21 (May 25, 1895), 39. The mosaic reredos and altar are listed in *Glass Mosaic* (1896).



the Spirit of Light descending on the world of darkness (Figure 24).<sup>129</sup> The imposing mosaic is a feat of artistry measuring fourteen feet high and eight feet wide. The angel's strength and intensity are striking and rarely seen in Tiffany's works. The iridescent and opalescent glass adds to the visual power and otherworldliness of the piece.

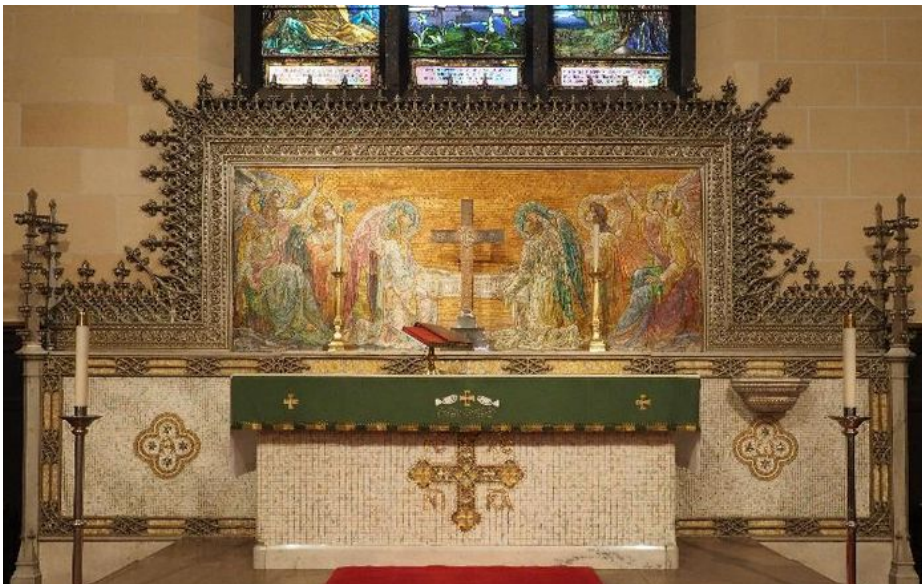


Figure 23: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, altar and reredos, 1896. Glass mosaic. St. Matthew Church, Worcester, Massachusetts. Cambridge2000.com. <http://www.cambridge2000.com/gallery2/html/2014/P7231562m.html>. (accessed June 3, 2015).

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<sup>129</sup> "Memorial to J. H. Parker," *The New York Times*, November 8, 1915. The mosaic is a memorial to James Henry Parker from his wife Julita A. Jones Parker and is inscribed "TO MY BELOVED HUSBAND." The mosaic was installed behind the pulpit of the Church of the Messiah on Park Avenue in New York City. In 1935 it was placed in the First Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, NY.



Figure 24: Tiffany Studios, *Spirit of Light*, 1915. Glass mosaic, 14 x 8 feet. First Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society, Brooklyn, New York. Image © 2015 First Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society. <http://www.fuub.org/home/about-us/our-building/>. (accessed June 3, 2015).

It was not uncommon for designs to be reproduced multiple times in mosaic, such as the two known versions of *The Good Shepherd*, attributed to leading designer Frederick Wilson (1858–1932). The first was commissioned by Jennie Tuttle Hobart and given to the First Presbyterian Church in Paterson, New Jersey (Figure 25) as a memorial to her father, Socrates Tuttle, the former mayor of Paterson. The memorial was known as the “Socrates Tuttle” mosaic and a sketch was published in the 1913 history of the congregation (Figure 26).<sup>130</sup> In 1914, the Sleight family donated a mosaic of the same design, identical bronze frame, and similar color scheme to the Washington Street Church in Eastport, Maine.<sup>131</sup> In the striking design, Christ boldly emerges on a rocky peak, embracing a sheep. The small cluster of birds in the lower left corner, and the lack of

<sup>130</sup> Clarence Edward Noble Macartney, *A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Paterson, New Jersey* (Paterson, NJ: The Church, 1913), 27. This mosaic is listed on p. 86 of *A Partial List of Windows* (New York, NY: Tiffany Studios, 1910), but is mislabelled as a window.

<sup>131</sup> The church was rebuilt in 2005 and named the Cornerstone Baptist Church.

foreground, suggest Christ has gone to the highest peak to save the one lost sheep.<sup>132</sup> The design, worked out in a rainbow of iridescent glass, illustrates a moment of salvation, both radiant and glorious.



Figure 25: Tiffany Studios, Frederick Wilson, designer, *The Good Shepherd*, pre-1910. Glass mosaic. First Presbyterian Church, Paterson, New Jersey. Image © You Don't Know Jersey. <http://www.youdontknowjersey.com/2014/11/paterson-historic-preservation-commission-holds-second-annual-historic-stained-glass-tour-of-paterson-churches/#!/prettyPhoto>. (accessed June 3, 2015).

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<sup>132</sup> The image of Christ the Good Shepherd comes from the Gospel of John 10:11, where Christ says, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." And also, from the Gospel of Matthew 18:11-12, "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?"





**Figure 26: Sketch of *The Good Shepherd*, artist unknown. From *A history of the First Presbyterian Church of Paterson, New Jersey*, by Clarence Edward Noble Macartney, Paterson, NJ: The Church, 1913, pg. 32.**

Designs were often used interchangeably between mosaic and leaded-glass, such as the *The Sower*, an illustration of Christ's Parable of the Sower from the Gospel of Matthew. The design was produced numerous times in leaded-glass, beginning as early as 1914, and at least twice in mosaic.<sup>133</sup> It is clear from these versions that the design was modified as needed to accommodate the size and architecture of each distinct space. For example, in the window of *The Sower* in St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Washington, DC, the landscape and sky have been expanded to fill out the window tracery (Figure 27).

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<sup>133</sup> St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Washington, DC (1914), First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania (1921), and Old Stone Church, Cleveland, Ohio (1930). According to Tiffany Studios *Partial List of Windows*, additional leaded-glass versions of *The Sower* include: Congregational Church, Danbury, CT (Cook Memorial Window); St. Paul's Universalist Church, Meriden, CT (Chapin Memorial Window); First Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth, NJ (Miller Memorial Window); Church of the Saviour (Catholic), Brooklyn, NY (Farley Memorial Window); Westminster Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, OH (Falconer Memorial Window); St. Stephen's Church, Steubenville, OH (Elliott Memorial Window).



Figure 27: Tiffany Studios, Frederick Wilson, designer, *The Sower*, 1914. Leaded glass. St. Margaret Episcopal Church, Washington, DC. <http://www.stmargaretsdc.org/about/church/stained-glass>. (accessed June 3, 2015).

The earlier mosaic of *The Sower* (1915), a commission by the First Unitarian Church in New Bedford, Massachusetts, shows significant design changes to the figure and landscape: the figure is elongated and takes a wider stance, his right arm is extended scattering seed, and the field is expansive with a single tree stretching up the right side of the panel (Figure 28).<sup>134</sup> The later mosaic version of *The Sower* (1931)<sup>135</sup> for Immanuel Congregational United Church of Christ in Hartford, Connecticut, is based more closely

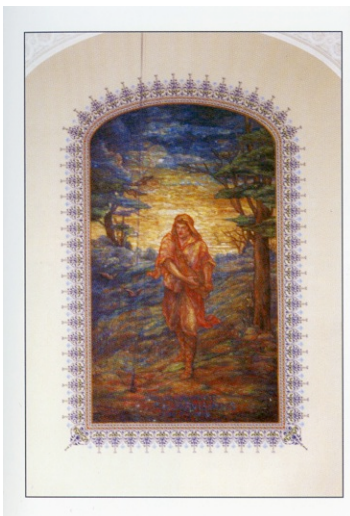
<sup>134</sup> The congregation commissioned the mosaic to memorialize their pastor who had died suddenly. The church is now the Pilgrim United Church of Christ. According to the church, the head of the sower is made up of more than 300 pieces of glass.

<sup>135</sup> Thomas G. Mills donated the mosaic to the church in memory of his wife Clara Jarvis Mills. To pay for the mosaic, he exchanged his collection of antique Oriental rugs with the Tiffany Studios. Daniel George, a member of the congregation, added the decorative stencil surrounding the mosaic. See the church's pamphlet, "The Treasure Which is Ours" by Alexander M. Watson (Hartford, CT: Immanuel Congregational Church, 1990). Mr. Mills was one of the appointed members of Immanuel Congregation's church improvement committee and involved in the construction and placement of the memorial. It took the Studios one year to create the mosaic. See "Tiffany Mosaic Memorial Given Immanuel Church," *The Hartford Courant*, (February 14, 1930), 13.

on the original design: the figure is situated within a wooded landscape and his right arm reaches for seed from his satchel (Figure 29).



**Figure 28:** Tiffany Studios, Frederick Wilson, designer, *The Sower*, 1915. Glass mosaic, 14 x 9 feet. Pilgrim United Church of Christ, New Bedford, Massachusetts. Courtesy of Pilgrim United Church of Christ.



**Figure 29:** Tiffany Studios, Frederick Wilson, designer, *The Sower*, 1931. Glass mosaic, 13 x 8 feet. Immanuel Congregational United Church of Christ, Hartford, Connecticut. From *The Mosaics of Louis Comfort Tiffany*, by Edith Crouch, Atglen, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2009, pg. 149.

The mosaic versions of *The Sower* are strikingly different from those in leaded-glass beyond the subtle differences in design interpretation. In mosaic the light is reflected, rather than transmitted, and color and texture are achieved through the juxtaposition of numerous small pieces of glass, rather than large plates of textured glass. The mosaic panels are dense and solid, while the window versions are airy and ethereal. The ability to freely translate a design into both leaded-glass and mosaic is a testament to the talent of the glass artisans at the Studios who worked simultaneously in both mediums.

### **The Making of a Tiffany Mosaic**

The fabrication process departed from traditional methods in three important ways. First, Tiffany's innovation began with the mosaic material. Traditionally, mosaics consisted of individual tesserae that, strictly speaking, were uniformly cut cubes, and effects of shading, texture, and fine detail were necessarily minimal. Up close, these details are obscured and the image is impressionistic; it is only from a distance that it comes into focus. Tiffany's development of sectiliae, pieces of glass cut to special and irregular forms, made it possible to achieve complex designs in mosaic. Shading and fine detail were further enhanced by the quality and texture of the glass. The end result was a complex puzzle made of endless color variety, incredible detail, and a sense of realism.

