

SALVIATI & Co.



The APPLE Store at 235 Regent Street, London, was once the office in London of Salviati & Co., mosaic manufacturers of Venice. The Lion of Venice (the *Winged Lion*) is depicted on the *spandrel* between two arches.

by R. S. KOVACH



Paul R. Speakman 2026

THE ANGLO-CATHOLIC REVIVAL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE RESURGENCE
OF THE VENETIAN ENAMEL MOSAIC INDUSTRY

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By

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ABSTRACT

The art of mosaic decoration has existed for millennia. The earliest examples are floors made of pebbles from the eighth century BC that were found in Asia Minor. The Greeks were the first to produce enamel mosaic two thousand years ago, and the process travelled around the Mediterranean before eventually spreading to the adjacent continents. Byzantine craftsmen created an innovative style with their extensive use of rich metallic colors, and they had a great influence on the emergence of Venice in the thirteenth century as a leading, global force in enamel mosaic manufacture for hundreds of years. The deregulation of the industry and the lack of skilled masters contributed to the drastic decline of Venetian enamel mosaic workshops by the early 1800s; however, within a century, the industry was booming again, with new architectural mosaics being installed all over Europe and North America.

By examining the religious, social, and cultural environment in Great Britain during the late nineteenth century, as well as by conducting a case study of Salviati enamel mosaics, this thesis will postulate that the Anglo-Catholic revival had a direct effect on the renewed popularity of Venetian mosaic architectural decoration. It will conclude that the increased interest in Catholic ritualism that was fueled by the Oxford Movement and advocated by ecclesiologists led to the revival of the Gothic style of architecture, which in turn helped boost a demand for traditional church decoration.

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RECOMMENDATION

This transcribed piece, which formed the Thesis for a Master's Degree awarded to Rita Kovach at Georgetown University, Washington D.C., in 2012, is highly recommended to those who wish to understand and appreciate the works of Salviati & Co., who were responsible for some of the mosaics within the chancel of St. Mark's Church, Worsley. Their reputation in the later nineteenth century was unsurpassed and their name appears in connection with many beautiful mosaics in this country.

P.R.S. 2026

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

By the early nineteenth century, the previously very popular and lucrative glass manufacturing industry located in Venice that had provided wares and decorations for the global market for hundreds of years was almost non-existent. To rectify this, an enterprising lawyer, Antonio Salviati – encouraged by his fascination with restoring the mosaics of St. Mark’s Basilica – formed a Venetian company in 1859 to engage in the almost forgotten traditional glass manufacturing processes. After several successful international exhibitions and the subsequent receipt of private British financial backing in 1866, Salviati’s venture generated a renewed interest in and increased use of Venetian glass, which quickly spread from Great Britain to the rest of Europe and North America. Concurrently, the Anglo-Catholic revival, which began in 1833 and reached its height in the 1860s, had been influencing both secular and church architecture in Britain through its support of the Gothic Revival style. This thesis aims to show how this religious movement provided the necessary social and cultural environment in Great Britain for enamel mosaic works to be valued at a greater level and how religious commissions helped save the Venetian glass industry.

The research for this thesis uses Antonio Salviati’s first-hand account of the mosaic manufacturing process, contemporary nineteenth-century writings detailing the social environment and view of the visual arts, and information about the various international exhibitions that took place within England at that time. Modern analyses and commentaries on the Venetian glass industry, as well as on the Anglo-Catholic revival have been examined. Additionally, a representative sample of mosaic works by Salviati’s various companies that can still be found in British churches has been catalogued. Finally, a site visit to England in late March 2012 also allowed for a first hand examination and analysis of two churches containing Salviati mosaics.

CHAPTER TWO

VENETIAN ENAMEL MOSAICS

According to contemporary artistic glass expert Sheldon Barr, “[t]he recovered art of Venetian mosaic in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century is now seen as one of the most important aesthetic achievements of the Victorian-Edwardian era.”