Second, contrary to the traditional direct method, where tesserae are arranged face down, the glass selector and cutter at the Studios always worked on the design face up. In this approach, artisans benefited from being able to see the design as it came together and subtle changes to color, or cutting, could be made as they worked.

Lastly, rather than constructing mosaics on site, works were fabricated at the Studios. Completed mosaics were delivered to the selected location and then installed. By fabricating mosaics “in house,” artisans could access the full stock of glass as they worked, and were in close proximity to the department designers, when collaboration was necessary.

Details of the fabrication process were frequently reported in newspapers, as writers offered their readership a glimpse behind-the-scenes, relaying the steps involved in the making of a Tiffany mosaic.<sup>136</sup> These accounts remain an invaluable resource for understanding the modern method employed at the Studios, and for appreciating the intricacy of the finished product. To begin, the artist created a full-size watercolor sketch, called a cartoon. From this sketch, a full-scale tracing, complete with every detail of the cartoon, was made on transparent linen, either in color or shaded black and white. The tracing was mounted on a board, the size of the mosaic panel. Mosaic works that were especially large were made in sections, each mounted on a separate board. The tracing was given to glass selectors and cutters in the mosaic department for translation into glass, along with a small color sketch, indicating the desired color scheme. A thin layer of melted wax was applied over the whole, so as not to obscure the tracing.

Artisans in the Glass Cutting Department cut each glass piece using diamond or steel-tipped glasscutters, and then achieved the precise shape using iron pliers. One by one, each cut and shaped piece of glass was applied to the waxed board, until the entire cartoon was filled in with colored glass. Trained artisans were responsible for selecting

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<sup>136</sup> For this step-by-step process, see “Glass Mosaic: The Decoration of the New Mint at Philadelphia and How They Were Made,” *New York Tribune* (June 23, 1901), 9.

materials, but “always under the supervision of an artist,”<sup>137</sup> suggesting the work progressed in collaboration with the designing artist. The artisan selected from a supply of glass sheets in a virtually unlimited variety of color, thickness, and texture. After touring the Studios in 1898, English art critic Cecilia Waern (1853-after 1920) reported in *International Studio*, “[T]here are from 200 to 300 tons of [glass] generally kept in stock in the cellar of the building, partly in cases, partly in labeled and numbered compartments or racks. These number 5000—*i.e.*, 5000 colors and varieties are kept accessible.”<sup>138</sup> Waern also noted, in addition to glass sheets, disks “mostly in the form of a coating of colour over opaque white” were also used for mosaic.<sup>139</sup>

Once the glass cutting was complete, the surface was covered with varnish and, when nearly dry, oiled paper was pressed down over the surface adhering to the varnish. The linen tracing was cut away from the board, and the work was placed face down on a marble table covered in Venetian turpentine. The linen backing was removed and the back of the glass cleaned. Liquid cement, “the well-known Keene” brand,<sup>140</sup> was poured over the mosaic, sinking into all the cracks, and hardened within two hours. The panel was loosened from the table, turned face up, and the oiled paper removed. Finally, the surface was thoroughly cleaned until smooth. This process,<sup>141</sup> executed entirely by hand,

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<sup>137</sup> *Glass Mosaic*, 28.

<sup>138</sup> Cecilia Waern, “The Industrial Arts of America: The Tiffany or ‘Favrile’ Glass,” *International Studio*, 14, 63 (June 1898), 16.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>140</sup> *Glass Mosaic*, 18. Defined as “a hydraulic or oleaginous cement.”

<sup>141</sup> It is important to note, Tiffany is not credited as the inventor of this fabrication process. As early as 1860, Salviati was prefabricating mosaics in a similar process in his studio, employing full-scale color cartoons, and shipping completed work to location. According to Sheldon Barr, this technique was being utilized in North Africa prior to Salviati, and also in the Levant in the construction of mosaic and tiled mosques and palaces. See *Venetian Glass Mosaics, 1860-1917* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors’ Club, 2008), 12.

was incredibly labor intensive and time consuming; a single life-size figure could take a skilled artisan up to three months to complete.<sup>142</sup>

Surviving sketches for the mosaic *Prayer of the Christian Soldier* offer an illustration of this fabrication process.<sup>143</sup> The mosaic was commissioned as a war memorial to five American soldiers who died in World War I and was dedicated in 1919 at the First Presbyterian Church in Binghamton, New York.<sup>144</sup> The elegant sketch in watercolor, ink, and gouache, shows Frederick Wilson's composition of St. George in front of the Lord's Prayer, worked out in a Gothic script of blue and gold (Figure 30). A pen and ink drawing of the preliminary sketch, indicates how the intricate design was to be worked out in glass tesserae and sectiliae (Figure 31).



**Figure 30:** Tiffany Studios, composition sketch for a memorial, n.d. Watercolor, ink and gouache. From *A great capacity for beauty: the Tiffany glass collection at the Hartworth Art Gallery*, Hyndburn, England: Hyndburn Borough Council, 2012, figure 73. Image © 2012 Hyndburn Borough Council.

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<sup>142</sup> “Glass Mosaic,” *The Art Amateur* (June 1898), 10.

<sup>143</sup> For more information, see Jennifer A Rennie et al., *A Great Capacity for Beauty: The Tiffany Glass Collection at the Hartworth Art Gallery*, Accrington (Hyndburn: Hyndburn Borough Council, 2012).

<sup>144</sup> Captain John Case Phelps (1883-1918), James Knight Nichols (1881-1918), Captain Alexander Dickson Wilson (dates unknown), William E. Lippacher (1895-1919), Major Harold D. MacLachlan (d. 1918).



**Figure 31: Tiffany Studios, preliminary sketch, n.d. Photograph of pen and ink drawing. From *A great capacity for beauty: the Tiffany glass collection at the Hartworth Art Gallery, Hyndburn, England*: Hyndburn Borough Council, 2012, figure 144. Image © 2012 Hyndburn Borough Council.**

A close comparison of the drawing to the completed mosaic (Figure 32) reveals how closely the mosaicist followed each detail of the working drawing.<sup>145</sup> It also indicates areas where the assembling artisan used their own judgment to fill in details. For example, in the drawing, the horse's bridle suggests a decorative embroidery pattern inspired by Renaissance examples. To capture the sumptuous texture of the embroidery, the artisan hand-selected individual pieces of textured glass and cut each into a unique shape. Another example is the text of the Lord's Prayer in the background. While the drawing provides a key to assembling the script in mosaic, it was left to the artisan to fill in the negative space with tesserae.

<sup>145</sup> This design was taken from Wilson's copyrighted design *Prayer of the Christian Soldier*, produced in 1896 in memory of Ernest George Whitehouse (1860-1896), who was killed in the Boer War in southern Africa. The design, copyrighted by Wilson, was published in *Glass Mosaic* (1896), and twenty years later, in the 1918 *Tributes to Honor* booklet. The mosaic is one of two in First Presbyterian Church, the other is entitled *Jesus in the Temple* (1895).





Figure 32: Tiffany Studios, Frederick Wilson, designer, *Prayer of the Christian Soldier*, 1919. Glass mosaic, 7 x 4 feet. First Presbyterian Church (now United Presbyterian Church), Binghamton, New York. Cambridge2000.com. <http://www.cambridge2000.com/gallery2/html/2014/P7150902m>. (accessed June 3, 2015).

## Memorials and the Commission Process

Sponsoring a memorial was a popular practice during the period and was perpetuated by the spiritual fervour that marked the Gilded Age era. The majority of the Studios' ecclesiastical figural mosaics were purchased as memorials to honor beloved family members or leaders in the community. With the significant population increase, particularly of the middle class, there were an unprecedented number of individuals with the financial means to sponsor memorials. Tiffany's patrons represented a wide demographic, from wealthy industrialists, to poor congregations pooling resources to

commission a memorial.<sup>146</sup> A single family typically sponsored a memorial, but it was not uncommon for a church group to donate a memorial in memory of a former pastor, or for a community to commission a memorial to honor soldiers they lost in war.

The commissioning of memorials was socially encouraged and there was much discussion about the benefits and value of such a gesture. On the subject of memorials, the Studios maintained it is “useful that those who have led exemplary lives and have finished the good fight should be remembered by those who are still in the battle; remembered not only by their friends and immediate relatives, but by all the people of the church.”<sup>147</sup> While this statement specifically described memorial windows, it certainly would have pertained to figural mosaics as well. Churches being constructed or renovated during the building boom welcomed the addition of memorials, whether windows, mosaics, or furnishings; the contribution of a memorial not only enhanced the church edifice, but also defrayed building costs, and provided a long-lasting source of beauty to inspire the congregation.

The selection of subject matter, or theme, was the starting point when choosing a memorial. Tiffany advised clients on the suitable nature of memorials, and made recommendations of appropriate themes. Clients would typically look to Scripture for a passage that was favored by the deceased or symbolic of virtues the individual exhibited while living. The choice of imagery was incredibly significant and meaningful.

According to the firm, representations of divine persons and things could “teach the

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<sup>146</sup> For more information on the patrons of Tiffany memorials, see Elizabeth De Rosa’s chapter “With Joyous Hope and Reverent Memory: The Patrons of Tiffany’s Religious Art,” in Pongracz, *Louis C. Tiffany and the Art of Devotion*, 116-135.

<sup>147</sup> *A Synopsis*, see appendix, n.p.

beholder something to be imitated” and memorials would be “object-lessons in the way of truth, but would also carry consolation to bruised hearts, rebellious and weary souls.” Furthermore, memorials were “historical records, written in lines of beauty, of the growth of the church in which they are placed.”<sup>148</sup>

In selecting a figural mosaic, patrons could choose from a variety of stock designs, or a custom design could be commissioned. Stock designs, prepared for either mosaic or leaded-glass, presumably served a few purposes: ready-made designs would have been a helpful and inspiring starting point for a patron; designs could have easily been adapted or customized; and certainly, choosing a prepared design would have hastened the overall process and been less expensive than an original design. A selection of watercolor designs hung in the showroom at the Studios (Figure 33), presumably showcasing the variety of beautiful options available to patrons.

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 33: Tiffany Studios, *metal showroom*, 1913. In *Character and Individuality in Decorations and Furnishings*, by Tiffany Studios. New York, NY: Tiffany Studios, 1913, n.p.**

Mosaic sample panels, such as a detail from *Christ in the Temple* (Figure 34), would have shown patrons the quality of the material and fabrication. Another panel, the “Head of St. Andrew” (Figure 35) has an alternative color palette worked out in the top left hand corner, indicating that it was, perhaps, used to show the variety of colors available in mosaic glass. It is also likely that these sample panels, convenient in size, would have been displayed at exhibitions, along with larger mosaic examples.

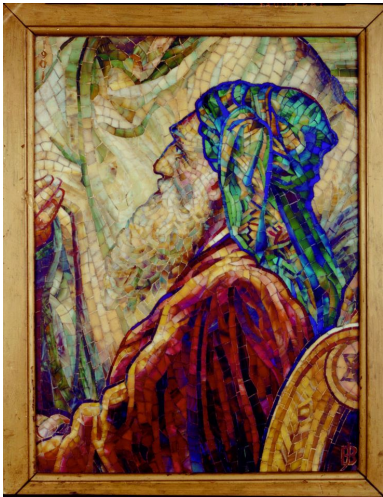


Figure 34: Tiffany Studios, Mosaic Sample Panel, 1901. Glass mosaic, 25 x 18 inches. Signed with conjoined "JB" (for Joseph Briggs) on lower right corner. Detail from "Christ in the Temple," after Heinrich Hofmann. Private Collection. Inlay.com. <http://inlay.com/mosaics/tiff/tiff.htm>. (accessed June 4, 2015).



Figure 35: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, Frederick Wilson, designer, Mosaic Sample Panel, ca. 1897. Glass mosaic, 49 x 30 inches. Head of St. Andrew, detail for a "Last Supper" composition. Collection of Allen Michaan, courtesy of Lillian Nassau LLC, New York. In "The Women Mosaicists at Tiffany Studios," by Nina Gray, Margaret K. Hofer, and Martin Eidelberg. *Magazine Antiques*, 171, 3 (March 2007), pg. 100, figure 8.

The staff of the Ecclesiastical Department assisted patrons in every detail of purchasing a memorial, including the selection of style, color scheme, and size, but also in practical considerations, such as determining the ideal location of the memorial, and personally supervising the installation. The memorial mosaic, *Christ's Charge to His Disciples* (1917), offers an insight into this process. The mosaic was commissioned by Robert Culin Canby as a memorial to his wife Hattie Elizabeth Parmelee Canby and given to St. Clement Church in El Paso, Texas, where his wife had been an active member and generous contributor.<sup>149</sup> An article published in 1917 in the *El Paso Herald* notes that Mr. Canby had the idea for the design, but before it was drafted, an artist from the Studios travelled to El Paso to “study the church and its lighting conditions, so that the design would be perfectly adapted to the building.”<sup>150</sup> Presumably, such considerations would have included the Gothic shape of the frame, color scheme, and placement within the church. The work was exhibited in the Studios for two months, before being installed in the church under an artist’s personal supervision.<sup>151</sup> This instance was most likely quite common and is a testament to the high level of service provided by the Studios.

The Canby memorial depicts the significant moment in Scripture when Christ gives Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven and then charges his disciples not to tell anyone that he is the Son of Man. Christ is shown with three of his disciples: St. John who kneels at Christ’s feet, St. Peter on whose shoulder rests Christ’s hand, and St.

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<sup>149</sup> The mosaic is set into a bronze frame with the inscription “To Hattie Elizabeth Parmelee Canby, 1915.”

<sup>150</sup> Ruth Monro Augur, “Beautiful Mosaic in St. Clement Church To Be Dedicated Sunday,” *The El Paso Herald* (April 19, 1917), 8.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. The article notes that an artist named Joseph Cowan of Tiffany Studios, who also supervised the installation process, executed the work but additional information about him is unknown.

Matthew who stands behind St. Peter (Figure 36). The colorful iridescent glass is especially vivid compared to Tiffany's other works and the bold green, red, and yellow of the garments are in keeping with historical paintings of the same subject.<sup>152</sup> The lush garden, golden mountain peaks, and silver lake recall the native Texan landscape. Following installation, the mosaic was praised as "an artistic gem, vibrant with pure color" and the color of the mountains in particular, "would delight the eyes of everyone who knows and loves the southwest."<sup>153</sup>



Figure 36: Tiffany Studios, *Christ's Charge to His Disciples*, 1917. Glass mosaic, 8 x 5 feet. St. Clement Church, El Paso, Texas. Image courtesy of St. Clement Church.

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<sup>152</sup> In particular, Raphael's *Christ's Charge to Peter* (1515-16) and Peter Paul Rubens' *Christ's Charge to Peter* (c. 1616).

<sup>153</sup> Augur, Ibid.



Figural memorials were produced in a variety of sizes. Among the grandest in scale is certainly the pair of allegorical friezes commissioned for Wade Memorial Chapel, located in the Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio. The chapel was built in 1901 as a memorial to Jephtha Wade (1811-1890), the founder of Western Union Telegraph Company, and the first president of the Cemetery. Designed by local architects Hubbell and Benes, the interior decoration was undertaken by Tiffany Studios, the whole of which demonstrates the exceptional skill of the Ecclesiastical Department and its mosaicists (Figure 37).

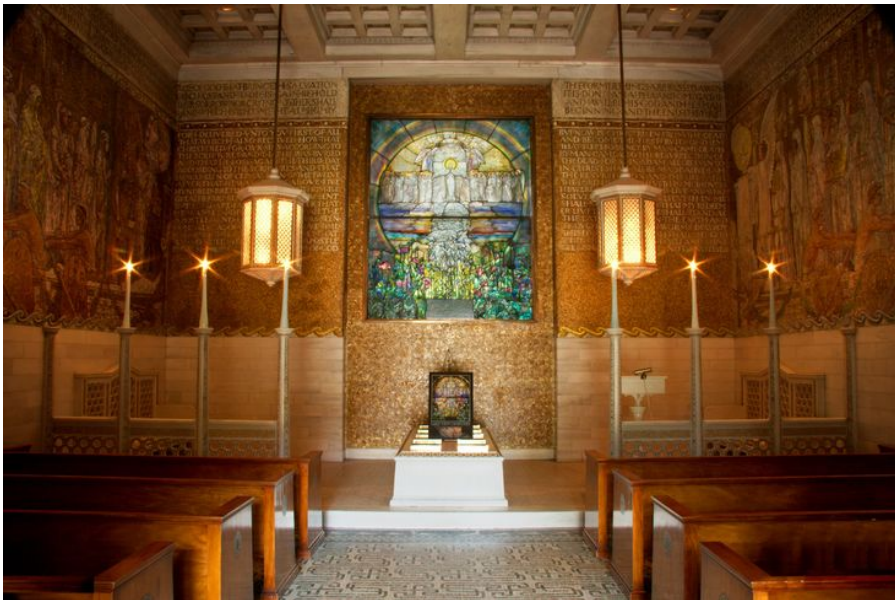


Figure 37: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, Frederick Wilson, designer, *The Voyage of Life*, 1901. Glass mosaic, leaded glass, and interior decoration. Wade Memorial Chapel, Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio. Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio. <http://www.lakeviewcemetery.com/weddings.php>. (accessed June 3, 2015).

Collectively entitled *The Voyage of Life*, the mosaics symbolize, on the west wall, the prophecy and the law of the Old Testament (Figure 38), and on the east wall, the



fulfilment of the laws of the prophets through the birth of Christianity (Figure 39).<sup>154</sup> The design is by leading artist Frederick Wilson and is marked by the influence of the American Renaissance, particularly in the Neo-Classical treatment of the figures. The glittering gold background behind the two rows of figures recalls the Byzantine tradition of suspended space and time, and the pastel hues of shimmering iridescent glass evoke a feeling of heavenly purity and peace. The nature of the composition is allegorical, rather than overtly Biblical, and is an example of Tiffany's ability to strike a balance between the religious and the secular.



Figure 38: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, Frederick Wilson, designer, *The Voyage of Life*, 1901. Glass mosaic. Wade Memorial Chapel, Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio. Image by Jeni Sandberg, <http://barkingsandsvintage.blogspot.com/2012/12/tiffany-studios-wade-memorial-chapel> (accessed June 3, 2015).

<sup>154</sup> Each mosaic frieze measures thirty-two feet in width and eight feet in height.

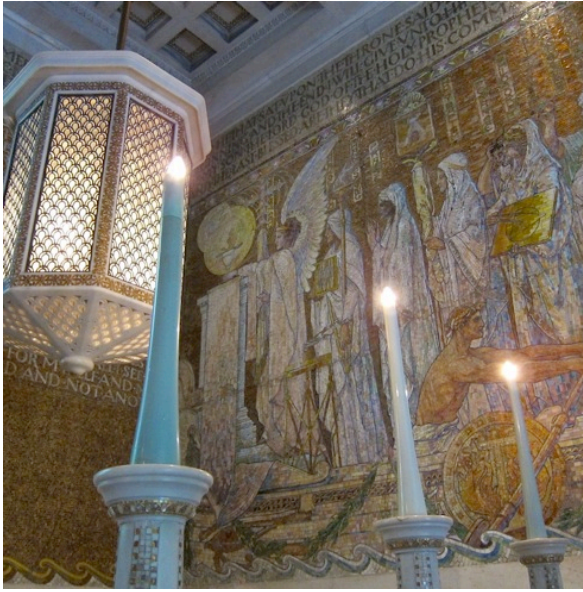


Figure 39: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, Frederick Wilson, designer, *The Voyage of Life*, 1901. Glass mosaic. Wade Memorial Chapel, Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio. Image by Jeni Sandberg, <http://barkingsandsvintage.blogspot.com/2012/12/tiffany-studios-wade-memorial-chapel> (accessed June 3, 2015.)

## Designers and Artisans

Under Tiffany's direction, a large staff of artists, assistants and apprentices, glass selectors and cutters, and numerous other workers, had a role in the fabrication of mosaics. The importance of the worker's role is elaborated upon in the firm's brochure *Glass Mosaic*. To work in mosaic, above other decorative materials, the designer had to "be thoroughly familiar with its possibilities...the mechanical obstacles of construction and application, and the limitation of the artisan who carries out his design."<sup>155</sup>

The Studios employed numerous artists, either on an interim basis or full-time. Many artists were well known in their own right, typically for their work in mural painting or stained glass design, and were personally sought out by Tiffany because of

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<sup>155</sup> *Glass Mosaic*, 15.

their talent.<sup>156</sup> Designing artists contributed their individual artistic style to the Studios, while working consistently within the Tiffany aesthetic. As much as possible, the Studios publically credited the work of their artists, however, many mosaics remain unattributed to an individual; signatures were rarely incorporated into mosaic and, in many cases, records or drawings that may have noted such detail have not survived.