A Brief History of Mosaic

Enamel mosaics – which are the focus of this thesis – are thought to have been first produced by the ancient Greeks in the second century BC. They found the technique to be much superior compared to both marble and painted substances in achieving a very colourful composition. Enamel mosaics are often “improperly described as glass”; and even though their basic component is a vitreous paste (the same material that makes up common glass), other materials of a distinct quality are added in precise quantities and under exact heat to give them their specific density, hardness, and colour. The process of making enamel can be traced back to the Egyptians, who by 4000 BC had discovered a way to use alkaline silicate of calcium to apply an enamel coating to buttons, and would later come to use this process to produce glazed china. It was not until 2,500 years later that the technique for making glass was discovered in Mesopotamia. In this process, a combination of silicate and lime that was found in sand was mixed with soda from nitre. This was then heated to a liquid state, shaped, and cooled to form a non-crystallized and, therefore, breakable medium. Within less than a century, this particular method of glass production spread westward along the Mediterranean, through Syria, Palestine, Greece, and finally, back to Egypt.

Mosaic glass should not be confused with mosaics made from enamel glass. The former involves melting glass rods together in order to create a pattern called millefiori (“thousand flowers”) to make jewellery or various vessels without using the glass blowing process. The latter involves adhering tesserae (individual mosaic pieces) cut from sheets of smalti (opaque enamel glass) to a surface to create a picture.

Properly manufactured enamel mosaics can be superior to paintings (especially frescoes found in northern locations) because of their colour retention, ability to be cleaned, tolerance of numerous climates, and general permanency. This is because apart from extreme temperatures and moisture, the only major threats to mosaics are fires and earthquakes. Thin sheets of gold and silver can also be fused under great heat between two pieces of enamel in order to make extremely durable metallic pieces. Furthermore, enamel mosaic can be cleaned and repaired more seamlessly with less of a chance of detracting from the value of the original work, unlike oil paintings or frescoes.

Mosaic is a uniform composition made with many pieces (which can be of marble, enamel, or numerous other media) of various sizes, colours, and forms applied in a manner in which they create a design that achieves an aesthetic result similar to that of a painter with a brush. There are two types of mosaics: the first is called rough (or Monumental or Byzantine), in which the shapes are irregular and are placed near each other, leaving a visible joint; this is the method of mosaic production that was used by the ancient Greeks and Romans and was “generally adopted for the purpose of architectural decorations, both for the interior and exterior of buildings.” The second type of mosaic is a smooth (otherwise known as Marquetry or inlaid) surface in which the edges are “perfectly close and adherent to one another” and the surface is polished.¹⁰ Inlaid mosaics are generally used for personal ornaments like brooches, earrings, and bracelets, as well as household decorations like tables or other furniture. However, the Italians – including the Florentines, Romans and Venetians – adopted this method for making wall mosaics. This turning point probably took place during the Renaissance when the Marquetry process was used to help mosaics better mimic the look of paintings. However, the smooth application of the tesserae reflected the light less than the Byzantine method and therefore, resulted in a more muted overall effect.

The earliest architectural mosaics that have been found are residential floors in Gordium, Turkey, made in the eighth century BC and composed of monochromatic pebbles. The oldest surviving wall mosaics are from Nero’s palace in Rome “the Domus Aurea” from the first century.¹² The Romans also created the oldest mosaics to be discovered in Britain, which are from AD 60-70 and are found in the legionary fortress baths in Exeter.¹³ These decorated the floors and walls and were made of marble.¹⁴ Common themes and subjects in these early works included geometric designs, flora and fauna, myths and stories of the gods, as well as scenes from everyday life such as hunts, games, and wars.

As of the fourth century, Christian themed mosaics in chapels and crypts began to appear as the successors to the pagan symbols of temples and shrines. By this time, “wall mosaics had become quite mature” in their use of colour and in their ability to portray images accurately from greater distances. Biblical scenes, religious figures and symbols, as well as portraits of the occasional contemporary political or church leader were common subjects of these colourful – and often metallic – compositions.

Mosaic art quickly spread all along the Mediterranean and it made its way into Europe, North Africa, and Asia Minor. By the sixth century, Byzantine craftsmen had developed a new style of mosaic application in which they angled the rich, metallic tesserae to “focus the reflections directly into the viewer’s eyes.” They brought this technique to the Italian peninsula, and numerous examples from this period are found in Rome and Ravenna. By the late seventh century, mosques – in Jerusalem, Syria and Spain, among others – were using mosaics for decoration to depict landscapes, plants and geometric patterns.

Constantinople’s Hagia Sophia, originally a Byzantine and later an Eastern Orthodox basilica, was able to escape much of the iconoclasm of the eighth and ninth centuries because its founder Emperor Justinian decided not to use images or icons in its original mosaic decorations when it was built in 532-37. The mosaic of the Madonna and Child above the main apse was the earliest image that was added during a short break in the Iconoclastic Controversy in 787 in order to “clarify the Orthodox faith as practiced in the basilica.” Many other Eastern Orthodox churches, convents and monasteries built at this time that are located between Greece and present-day Russia also contain Byzantine style mosaics depicting grand scenes, often of Christ and the Virgin Mary.

In the Middle Ages, mosaics were preferred by the wealthy to decorate their villas and castles as the more luxurious alternative to painting. Venetian tesserae enjoyed a virtual monopoly and the Italianate style tended to dominate wall mosaics in the West; there are few examples of Romanesque or Gothic ones. During the

Renaissance, mosaicists began to reproduce paintings by contemporary Italian masters accurately, with numerous examples found in the basilicas of both St. Mark's in Venice and St. Peter's in Rome. In the eighteenth century, new methods of glass production contributed not only to the continued, albeit reduced, use of mosaics in wall decoration, but also to an increase in portraits, miniatures, and decorative furnishings such as snuffboxes and vases. During this time, Rome established itself as the new center of Italian mosaic production, with the Vatican even setting up a still existing school for teaching the craft. The increasingly abundant visitors to the Eternal City from this time onwards helped disseminate these objects throughout Europe.

The discoveries of decorated pavements, temples, baths, villas, and tombs at Pompeii and Herculaneum in the mid-eighteenth century brought the art of mosaics to the attention of a new generation. In his enormously popular aesthetic treatise of 1851, *The Stones of Venice*, author John Ruskin singles out colour and form as ways to "delight in all productions of art" and identifies glass and enamel as the perfect media to use for this. This is in sharp contrast to the view that acclaimed twentieth-century architect Le Corbusier would take sixty years later when he said that "mosaic must achieve its effect not by the colour but by its material" and that this was ideally done through the use of natural stone and marble instead of artificially painted tesserae.

The Venetian Glass Industry

After the fall of the Roman Empire, Italy had become a collection of city-states with their own individual dialects and regional customs. One of these was the Commune di Venezia, which includes the historic city of Venice and the mainland cities of Mestre and Marghera and which has been inhabited since 10,000 BC. However, refugees from the defunct empire began to settle permanently in this cluster of more than a dozen islands and the surrounding land along the coast in the northern Adriatic Sea in the fifth century. After more than a millennium marked by both independence and intermittent rule by outsiders, Venice was among the last of Italy's city-states to join the newly formed Kingdom of Italy when it was liberated from under Austrian rule in 1866.

The setup of this city built on the water is almost unparalleled, with only a few other places on earth that are so closely connected to the sea. The influx of travellers through this maritime city brought with it new goods and ideas which later spurred innovation and creativity. The landscape of Venice has undoubtedly shaped the mentality and livelihood of its inhabitants. Dominating trade and certain industries like lace and glassmaking for centuries, this city has had a volatile history and its share of dominance and oppression. But even today, tourists flock to it – often outnumbering the residents – in order to view the architecture, to experience its atmosphere, as well as to buy its famous artisan goods. The production of Venetian enamel mosaics grew directly out of the area's significant history of glass manufacture. There are records of glass production from as early as the third century in the Roman settlement of Aquileia in northern Italy, which would come to influence Venetian glassmaking. Aquileia is about 80 miles north-east of Venice by land and it is even closer by sea. It is the home of one of the earliest Christian churches that is still intact, dating to 313, which contains a remarkably well preserved and original mosaic floor from the early fourth century. Additionally, archaeological evidence points to glass manufacturing having taken place in the Venetian lagoon on the island of Torcello by the seventh or eighth centuries. The art of local mosaic production originated in the Byzantine era, when Greek masters, seeking shelter in the lagoon, imparted their secrets to the Venetians.

Glassmaking in the city of Venice took place until 1291, when it became forbidden due to fears of fire on the crowded island. Thereafter, the craft was mostly practiced on the island of Murano. From the thirteenth century onwards, Venetian glassmaking was significantly influenced by the industry centered in the Eastern Mediterranean, which had developed from the traditional processes of the Romans and early Byzantines.