In 1899, Frederick Wilson was appointed head of the Ecclesiastical Department and held the position for nearly twenty-five years.<sup>157</sup> In his long-standing role as primary designer for the department, Wilson brought a “cohesive look”<sup>158</sup> to the production of ecclesiastical mosaics and stained-glass windows. Wilson was born in Dublin in 1858 to artistic parents of English descent. He studied art at the South Kensington School and worked in London as a stained-glass designer and muralist from the 1870s to the early 1890s. After immigrating to the United States in 1891, his work in stained-glass was an immediate success and he joined Tiffany in 1893. Wilson’s impressive knowledge of religious art and iconography, and fine skill for rendering the human form, were essential to his ecclesiastical work. Among his artistic strengths was the ability to handle complex figural compositions, achieving a design that is fluid rather than crowded. His figures are characterized by their distinct angelic quality, particularly in the treatment of the face and flowing hair, and show the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites in his work. Wilson’s ecclesiastical designs generally depict the sweetness

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<sup>156</sup> Notably among them were Joseph Lauber (1855-1948) and J.A. Holzer, although their mosaic work was largely for secular and public commissions.

<sup>157</sup> Diane C. Wright, “Frederick Wilson: 50 years of stained glass design,” in *Journal of Glass Studies*, Vol. 51 (2009), 206.

<sup>158</sup> Diane C. Wright, “Innovation by Design: Frederick Wilson and Tiffany Studios’ Stained-Glass Design,” *Louis C. Tiffany and the Art of Devotion*, 138.

and light of the New Testament and the gentleness of Christ. His prolific designs for mosaic include *The Last Supper* series (1896-1902) and the *Te Deum Laudamus* mosaic (1923).

To achieve a successful translation into glass, the artisan's role was also significant, requiring "skill and aesthetic intuition," as well as "a keen color sense [and] appreciation of form, together with dexterous handicraft."<sup>159</sup> Beginning in 1892, this task was largely the work of female artisans in the Women's Glass Cutting Department.<sup>160</sup> The department was under the charge of Clara Driscoll (1861-1944), who had been a leading designer at the Studios since 1888 (Figure 40).<sup>161</sup> Tiffany believed that women had a natural sense of color and taste, dexterity and patience, which were all essential in mosaic work. The women were paid on "exactly the same scale as men" and the effect from working on beautiful artworks was considered especially "refining"; indeed, it was even stated, "it is a superior class of women who are found among glass-workers."<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *Glass Mosaic*, 16.

<sup>160</sup> The department was established in response to a citywide strike of the Lead Glaziers and Glass Cutters' Union, who demanded higher wages and reduced hours. Initially, sixteen female art students from various New York art schools were hired and received training from Driscoll. At one time, the number of women employed may have been as many as thirty. For more information, see Nina Gray, et. al., "The Women Mosaicists at Tiffany Studios," *Magazine Antiques* (March 2007), 96-105.

<sup>161</sup> For more information on Driscoll's work with mosaics, see Martin P. Eidelberg, Nina Gray, and Margaret K. Hofer, *A New Light on Tiffany: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls* (London: New-York Historical Society, in association with D. Giles Ltd, 2007), 35-41.

<sup>162</sup> Unknown, "Stained Glass and Glass Mosaic." 332.



**Figure 40: Photograph of Clara Driscoll in her workroom at Tiffany Studios, with Joseph Briggs, 1901. Photograph. Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, Department of American Decorative Art. [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org).**

In 1894, *Art Interchange* reported that women were employed in “every stage”<sup>163</sup> of glasswork: the beginner cut patterns and glass jewels, while the advanced artisan was responsible for selecting the glass and cutting it into the required shape. Once a mosaic was assembled, male artisans were in charge of the cementing. In general, physically demanding and gritty labor was the responsibility of male artisans, although on at least one occasion Driscoll cast a mosaic panel herself and wrote, “You ought to see me with sleeves rolled up doing plaster work with a trowel. It is really great fun.”<sup>164</sup> Beyond the selection and cutting of glass, these female artisans were ultimately responsible for the realization of the artist’s design and its translation into glass. During its operative years, the Women’s Glass Cutting Department had an incredibly important role at the Studios,

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<sup>163</sup> Polly King, “Women Workers in Glass at the Tiffany Studios,” *The Art Interchange*, 33 (October 1894), 86.

<sup>164</sup> *A New Light on Tiffany*, 41.

and is credited with the execution of some of the most important and substantial mosaic commissions of the period.<sup>165</sup>

The Ecclesiastical Department at the Tiffany Studios was an incredibly successful branch of the business and gained national recognition as a leading brand for ecclesiastical design. By featuring mosaic on their wide range of products they showcased the versatility of the medium. Their designs, which prominently incorporated mosaic into American churches, whether as ornament or large-scale figural works, beautifully explored the decorative possibilities of the material for the modern era. Under Tiffany's direction, the staff of renowned artists and talented artisans achieved a new mosaic method and executed intricate figural works that were unparalleled.

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<sup>165</sup> See appendix in *A New Light on Tiffany: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls* (London: New-York Historical Society, in association with D. Giles Ltd, 2007).

### **CHAPTER THREE: SOURCES OF DESIGN INSPIRATION**

For forty years (1891-1931) the Ecclesiastical Department of the Tiffany Studios produced figural mosaics for many of the nation's most important church edifices. In their totality, these religious artworks comprise an extensive assortment of subject matter and themes, and also exhibit a variety of techniques that were employed in their making. In most cases, leading artists in the department produced figural mosaics from original compositions, but reproductions of popular paintings were created as well. Artists drew upon several key sources of inspiration in the design process. Historic mosaic examples were frequently referenced, as well as popular paintings of Christian themes, depictions of Scripture, and Christian iconography. A survey of these figural mosaics demonstrates the artistic breadth of Tiffany's artists, who were clearly steeped in the Christian art tradition and well versed in its symbolism. The following selection of figural mosaics will illustrate the influence and interpretation of these sources, as well as demonstrate the stylistic progression that ultimately led to the full flowering of Tiffany's modern mosaic method.

In 1893 the firm stated, "The aim of the Company is not so much to imitate the work of the past, as the introduction of new and original ideas, at the same time making it

equal in merit with the best that has been done.”<sup>166</sup> This objective certainly directed the work of the Ecclesiastical branch of the business in their designs for figural mosaics. While Tiffany and his artists were versed in the art tradition of the past, they were committed to continuing it in a new and contemporary way. The firm advocated for the use of religious mosaics in many of their promotional materials, educating the public on its decorative possibilities and practical advantages. In their promotional booklet *Glass Mosaic* they showcased several of their figural mosaics and promoted the benefits of mosaic decoration. The booklet opens with a romanticized history of mosaic art and descriptions of the world’s finest mosaics from the early Christian period to the Middle Ages—including those in Milan, Rome, Florence, Ravenna, and Turkey—to suggest to the public the extent of their knowledge of historical examples.

Tiffany equipped his artists with visual resources to assist in the design process. Among Tiffany’s archives was a large collection of souvenir photographs, accumulated by him during his travels or collected for him. The archive contains numerous images of historic mosaics, primarily architectural examples in the Italian Cosmatesque style, but there are also photographs of religious figural mosaics, including the Byzantine mosaic of Empress Theodora (6<sup>th</sup> century) from the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna (Figure 41) and a detail of the nativity scene (12<sup>th</sup> century) from the Byzantine ceiling mosaics in the church of La Martorana in Palermo, Sicily (Figure 42). This collection was available to his artists for their reference and inspiration. In a photograph of the mosaic workshop from 1910, painted canvases and small mosaic panels can be identified throughout the

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<sup>166</sup> *A Synopsis*, 4.



space; presumably some of these works are by the Studios, but most likely many are also there for personal reference (Figure 43).



**Figure 41: Tiffany Studios study image (unknown photographer), detail of Empress Theodora, ca. 547. Photographic print mounted on mat board. Stamped Tiffany Glass Company: 65-030:0741— mosaic panel Ravenna. Written below the image in the plate: No. 11564 RAVENNA-Tempio di S. Vitale. Ritratto dell imperatrice Teodora (mosaico del VI. secolo). The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida. © The Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, Inc.**



**Figure 42:** Tiffany Studios study image, G. Sommer, photographer, detail of the Nativity scene, ca. 1143. Photographic print mounted on mat board. Stamped L. C. Tiffany & Co.: 65-030:1059—Mosaic ceiling. Written on bottom of image in plate: 10006. Palermo la Martorana / G. Sommer - Napoli. The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida. © The Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation, Inc.



**Figure 43:** Tiffany Studios, *mosaic workshop*, c. 1910. From *Character and Individuality in Decorations and Furnishings*, New York: Tiffany Studios, 1913, n.p.

## The Influence of Popular Paintings

Many of the artists working at the Studios had training in fine art and their knowledge of famous artworks was crucial to their design process. In addition to inspiring their own original designs, a handful of well-known paintings were reproduced during the early years of the department. It was a very popular practice during the period, before widespread photography or printed art books; for many people, a reproduction was the closest they would ever be to the original. For the Studios, reproductions were a creative way to demonstrate the possibilities and advantages of the mosaic medium, and showcase the exceptional use of opalescent and iridescent glass sectiliae. The practice continued, albeit infrequently, until 1908 when Tiffany set a policy restricting historical reproductions, except by his consent.<sup>167</sup>

A striking example is the Studios' reproduction of Heinrich Hofmann's (1824-1911) contemporary painting entitled *Jesus in the Temple* (1881), executed in glass mosaic in 1895 for the First Presbyterian Church, in Binghamton, New York (Figure 44.) In the mosaic version (Figure 45), the artist elaborated upon Hofmann's intimate and tightly cropped composition. Stepping back from the scene, the expanded setting includes a marble and mosaic temple draped in sumptuous textiles, and reveals the full length of the temple doors who gather around Jesus. Hofmann's delicate painting is distinguished by its subtle light and softness in the treatment of the figures and overall color palette. The mosaic, in comparison, is vibrantly colorful with an enhanced textural effect, and overall a heightened sense of depth and illumination achieved by the use of

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<sup>167</sup> Thalheimer, *Louis C. Tiffany and the Art of Devotion*, 31.

glass. The large mosaic panel is the central focal point of the church, and its detail and sense of realism can be seen throughout the entire space.



Figure 44: Heinrich Hofmann, *Jesus in the Temple*, 1881. Oil on canvas. Galerie Neue Meister, Dresden, Germany. The Life & Art of Heinrich Hofmann. <http://www.heinrichhofmann.net/gallery.html>. (accessed June 25, 2015).



Figure 45: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, *Jesus in the Temple*, 1895. Glass mosaic. First Presbyterian Church, Binghamton, New York. Image courtesy of Lindsay R. Parrott.

The mosaic of *Jesus in the Temple* is an early and significant example of Tiffany's modern method and demonstrates the unique effect achieved from the use of sectiliae and textural glass. One area in particular is the glass technique utilized for the treatment of the marble temple columns, where large sections were cut from a type of opalescent glass known as "streaky glass," which contains multiple colors in a single sheet, and in this case, gives the illusion of solid marble. Large, irregular pieces of glass were also used for the pair of books in the lower right corner of the composition. To lend dimensionality to the figures, a type of glass known as "drapery glass" was specially cut in fluid forms that mimic the fold and drape of the garment and suggest the human form underneath. The mosaic pattern decorating the temple dome features the use of iridescent glass, made with the addition of metallic oxides, and creates the effect that the temple is illuminated from above. At first glance, the glass used for the faces and hands of the figures may resemble traditional tesserae, but upon closer look, the glass pieces are quite irregular and rectangular rather than square cubes that were traditionally used in historic examples (Figure 46).



**Figure 46: Detail of *Jesus in the Temple*, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, 1895. Glass mosaic. First Presbyterian Church, Binghamton, New York. Image courtesy of Lindsay R. Parrott.**

The following year, in 1896, the Tiffany Studios completed a reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's (1452-1519) *The Last Supper* (1495-98) for the sanctuary of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia.<sup>168</sup> A depiction of The Last Supper is a particularly appropriate choice for church decoration because it recounts Christ's institution of the Eucharist, and within the Christian art tradition, it is one of the most beloved and central themes. Undertaking the reproduction of such a famous work was certainly bold, but it conveyed a mindfulness of the historic art tradition, and offered an interpretation within the Tiffany aesthetic. For many members of St. Paul's Church, *The Last Supper* mosaic (Figure 47) was the closest they would ever be to da Vinci's original (Figure 48) and the experience must have been awe-inspiring.

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<sup>168</sup> The mosaic is a memorial to Joseph Reid Anderson, a prominent member of the community, and was given by his wife.





Figure 47: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, *The Last Supper*, 1896. Glass mosaic, 9 x 18 feet. St. Paul Episcopal Church, Richmond, Virginia. Image by author.

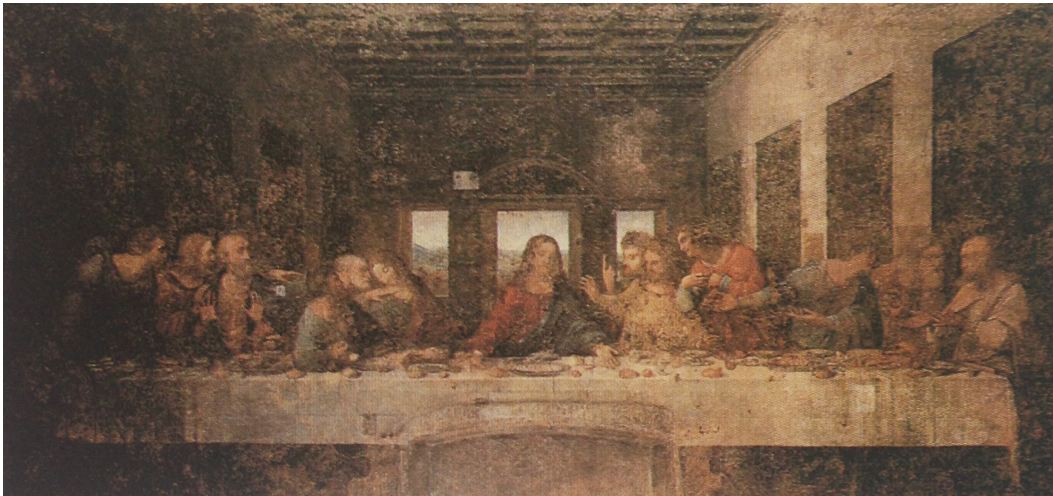


Figure 48: Leonardo da Vinci, *The Last Supper*, 1495-98. Oil tempera on plaster, 15 x 29 feet. Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan, Italy. In *Masterpieces of Western Art: A History of Art in 900 Individual Studios*, ed. Ingo F. Walther. Köln, Germany: Taschen, 2004. pg. 161.

The composition of *The Last Supper* mosaic has a great likeness to da Vinci's fresco. The twelve disciples are seated on the same side of the table, facing the viewer, with Christ in the center. The medieval-style trestle table is covered with a square-

crossed linen and set with the Passover feast. Similar too are the expressive gestures, posture, and draping of the figures. The striking difference, however, is the solid gold background of iridescent tesserae instead of perspective or architectural setting. The mosaic is an interesting pastiche of artistic influences. While it reproduces a Renaissance painting, the expansive gold background is borrowed from the Byzantine mosaic tradition, and the mosaic medium itself has its origins in antiquity. The influence of these important periods of art are celebrated and given a new expression in the Tiffany Studios version.

*The Last Supper* mosaic was an ambitious undertaking, but stylistically it is an oddity compared to Tiffany's other figural mosaics. The solid gold background is a distinguishing element, but the lack of perspective or atmospheric effect is very unusual. This Byzantine-inspired technique was used in some of the firm's earliest original designs, most notably the *Fathers of the Church*, exhibited at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition (Figure 49), and the reredos for St. Matthew's Church (Figure 23). In both examples, the profusion of gold lightens the overall effect and is in harmony with the figures; by comparison, the background of *The Last Supper* presents a stark contrast to the scene. Also unusual are the faces and hands of the figures, which have been painted on large pieces of glass (Figure 50). This technique was also employed in one other instance, the mosaic *Christ Blessing a Child* (1910), which was commissioned for the Church of the Transfiguration in Brooklyn, New York (Figure 51).<sup>169</sup> Given the lack

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<sup>169</sup> The Church of the Transfiguration closed in the 1940s and the mosaic was moved to All Souls Universalist in Brooklyn, New York, which closed in 1997. The mosaic is now in a private collection.



of examples, it is likely that the technique was experimental and discontinued in favor of using sectiliae throughout.



Figure 49: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, *Fathers of the Church*, Joseph Lauber, designer, 1893. Glass mosaic, 97  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 58  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass, Long Island City, New York. Image courtesy of The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass.



Figure 50: Detail, *The Last Supper*, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, 1896. Glass mosaic, 9 x 18 feet. St. Paul Episcopal Church, Richmond, Virginia. Image by author.



**Figure 51:** Detail, *Christ Blessing a Child*, Tiffany Studios, ca. 1910. Glass mosaic, 96 x 48 inches. Private Collection. Image courtesy of Lindsay R. Parrott.

### **The Last Supper Series**

Following the da Vinci reproduction, the Studios went on to produce three mosaic reredos of *The Last Supper* from an original design by Frederick Wilson (Figure 52). The three variations were produced between 1897 and 1902 and were among the firm's most renowned works. The three versions have the same composition and are virtually identical. The types of glass and mosaic techniques utilized in *The Last Supper* mosaics are very similar to other Tiffany works during the same period. They feature opalescent and iridescent glass sectiliae in a rainbow of colorful hues, with each figure in a different combination of colors. The use of gold sectiliae emphasizes the sacred, particularly the halos, with the exception of Judas, and Christ's cup and plate, which are the vessels that facilitate the Eucharistic feast.



Figure 52: Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, *The Last Supper*, Frederick Wilson, designer, 1897. First Unitarian Church, Baltimore, Maryland. Glass mosaic, 9 x 18 feet. Art, the Bible & the Big Apple. <http://artthebibleandthebigapple.org/tag/louis-c-tiffany/> (accessed June 25, 2015).

Wilson's representation of the theme is more consistent stylistically with the Tiffany aesthetic than the da Vinci reproduction, but there are details of the composition that indicate the artist referenced historical paintings. Unlike da Vinci's fresco, Wilson placed the disciples around all sides of the table, and countless historical depictions also favor this intimate composition. A famous example is Florentine artist Bartolomeo Carducci's (1560-1608) *The Last Supper* painted in 1605 (Figure 53). Both Wilson's decorative treatment of the draped linen and the symbolic use of halos can be seen in Italian frescos dating back to the 1300s, for example, the fresco originally in the Church of Santa Monica, near Spoleto, Italy (Figure 54).



Figure 53: Bartolome Carducci, *The Last Supper*, 1605. Oil. Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain. Bridgeman Images. <http://www.bridgemanimages.com/en-GB/asset/38077/carducci-or-carducho-bartolome-1554-1608-10/the-last-supper>. (accessed June 25, 2015).



Figure 54: Artist unknown, *The Last Supper and the Agony in the Garden*, about 1300. Fresco transferred to canvas. Church of Santa Monica, Spoleto, Italy. Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts. <http://www.worcesterart.org/collection/European/1924.24.html>. (accessed June 25, 2015).



Wilson has placed a great emphasis on Christ as a priestly figure, which is signified by Christ's right hand elevated in blessing and the prominent placement of the Eucharistic vessels, rather than a crowded table setting; there is movement in the bustling scene, but Christ looks directly at the viewer and commands attention. These symbolic elements have been favored by many of the great masters, including Catalan artist Jaume Huguet (1415-1492), who incorporated similar references in his version of *The Last Supper* painted in the mid-fifteenth century (Figure 55).



Figure 55: Jaume Huguet, *The Last Supper*, c. 1740. Oil on wood, 67 x 64 inches. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain. Web Gallery of Art. [http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/h/huguet/last\\_sup.html](http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/h/huguet/last_sup.html). (accessed June 25, 2015).

The Studios produced their first mosaic of *The Last Supper* in 1897 for the First Independent Church in Baltimore, Maryland. After being exhibited briefly at the Studios,

the reredos was installed above the altar (Figure 52).<sup>170</sup> The mosaic was a great success and was considered “the most important figure panel in mosaic glass that has ever been attempted in this country.”<sup>171</sup> The intricate design consisted of 64,863 pieces of glass and featured life-size figures.<sup>172</sup> The labor-intensive mosaic took a year to fabricate and was very costly; the firm reported they would not reproduce it for less than \$10,000, which was an incredible sum at the time.<sup>173</sup> The mosaic was praised for its “strong religious sentiment,” for illustrating the “vast range of color to be found in the American glass,” and for Tiffany’s “American method of work” compared to that of European artists.<sup>174</sup> After its installation, *The Brooklyn Eagle* reported, “While the grouping and poses are conventional, there is, nonetheless, a certain freedom in the arrangement, in the management of draperies and so on, that separates it from the old master work that was done upon the same lines.”<sup>175</sup> Newspapers had struck upon the distinguishing quality of the original work: it was decidedly American in craft and composition.