There is a reference to Venice in a 1359 Florentine document as "the place where glass is made for mosaics." But by the mid-fifteenth century, architectural theorist Filarete wrote that "little is made nowadays [of mosaic glass] as it is no longer popular." Instead, other decorative items took the forefront, and "it is recorded that hundreds of lamps were ordered from Venice for the mosques of Constantinople in the sixteenth century." In the seventeenth century, the Shah of Persia even sent his glassmakers to Murano to study the Italians' skills.

Having struck Venice previously in both the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the plague of 1630 killed more than 46,000 people – or one-third of the population – including prominent glassmakers and mosaicists. It took over a century for these industries to recover; as the chemist Paul Bosc d'Antic told the French Academy of

Sciences in 1760, “[n]owhere was glass made better than Murano, ... [but now,] Murano glass is the ugliest in Europe.” His assessment was possibly based on the fact that eighteenth-century Murano glass had no noteworthy features except for its vibrant colour, ancient technique, and the popularity of its drinking glasses and bowls.

After the loss of its independence in 1797 to Napoleon’s army, Venice was further hurt when its glassmakers’ guild, which had regulated the market with stabilizing rules for over 600 years, was abolished in 1806. The cost of raw materials also escalated during this time. Between 1799 and 1806, only twenty-four furnaces operated, employing 332 staff; by 1820, the number had gone down to just sixteen. This was a decline of almost forty percent from the highpoint of Muranese glassmaking in the sixteenth century, when twenty-eight glassworks operated on the island.⁴⁴ With the exception of bead manufacture, all sectors of the Venetian glass industry suffered between the fall of the Republic in 1797 and 1860. The number of glass factories on Murano dwindled further, down to fifteen in 1846 and twelve in 1847. Luckily, in 1840 master glassmaker Lorenzo Radi rediscovered a century-long lost process of making coloured vitreous paste – used for making smalti – and gold leaf for mosaics. This process became essential to the restoration of St. Mark’s Basilica.

Thanks to this rediscovery, by 1867 enamelled glass enjoyed a renaissance, which is often credited to Antonio Salviati, the public face of the movement. Today, about 4,600 people live on Murano and the glass industry brings in an estimated \$217 million in revenue annually. But this is a twenty-five percent decline from even a decade ago, which itself was less than during the most recent heyday of the industry in the 1960s, when it employed about six thousand people compared to six hundred today. Because of the increasing costs of energy and labour, as well as competition from cheap fakes, the former glassworks are now being sold and transformed into luxury hotels. Thus, somewhat ironically, the current decline of the glass industry is helping to revitalize tourism amongst the islands in the Venetian lagoon by making abandoned factory land available for developers. In the late nineteenth century it was the other way around, since increased tourism contributed to an increased awareness of and demand for glass products. Salviati and Companies John Ruskin was an influential art critic during the Victorian era who wrote on a wide range of subjects. He travelled extensively, including making several trips to Venice. His criticism of the Austrian modernization of Venice in the first half of the nineteenth century, including the whitewashing of many historic buildings, brought the issue of protecting Venetian artistic patrimony to light. This was highlighted by the fact that not only were the centuries-old mosaic decorations in St. Mark’s Basilica falling off the walls and ceilings, but they were also being sold to the wealthy tourists who visited the city. Ruskin had called the mosaic scenes in St. Mark’s “the poor man’s Bible [that was] more easily read upon the walls than a chapter” and believed that “[c]hurches ought to be richly adorned, as being the only places in which the desire of offering a portion of all precious things to God could be legitimately expressed.”

Antonio Salviati most certainly shared Ruskin’s opinions regarding St. Mark’s and its mosaic decorations. Although he was from the city of Vicenza – about fifty miles inland to the west – Salviati considered Venice “[his] own city” and he was proud of its pre-eminence in the art of mosaic. He believed that with the increase of Christianity in the third and fourth centuries, mosaics “received a new life” and he considered those of Hagia Sophia to be “[s]uperior to all others.” His fascination with the mosaics of St. Mark’s, therefore, is no surprise, since the two buildings share a similar Byzantine layout and style. He specifically found St. Mark’s to be remarkable because of its “strength, beauty and expression” and said that its ornamentation “is also fitted for a higher and sacred purpose” which needed to be sought in other architectural works.