Following the success of *The Last Supper* mosaic in Baltimore, the Studios immediately produced a second version, which was completed in 1898. The mosaic was virtually identical to the one in Baltimore, and just as intricate (Figure 56). According to Clara Driscoll, cutting the pieces of glass for the figure’s heads was particularly challenging and she wrote, “Some of the pieces of glass around the eyes and mouths in the faces are less than an eighth of an inch, besides being irregular in shape and

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<sup>170</sup> “Stained Glass at the Tiffany Galleries,” *The New York Times*, (February 27, 1897), 12. The church is now the First Unitarian Church of Baltimore. The mosaic was given by members of the congregation.

<sup>171</sup> “A Large Figure Mosaic,” *The New York Times*, (June 20, 1897), 15.

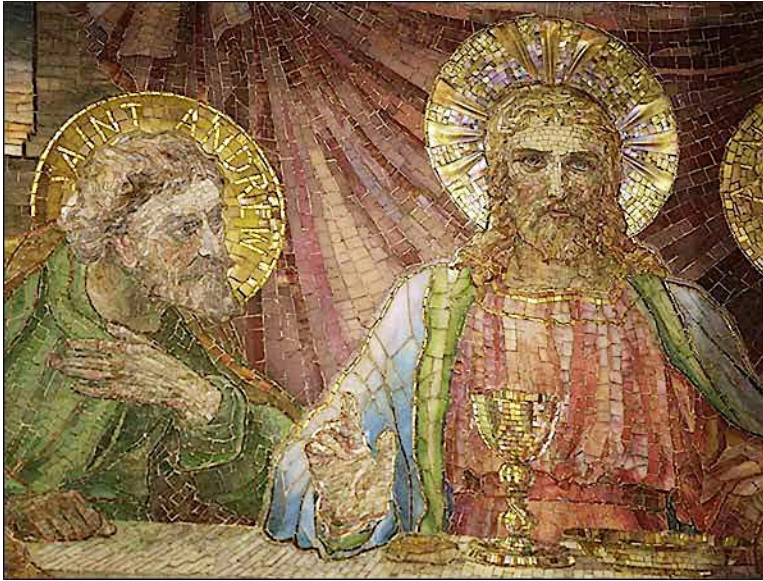
<sup>172</sup> “A Handsome Glass Mosaic,” *The Sun*, (June 21, 1897), 10.

<sup>173</sup> “A Fine Mosaic Picture,” *The Sun*, (September 30, 1897), 10.

<sup>174</sup> “A Large Figure Mosaic,” *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> “Tiffany’s Mosaic of ‘The Last Supper,’” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, (June 27, 1897), 21.

consequently very hard to cut.”<sup>176</sup> Tiffany exhibited the mosaic at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900 and at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York in 1901, indicating that he considered it to be an exemplary artwork of the brand.



**Figure 56: Detail of St. Andrew and Jesus, *The Last Supper*, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, Frederick Wilson, designer, ca. 1898, installed 1902. Mosaic glass, 6 x 16 feet. Chapel of the Sanitarium Apartment Building, Clifton Springs, New York. Image by Annette Lein. In “Rare glass mosaic artwork by Tiffany being restored in Ontario County Chapel,” by Bennett A. Loudon. [http://www.fostercottage.org/Timeline/rare\\_glass\\_mosaic\\_artwork\\_by\\_tif.htm](http://www.fostercottage.org/Timeline/rare_glass_mosaic_artwork_by_tif.htm) (accessed June 25, 2015).**

At the close of the Pan-American Exposition, the firm suggested the mosaic to a patron who was looking for a memorial. In 1902 it was installed in the chapel of the Clifton Springs Sanitarium in Clifton Springs, New York, in honor of its founder Dr. Henry Foster.<sup>177</sup> During the unveiling ceremony, Dr. Rev. Ensign McChesney, Dean of

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<sup>176</sup> Nina Gray, et. al., “The Women Mosaicists at Tiffany Studios,” 100.

<sup>177</sup> The mosaic is inscribed: “To Thee, O Lord, be the Glory forever” / In Memory of Dr. Henry Foster / Born Jan. 18, 1821—Died Jan. 15, 1901 / By his friends, Mr. & Mrs. M. M. Buck.

the College of Fine Arts of the University of Syracuse, delivered a lecture on

“Christianity and Art” and spoke of the American nature of the artwork:

You will recall in Leonardo’s picture how everyone seems to be speaking; there seems to be action in everyone...Here you find the more quiet, reserved American style, and you see how expressive those figures are, how they show consternation; not as an Italian would show it, but as you and I would show it. What grief, what anxiety, what sadness seems depicted upon the countenances of this group seated at the table of our Lord...Altogether it is a noble work of art.<sup>178</sup>

As the Dean’s heartfelt words suggest, the artwork had captured this beloved biblical scene in a manner that was uniquely American, and that viewers could identify with on a deeply personal level.

The third and final version was installed in 1902 in Christ Episcopal Church in Rochester, New York,<sup>179</sup> and received similar accolades, particularly on the individuality of the figures, each with a posture “indicative of their character.”<sup>180</sup> Following the unveiling ceremony, a reporter for the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* wrote that the representation of Judas was especially impressive (Figure 57):

Unlike the rest of the disciples, his name has faded from the halo that still encircles his head. He has an air of abject misery: his eyes are on the ground, his chin has sunk upon his breast and his back is turned to the Master. He appears to be unmindful of his surroundings and unconscious of everything, perhaps, save the words and presence of Him whom he has betrayed.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> “The Last Supper: Unveiling of the Beautiful Mosaic Sanitarium,” *The Clifton Springs Press*, (February 27, 1902), n.p. I would like to thank Jim Conners, Clifton Springs Village Historian, who shared a transcription of the original article with me.

<sup>179</sup> The mosaic is a memorial to Helen Estelle Smith and was given by J. Moreau Smith and V. Moreau Smith, father and son. The inscription reads: This framed mosaic is erected / to the glory of God and / in / loving memory of / Helen Estelle / by her husband and son / J. Moreau Smith-V. Moreau Smith. / ‘Lord I have loved the habitation of Thy House and the place where Thine honor dwelleth.’

<sup>180</sup> “Will See New Reredos for First Time To-Day,” *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, (November 2, 1902), 19.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.



The individuality of each figure, and the overall religious feeling achieved in the artwork, demonstrates the artist's knowledge of Christian art and its symbolism. In Wilson's design, the influences of Scripture and religious art can be identified as important sources of inspiration for the composition, in the treatment of figures and textiles, and of course, by interpreting the biblical theme. The mosaic series of *The Last Supper* was a great success and their value as religious artworks was nationally recognized. The mosaics were praised for the American quality of their design and execution, but also for exhibiting a mindfulness of the Christian art tradition.



Figure 57: Detail of Judas, Thomas, and Peter, *The Last Supper*, Tiffany Studios, Frederick Wilson, designer, ca. 1902. Mosaic glass. Christ Episcopal Church, Rochester, New York. Image courtesy of The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass, Long Island City, New York.

### Interpretations of Religious Iconography

Traditional Christian iconography was also an important source of design inspiration and the most ambitious commission is the suite of ecclesiastical figural

mosaics produced between 1912 and 1914 for the Cathedral of Saint Louis in St. Louis, Missouri (1907-1929).<sup>182</sup> These mosaics are often overlooked, but they are incredibly significant for several reasons. The Cathedral mosaics were done in the traditional Italian style, and as such, they are an anomaly in their design and fabrication when compared to Tiffany's other figural works. The commission is the only large-scale mosaic installation that Tiffany produced for a Catholic church, and therefore, the subject matter includes uniquely Catholic imagery. It is also a rare instance where Tiffany collaborated with an artist outside the Studios, Chevalier Aristide Leonori (1856-1928), an architectural engineer from Italy. The substantial commission consisted of floor-to-ceiling mosaic suites for the two west chapels of the new Cathedral building, the All Saints Chapel and the Blessed Virgin Chapel. Tiffany's mosaics were part of the larger mosaic plan that would eventually cover 83,000 square feet of the Cathedral's interior and contain more than forty-one million pieces of glass mosaic.<sup>183</sup>

Building the new Cathedral was a great undertaking led by Archbishop John J. Glennon (1862-1946). He envisioned a building that would reflect the faith, civic pride, and generosity of its members. The noble structure was to be "worthy of its own past and of its future—towering high to the skies, as towers the historic eminence of Saint Louis; rich and rare in its beauty in sanctuary and aisle, as is rich and rare the faith, the piety of the Church of Saint Louis."<sup>184</sup> The local architectural firm Barnett, Hayes and Barnett, produced an architectural plan that incorporated a Romanesque exterior with a modified

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<sup>182</sup> In 1999 Pope John Paul II visited the Cathedral and bestowed upon it the honor of Basilica, a place of worship with special distinction.

<sup>183</sup> William Barnaby Faherty, S.J., PH.D., *The Great Saint Louis Cathedral* (St. Louis, MO: Archdiocese of Saint Louis, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1988), 30.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

Byzantine interior. The Cathedral became the third largest church in the Western Hemisphere and is distinguished by the proliferation of interior mosaics, comprising the largest collection in any single building in the world (Figure 58).



**Figure 58: The Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis, 1907-1929 (mosaics completed in 1988). Glass and marble mosaic. St. Louis, Missouri. Image by author.**

The extensive plan for the Cathedral mosaics took seventy-six years to complete. Tiffany's mosaics were the earliest installation, followed by the Ravenna Mosaic Company of Saint Louis until America entered into World War I. The project resumed in 1923, but ceased during the Great Depression in 1932 and World War II. In 1954, Archbishop Joseph Ritter (1892-1967) initiated the plan once again and the final mosaic

was completed in 1988. The mosaics are diverse in their iconography: the narthex mosaics depict the life of King Louis IX of France, namesake of the city and the church, the rear dome depicts historical events of the archdiocese of Saint Louis, and the main dome of the church portrays scenes from the New and Old Testament. The East chapels are dedicated to All Souls and the Blessed Sacrament, while the West chapels, by Tiffany, are dedicated to All Saints and the Blessed Virgin; their iconography illustrates their respective themes.

All of the mosaics in the Cathedral are Byzantine in style and blend together seamlessly by a continuous profusion of gold tesserae, with the exception of Tiffany's chapels, which are distinctly Italian in their style and surrounding architecture. The difference between the two mosaic styles is striking (Figure 59). Byzantine mosaics are intensely colorful, highly reflective, and feature bold designs that can be easily seen at a distance. Italian mosaics, on the other hand, are pastel in color, less reflective, and the small pieces are fitted closely together resembling a painting rather than a mosaic. There is also a dramatic difference in the use of gold. Byzantine tesserae feature gold leaf on top of the glass and are brightly metallic, while in the Italian style, gold is applied behind the glass, softening the overall effect.

There is no surviving documentation in the Cathedral archives to confirm why these areas were done in a different style, and the decision is intriguing since much of Tiffany's mosaic work was inspired by Byzantine examples. However, since Leonori specialized in the Italian method it is most likely that he specified this style for his design

of the chapels. Regardless of the reason, the difference in style makes Tiffany's contribution all the more notable.



**Figure 59: Comparison of the Italian style mosaics in the Blessed Virgin Chapel with the Byzantine style mosaics in The Blessed Sacrament Chapel. From the Mosaic Museum at The Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis, St. Louis, Missouri. Image by author.**

The Studios worked in collaboration with Leonori to execute the commission. Leonori forwarded his preliminary designs to Tiffany and then completed the cartoons at the Tiffany Studios.<sup>185</sup> An article from 1913 reported, "[Leonori] spent several months in this country, in the Tiffany Studios, painting the pictures and conferring with the craftsmen who execute his designs."<sup>186</sup> It took the firm over two years to produce the mosaics, which numbered over five hundred individual mosaic panels.<sup>187</sup> The

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<sup>185</sup> "Drawings of Medieval Glass," *National Glass Budget*, 29, 42, (February 21, 1914), 13.

<sup>186</sup> "Mosaics in St. Louis Cathedral," *Evening Standard*, (April 12, 1913), n.p.

<sup>187</sup> "Drawings of Medieval Glass," *Ibid.*

decorations of the chapels were extensive, each costing \$200,000.<sup>188</sup> Prior to their installation, the Studios exhibited a large sampling of the mosaic panels, including twenty-two ceiling domes, and also wall panels and lunettes depicting seventeen ecclesiastical subjects.<sup>189</sup>

In both chapels, the Italian style mosaics are in harmony with the surrounding architecture, which is derived from early Roman churches. In the All Saints Chapel, the barrel vaulting features a typical Italian geometric pattern, commonly used in ancient Roman buildings. The floor is made from marble pieces obtained from ancient Roman temples and old buildings in Rome and assembled in a traditional Italian Cosmatesque pattern (Figure 60).<sup>190</sup> Twisted marble columns, similar to those used in Early Roman cloisters, are inlaid with small pieces of mosaic and define the mosaic panels of the four triptychs. The figural mosaics, beginning at the rear, present a brief history of the early church and represent the apostles, bishops and confessors, martyrs, and virgins. Many of the figures can be recognized by the symbol that they are depicted with; for example, St. Peter by his keys to heaven (Figure 61), St. Catherine of Alexandria by the wheel upon which she was tortured, and St. Sebastian who was martyred by arrows.

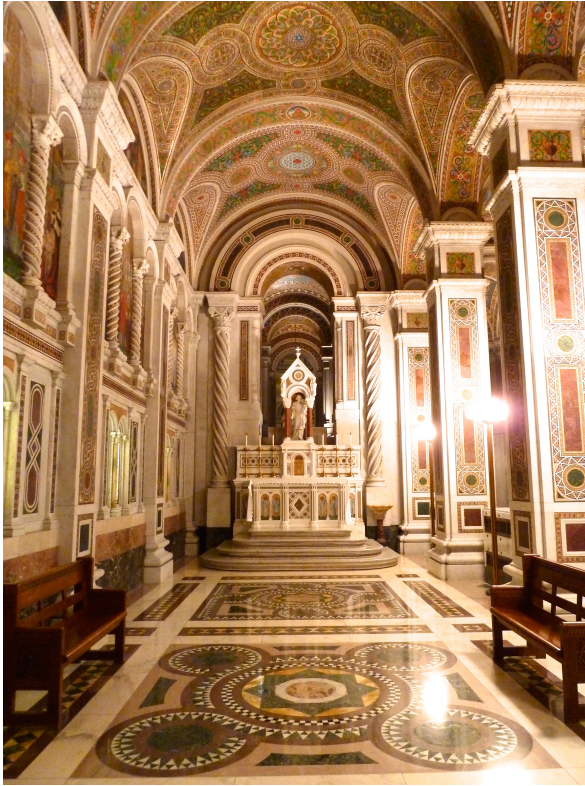
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<sup>188</sup> "Mosaics in St. Louis Cathedral," Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> "Exhibit Glass Mosaics: Tiffany Studios Have on View Ecclesiastical Ornamentations," *New York Tribune*, (January 17, 1914), 5.

<sup>190</sup> Rev. Maurice B. McNamee, S.J., *Mosaics of the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis* (St. Louis, MO: Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis, 1994), 42.





**Figure 60: Tiffany Studios, All Saints Chapel, Chevalier Aristide Leonori, designer, 1912-1914. Glass and marble mosaic, 20 x 50 feet. The Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis, St. Louis, Missouri. Image by author.**



**Figure 61: Detail of the Apostles Triptych from All Saints Chapel, Tiffany Studios, Chevalier Aristide Leonori, designer, 1912-1914. Glass mosaic. The Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis, St. Louis, Missouri. Image by author.**

In the Blessed Virgin Chapel, intricate mosaics cover the ceiling tracery with birds, flowers, and other well-known symbols: the cross of Christ recalls His death, the interlacing circles are symbols of eternity, and the vines and grapes represent the Eucharist. The four mosaic triptychs depict events in the life of the Blessed Virgin, namely, the Presentation, the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Assumption of Mary. Lunettes above the triptychs portray the Blessed Virgin under various titles: Consolation of the Afflicted, Help of Christians (Figure 62), and Refuge of Sinners. In addition, the Coronation of Mary is portrayed in the dome above the altar.



**Figure 62: Detail of lunette of Mary Help of Christians from the Blessed Virgin Chapel, Tiffany Studios, Chevalier Aristide Leonori, designer, 1912-1914. Glass mosaic. The Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis, St. Louis, Missouri. In *Mosaics of the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis* by Maurice B. McNamee, S.J. Saint Louis, MO: Archdiocese of Saint Louis, 1994, pg. 41.**

The chapel mosaics are distinct from Tiffany's other figural works. They are executed in a pastel color palette and, rather than large pieces of textural glass, the glass is opaque, closely resembling marble. The overall feeling is subdued and soft. Gold



tesserae are used sparingly, primarily on architectural elements and for halos, and are subtle compared to the Byzantine examples throughout the rest of the Cathedral. Unlike the majority of Tiffany's mosaics from this time period, the pieces of glass are small, uniformly cut, and the transition between colors is gradual. The tesserae are placed closely together and, from a distance, each figural composition resembles a painting rather than a mosaic. The Cathedral mosaics were a substantial and prestigious commission for the Studios. Distinguished by their stylistic differences, the mosaics demonstrate the versatility and artistic breadth of Tiffany's artists who executed Leonori's designs in the Italian manner. The mosaics were a great success and the *Evening Standard* reported that the undertaking "undoubtedly marks an epoch in the pictorial use of glass."<sup>191</sup>

The majority of the figural mosaics were produced from original compositions by the Tiffany Studios' artists, who drew freely from the visual language of Christian art to create their own interpretations of its iconography. In 1897 the art critic Cecilia Waern described their use of symbolism as "thoughtful, reverent, and—eclectic" with "distinct elements of originality and merit."<sup>192</sup> Of the many figural compositions, the *Witness of the Redemption*, commissioned for the Chapel of the Angels at St. Michael's Episcopal Church in New York, is one of the most monumental. Completed in 1920, the large mosaic is the centerpiece of the chapel (Figure 63). The chapel's décor was designed by

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<sup>191</sup> "Mosaics in St. Louis Cathedral."

<sup>192</sup> Cecilia Waern, "The Industrial Arts of America; The Tiffany Glass and Decorating Co.," 158

the Ecclesiastical Department and features a cohesive use of glass mosaic throughout the space.<sup>193</sup>



Figure 63: Tiffany Studios, *Witness of the Redemption*, Frederick Wilson, designer, 1920. Glass mosaic. Chapel of the Angels, St. Michael Episcopal Church, New York City, New York. Image by author.

The mosaic was inspired by the Latin hymn *Gloria in Excelsis* (Glory to God), which dates back to the early church, and is rich in symbolic imagery. The dense group of figures depicts the hierarchy of angels, archangels, dominions, thrones and powers, who together are witnesses to the moment of Christ's Redemption. The star at the center of the composition represents the divine presence and recalls the star of Bethlehem. A

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<sup>193</sup> The chapel was erected in memory of church benefactor Margaret Elizabeth Furniss Zimmerman and was dedicated on St. Michael's Day, Sep 29, 1920.

pair of kneeling angels lifts high the crown of life, amid the planets of the universe, for the King of Glory. Among the figures are the three archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, as well as Uriel, Chamuel, Noah, and Zadkiel, all inspired by biblical references.<sup>194</sup> The unique composition, with figures radiating from a central focus, has prototypes in Christian art and usually suggests a heavenly gathering of saints and angels. Among countless historic examples, *The Coronation of the Virgin* (1434-35) by Fra Angelico (1400-1455) is very similar (Figure 64).



Figure 64: Fra Angelico, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1434-35. Tempera on wood, 44 x 45 inches. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy. Wed Gallery of Art. <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html/>. (accessed June 25, 2015).

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<sup>194</sup> Jean Ballard Terepka, *A Brief Tour and Description of St. Michael's Church Interior and Windows* (New York, NY: St. Michael's Church, 2009), 9.

By the 1900s, Tiffany's modern mosaic method had achieved a full expression in aesthetic and execution.<sup>195</sup> *Witness of the Redemption* is an exceptional example of Tiffany's later work, characterized by its fine detail and subtle shading, confectionary colors, iridescence, and sole use of sectiliae. The mosaic has a sense of movement and fluidity, achieved by the intentional placement and shape of each individual piece of opalescent glass. When looking closely at the depiction of Raphael, who stands on the far right side of the panel, these elements can be seen clearly (Figure 65). His luxurious garment appears plush, with tassels and bits of embroidery at the edges, effects that were achieved by varicolored drapery glass, rather than solid colored tesserae. The use of irregularly shaped sectiliae is particularly effective in the billowing clouds at Raphael's feet, and also the intricately detailed wings of the angel, to his right, feathering from blush to orange. The impact of the ethereal scene is heightened by the profusion of iridescent glass, in shades of pearl, blue, and gold, giving delicacy to the angelic forms.