Salviati blamed the decline in the manufacture of Venetian mosaics on the Republic’s “political and commercial decay” of the eighteenth century. But because he felt that art was not wholly dependent on political changes, but “bound up with the nature and spirit of the people,” it was also capable of being reawakened. This belief, and his sadness at seeing the deterioration of existing mosaics in Italy, eventually drove Salviati to abandon his lucrative career as a lawyer and attempt to revive the industry in Venice. With the help of Radi – the award-winning mosaicist with forty years of experience – Salviati utilized the existing knowledge and skill of the Muranese craftsmen by teaching them “to work better and cheaper than in any other place.”

This was not the first time that a non-Venetian stepped in to save the declining local mosaic industry. In the early fifteenth century, the last skilled mosaicist had died without having trained any successors. Therefore, Florentine artist Paolo Uccello had to be called upon to restore several mosaics in St. Mark’s after a 1419 fire caused significant damage. Within twenty years, a new generation of Venetian artisans was once again trained in order to be able to work on the continuously needed restorations.

Venice was considered run-down by the time Salviati moved there in 1851 at age thirty-five to practice law. He was inspired by two like-minded individuals – the Muranese abbot and glass historian Vincenzo Zanetti, and pharmacist and future mayor of Murano Antonio Colleoni – to use glassmaking to help rebuild the local economy. Having travelled to the Vatican’s mosaic workshop in Rome to see their process for himself, Salviati returned to Venice committed to reviving the industry which once had its high point amongst the islands of the lagoon. Fortuitous timing also aided Salviati, because the previous mosaicist who had been restoring Venice’s crumbling treasures within St. Mark’s for over twenty years was found guilty in 1858 of selling original mosaic fragments, and thereby was relieved of his appointment.

Salviati opened his first workshop in 1859 to manufacture Radi’s new smalti with the hopes of receiving the vacated commission to create mosaics for the basilica’s restoration work.⁵⁹ By this time, he had been convinced by Zanetti and Colleoni to give up his work as a lawyer altogether in order to focus completely on the new venture. The first of his many companies, it was called Salviati Dott. Antonio fu Bartolomeo and officially registered in 1861. The assembly, exhibition and sale of all the mosaics that it manufactured were initially done in the studio and showroom in the Palazzo Barbarigo in Venice. Soon, the early stages of the restoration work on St. Mark’s were being held in such high regard that in late 1859, Salviati secured a fifteen-year contract to supply any required enamel mosaics. While glassblowing was still almost non-existent on Murano at this time, the mosaic industry in the lagoon was developing again.

In order to be able to produce quality mosaics at a reasonable price, Salviati also introduced a method of manufacturing that deviated from the ancient method of working the mosaics on-site, which limited the number of artists who could work at one time, increased production time, and thereby drove up costs. His process involved the manufacture of the mosaics (from low-priced raw materials) in his Venetian studio by multiple craftsmen (paid cheap wages), then shipping the pieces anywhere in the world to be affixed on-site (at a great speed). While he claimed to have invented this pre-fabricated method, this technique was actually already well-known in North Africa and the Levant.

Not only were the speed and price for the mosaics right, but their quality was also considered by the Imperial Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Venice to be superior to others that were being made at the time. This was due to the large variety in colours, including specific shadings and numerous golds, as well as two other, previously unknown, improvements. First, Radi was able to make gold enamel tesserae which were larger than before, allowing for their use in many more designs. Second, he came up with a way to engrave the gold leaf (with inscriptions, names, numbers) before enclosing it between two sheets of glass.

In addition to the changes in the makeup of the materials and the preparation of the compositions, the actual application of the mosaics was also different from the ancient technique. The small pieces of glass tesserae – usually measuring one square centimetre – were affixed within the workshop to heavy paper that already contained the reversed cartoon of the finished product. These partial pieces, containing the upside-down mosaics, were transported to the site, where they were placed in a smooth, fine mortar and according to Salviati, “joined to make the result look more like a painting.” Finally, the surface was smoothed, polished and coated with resin in order to fill any remaining gaps and improve the tints.