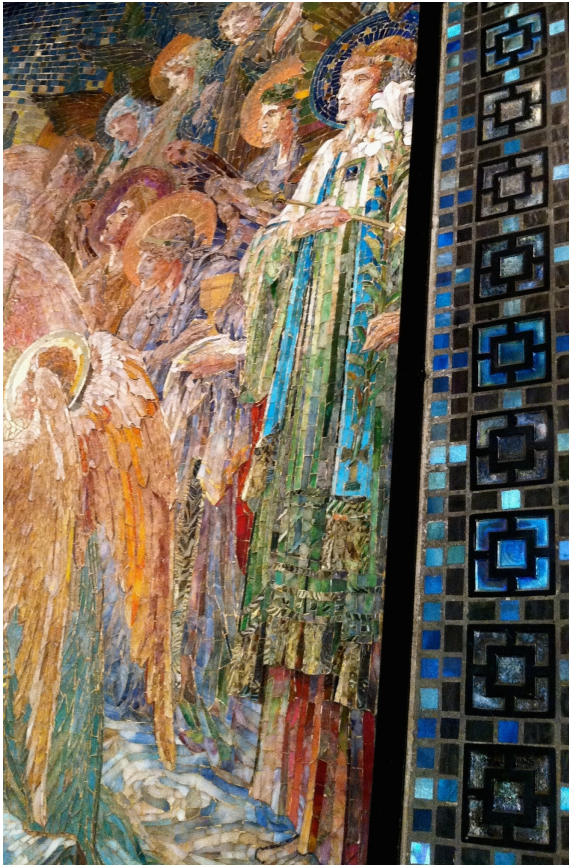
The intricate design took the firm over a year to execute, with each figure's head comprised of hundreds of mosaic pieces, and half a million pieces of glass in the entire composition.<sup>196</sup> Anticipating its installation, the *New York Times* wrote, the mosaic is, "One of the most beautiful and costly pieces of glass mosaic that has been made in this

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<sup>195</sup> This mosaic style can be seen in other mosaics produced during this period, particularly, the mosaic triptych *Te Deum Laudamus* (1923), designed by Frederick Wilson, that was commissioned for First United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, California (now installed in Lake Merritt United Methodist Church in Oakland, California).

<sup>196</sup> "Glass Mosaic Masterpiece," *The New York Times*, (February 17, 1920), 8.

country.”<sup>197</sup> Continuing, the *New York Times* aptly observed, “[The mosaic] is called the masterpiece of Louis C. Tiffany, the ripened work of his mature years.”<sup>198</sup>



**Figure 65: Detail of Raphael in *Witness of the Redemption*, Tiffany Studios, Frederick Wilson, designer, 1920. Glass mosaic. Chapel of the Angels, St. Michael Episcopal Church, New York City, New York. Image by author.**

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.



## CONCLUSION:

The Tiffany Studios were strategic in marketing and promoting their mosaics. By fabricating mosaics “in house,” and shipping to location, the firm was not limited to the local New York market, but could supply patrons from coast to coast. The Studios promoted their mosaics in product brochures, newspaper and magazine advertisements, and included mosaic samples in their impressive displays at exhibitions, both domestic and abroad.

Beyond traditional marketing tactics, Tiffany believed in the importance of showing the public how his products were made, including mosaic work, and frequently opened the workshops where visitors were invited on tours to see artworks in various stages of completion. Tours of the Studios generated publicity but also provided the public with an understanding of the mosaic method, its labor-intensiveness and intricacy, and a firsthand look at the artistry that was employed in their making.

An article, published by the *New York Times* in 1897, describes one such opening: “The Tiffany Studios at 333 Fifth Avenue were thrown open to visitors on Wednesday and Thursday last, between the hours of 10 A. M. and 4:30 P. M., and were thronged with those who have from time to time coveted such an opportunity.”<sup>199</sup> During the tour,

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<sup>199</sup> The article notes that visitors could also see “cartoons and studies” exhibited by Louis C. Tiffany, Frederick Wilson, Edward L. Sperry, Francis D. Millet, Joseph Lauber, Howard Pyle, Will H. Low, J.A. Holzer, F.S. Church, Elihu Vedder, Agnes F. Northrup, Lydia Emmett, Mary E. McDowell, and Elizabeth B. Comyns.

“visitors were shown the method of manufacturing stained glass windows, mosaics, and metal work from inception to completion.” Most interestingly, the article continues, “It was before the incomplete glass mosaics and inlays that the visitors halted longest, watching the process of construction.”<sup>200</sup> This keen interest is not surprising; for many individuals, it would have been their first experience of mosaic art. Welcoming the public into the Studios and inviting them to experience mosaic works up close—their rich colors, sumptuous texture, fine detail, and impressive scale—was a brilliant marketing tactic.

Figural mosaics were typically exhibited at the Studios prior to installation, which generated attention long before mosaics arrived at their destination. Exhibited mosaic works were routinely publicized in newspapers and made headlines once again after their installation. Churches also created publicity surrounding the installation of their commissioned mosaics and usually hosted a formal dedication ceremony to unveil the mosaic before the congregation. The newspaper frenzy and public interest surrounding the creation and installation of these mosaic works not only points to the fashionable regard for the Tiffany Studios’ brand, but also to their cultural importance as religious works of art.

The success of the Studios’ ecclesiastical figural mosaics coincided with an unprecedented period of expansive building, rising wealth, and religious fervor—a period within which Tiffany emerged as a leading designer and tastemaker. While the nation sought a unified cultural presence, many Americans looked to artistic traditions of the

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

past for inspiration. In Tiffany's own artistic career, historic mosaics from the early Christian and Renaissance periods—their color, exoticism, and decorative possibilities—were a great source of inspiration throughout his work.

While Tiffany incorporated the mosaic medium into a significant portion of his *oeuvre*, the figural compositions produced by his Ecclesiastical Department are among the most exquisite mosaic works. These religious artworks were successful within the brand and were praised for their distinctly American perspective. Characterized by their dimensionality and movement, immensity of color and texture, the figural designs beautifully showcase the modern expression that Tiffany achieved in mosaic. By including figural and ornamental mosaics in many of his most notable church commissions, Tiffany pioneered the use of mosaic art in the American ecclesiastical interior.

With the rise of European modernism in the 1920s came a demand for aesthetic simplicity and Tiffany's eclectic opalescent glasswork was out of fashion by the early 1930s. Yet, despite changing tastes, his legacy remains one of innovation and his influence continues to this day. Through his efforts, Tiffany initiated a revival of the mosaic art tradition, proved the versatility of the medium, and advanced the art form through a new design approach. In the decades following his success, mosaic continued to be integrated into ecclesiastical spaces, and many of the artists trained under Tiffany's direction perpetuated the art form through their own work, whereby bringing mosaic to the next generation.



**APPENDIX I:  
CHRONOLOGY OF FIGURAL MOSAICS**

- 1891  
Mosaic reredos (title unknown), J.A. Holzer, designer. St. Paul Episcopal Church, Troy, New York.
- 1892  
*Fathers of the Church*, Joseph Lauber, designer. Exhibited at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass, Long Island City, New York.
- 1895  
*Jesus in the Temple*, Frederick Wilson, designer. United Presbyterian Church (formerly First Presbyterian Church), Binghamton, New York.
- 1895  
Mosaic reredos (title unknown). St. Matthew Church, Worcester, Massachusetts.
- 1896  
*The Last Supper*. St. Paul Episcopal Church, Richmond, Virginia.
- 1897  
*The Last Supper*, Frederick Wilson, designer. First Unitarian Church (formerly First Independent Church of Baltimore), Baltimore, Maryland.
- 1899  
*Truth*. The Second Church, Boston, Massachusetts. Private Collection.
- 1901  
*The Voyage of Life*, Frederick Wilson, designer. Wade Memorial Chapel, Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio.
- 1898  
*The Last Supper*, Frederick Wilson, designer. Clifton Springs Sanitarium Chapel, Clifton Springs, New York.

- 1902  
*The Last Supper*, Frederick Wilson, designer. Christ Church, Rochester, New York.
- 1905  
*Baptism of Christ*. St. Luke Episcopal Church, Scranton, Pennsylvania.
- Ca. 1905  
Two mosaic panels with angels (titles unknown). Trinity United Methodist Church, Salisbury, Maryland.
- Before 1910  
*The Good Shepherd*, Frederick Wilson, designer. First Presbyterian Church, Paterson, New Jersey.
- Ca. 1910  
*Christ Blessing a Child*, Frederick Wilson, designer. Church of the Transfiguration, Brooklyn, New York. Private Collection.
- 1911  
*The Wanderer*, Frederick Wilson, designer. First Unitarian Church, New Bedford, Massachusetts.
- 1912-1914  
All Saints Chapel and Blessed Virgin Chapel, Chevalier Aristide Leonori, designer. Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis, St. Louis, Missouri.
- 1913  
*Jesus and Nicodemus*. First Congregational Church of LaSalle, LaSalle, Illinois.
- 1914  
*The Good Shepherd*, Frederick Wilson, designer. Cornerstone Baptist Church (formerly the Washington Street Church), Eastport, Maine.
- 1915  
*The Sower*. Pilgrim United Church of Christ, New Bedford, Massachusetts.
- 1915  
*Angel of Light*. First Unitarian Congregational Society (formerly the Church of the Messiah), Brooklyn, New York.

1917

*Christ's Charge to His Disciples*, Joseph Cowan, designer. St. Clement Church, El Paso, Texas.

1919

*Prayer of the Christian Soldier*, Frederick Wilson, designer. United Presbyterian Church (formerly First Presbyterian Church), Binghamton, New York.

1920

*Witness of the Redemption*. Chapel of the Angels in St. Michael Episcopal Church, New York City.

1922-23

*Te Deum Laudamus*, Frederick Wilson, designer. Lake Merritt United Methodist Church, Oakland, California (formerly located in First United Methodist Church, Los Angeles, California).

1925

Mosaic tablet of Christ (title unknown). North Reformed Church, Newark, New Jersey.

1931

*The Sower*. Immanuel Congregational United Church of Christ, Hartford, Connecticut.

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- Tiffany Studios' Photograph Archive. The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Natalie Zmuda grew up in Michigan and received a Bachelor of Arts from Madonna University. She relocated to Washington, DC to pursue graduate studies. During her time as a graduate student she was granted a fellowship with the *Archives of American Art Journal* and completed an internship at the Luce Foundation Center for American Art at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. She was awarded scholarships to summer programs at the University of Glasgow in Scotland and with the Victorian Society in America in Newport, Rhode Island. While completing thesis research, she worked as the Exhibitions Assistant at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Natalie has a passion for decorative arts, particularly glass and design history. She hopes to work and grow in the field for many years to come.