In 1860, Salviati met Sir Austen Henry Layard, a British politician and renowned archaeologist who had previously excavated Nineveh and Babylon. The rich aristocrat, who had been raised in Italy, soon helped Salviati get his first international commission, for a mosaic in Egypt for the Viceroy’s Palace at Mex near Alexandria. By 1865, Layard had become “chief adviser to the Queen on artistic matters” as well as a member on the Albert Memorial Committee.

After Prince Albert’s death four years earlier in 1861, Salviati had received from Queen Victoria his first British mosaic commission for the ceiling and walls of the entranceway to the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore. That same year, Salviati earned six medals from the Jury at the Italian Exhibition held in Florence, and he also received praise at the 1862 International Exhibition of London. His receipt of the Grand Medal of Honour for Mosaics at this London Expo no doubt soon inspired Salviati to open his first shop in the city, located at 431 Oxford Street, in order to sell his glass wares. Queen Victoria once again commissioned him to decorate several buildings at Windsor Castle and, in 1863, the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park (see figs. 1 and 2). St. Paul’s cathedral also ordered Salviati mosaics for its grand dome.

The First Glass Expo opened in Venice on November 20, 1864, and Radi and Salviati showcased their mosaics. In February 1865, Salviati made a presentation in front of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society in northern England extolling the virtues of using properly manufactured mosaics in both sacred and secular architectural decoration. Layard also extolled the benefits of mosaics over frescoes through a paper he read in 1866 to the Royal Institute of British Architects. Apart from attending international expos, Salviati promoted his company by sending a mosaic portrait of Abraham Lincoln as a gift to the United States in 1866. This work is now part of the U.S. Senate Collection and it hangs – along with a Salviati mosaic from 1883 of President James Garfield – in a quiet corridor off the Senate floor. His works also continued to receive much praise in the British and Venetian press. Additionally, a glass museum and school (the later Museo Vetrario) opened on Murano in the early 1860s with Salviati's help, and it became “crucial to expansion of the [blown glass] industry.” The next two decades would see the escalation of Europe's fascination with historical design styles that were showcased and practiced in the school.

Salviati had received several significant projects during these years, but the political unrest on the Italian peninsula still caused him economic hardship. This was because he needed to purchase new furnaces and other materials, but Austrian rule over Italy had forbidden foreign investment at the time. Salviati's London shop was also still struggling after seven years of operation. Consequently, by 1866 and the end of foreign rule in Italy, Salviati was practically bankrupt and unable to finish his existing commissions without financial assistance. He decided to target British investors because of his success in 1862 at the London Expo, the English elite's love of Venice, and their inclusion of it as a destination in their Grand Tours (thanks in no small part to the popularity of Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*), as well as his existing connection with Layard. Salviati's new investors ultimately came to include Layard, Baron Robert Amadeus Heath (a prior supporter of the Oxford Street glass shop), William Drake, Lachlan Mackintosh Rate, William Edward Quentell, Charles Sommers and William Fite. In 1866, with a total investment of £16,000, the *Societa Anonima per azioni Salviati e Compagnia* or *Salviati e Co.* (popularly known as *Salviati and Company*) was born.

Working with glassmakers Antonio Seguso and Giovanni Barovier, both “descendants of the old Murano glassmaking elite,” Salviati continued the international promotion of their works by attending both the 1867 Paris Expo and the 1868 Venice Expo. Charles Eastlake praised Salviati in his 1868 book *Hints on Household Taste*, which finally made the Oxford Street shop successful, necessitating a move to a larger shop in Piccadilly. Further evidence that the Muranese glass industry was booming was that by 1869, there were fifty factories that employed 3,500 people – a tenfold increase over the previous sixty years.

At the 1870 Rome Expo that focused on Christian art, Salviati sold a “Last Supper” mosaic to an unnamed church in London. At the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, Salviati and Radi again won awards. Lorenzo Radi died the following year, in 1874, and was replaced by Barovier and Seguso as head glassmakers.

Salviati was ousted from his position as director general of the English joint venture in 1871 because the British shareholders felt that he received too much personal credit for the firm's success. Layard in particular was critical of Salviati's “self-aggrandisement” and their relationship deteriorated. In 1872, the company was officially renamed the *Venice and Murano Glass and Mosaic Co. Ltd.* (often referred to by its Italian abbreviation *CVM*), possibly as a response to the popularity of the mosaic branch of the business. However, Salviati's name was so strongly associated with the business that an 1876 article in *The Art Journal* mistakenly identified the *CVM* store on St. James' Street in London, which contained displays of decanters, wineglasses and vases, as belonging to the *Salviati Glass and Mosaic Company*.

In 1877, Salviati – along with Seguso and Barovier – finally was forced out by his British partners from this company that he had founded. The trio returned to the name *Salviati e. Co.* for making mosaics and to *Salviati dott. Antonio* for manufacturing other artistic glass. Salviati's establishment of these two new companies was helped by William Henry Burke, a British marble merchant specializing in flooring. *CVM* declined fast after Layard's 1894 death and the loss of three additional glass masters.

Salviati was the public face of nineteenth-century Venetian mosaics, but an 1890s article in the *Architectural Record* entitled “*Modern Mosaic in England*” gave at least partial credit to the late Lorenzo Radi for his technical expertise and his role in the revival of the craft. Antonio Salviati was praised for his business sense and persistence, while the artists who designed the compositions, such as pre-Raphaelite artist John Richard

Clayton and Alfred Stevens, were equally highlighted. Although Clayton ultimately designed many mosaics and was enough intrigued with the art form that he travelled to Italy to study originals to understand them better, it was reported that he did not believe that the medium was appropriate for English architecture, nor to depict “the realism characteristic of the nineteenth century art.”

Twenty years earlier, the writer of an 1876 piece in *The Art Journal*, commenting on the newly installed reredos in northwestern England’s Chester Cathedral, had declared mosaics to be superior to frescoes not only in their durability, but also in their aesthetics. In answering whether mosaic qualifies as art, he stated outright that “the degree of artistic excellence ... leaves nothing to be desired” because of both the excellent smalti used and the technical abilities of Salviati’s mosaicists in translating Clayton’s cartoons into finished works. Furthermore, the author believed that mosaic decoration should be used in more varied locations, including public and private buildings, whether secular or religious.

Although it was the renovation of St. Mark’s Basilica that led Salviati into the mosaic business, he ultimately did not find in restoration work the same level of success that he enjoyed with the creation of new compositions. While considered to be of better quality than other enamel mosaics made at the time, the areas of St. Mark’s mosaics that had been restored using Radi’s smalti made under Salviati’s supervision did not match the originals in colour or in texture, being more flat due to their prefabrication and to their “improved” manufacturing techniques. Because of this and the subsequent British uproar that even included two former Prime Ministers signing a petition on behalf of the newly established Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Salviati in 1880 lost to Radi’s son (also Lorenzo) the rest of the commission to replace mosaics on the front façade of the Venetian basilica. In 1883, Salviati gave his businesses over to the Baroviers and they continued to operate under his name until 1896, six years after his death.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ANGLO-CATHOLIC REVIVAL

Salviati’s enamel mosaics can be found not only in British monuments and memorials, but also in houses of worship. Mosaics have long been part of architectural decorations in Great Britain, and some of the oldest church mosaics in England are the floors found in Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral, both dating to the twelfth century. However, the iconoclasm that resulted from the English Reformation created a gap of almost three centuries in British church decoration, before it took on a renewed popularity in the nineteenth century.

The English Reformation

When Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church in 1534 in order to be able to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and freely remarry, he laid the foundation for the English Reformation. While Henry himself worked to safeguard traditional Catholic practices against the increasing fervour of Protestant reformers, it was under his successors during the next one hundred years that Anglicanism began to deviate from Catholic tradition. In addition to creating a separate organizational structure, the Church of England came to follow its own official book of liturgy and doctrines. Under Henry’s son, Edward VI, the Catholic concept of transubstantiation, where wine and bread are believed to turn into the blood and body of Christ, was rejected; with this development, the images of the Last Supper within Anglican churches became politically obsolete.

The iconoclasm of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which involved the sale, looting, and destruction of religious images in houses of worship – especially with regard to vestments, liturgical accessories, and paintings before culminating in the elimination of altars starting in 1550 – led to much more sparsely decorated interiors within these churches up until the Anglo-Catholic Revival. For the next three centuries, whitewashed walls, plain wooden pews, and simple ornamentation replaced the lavish, decorated interior spaces that were previously often comprised of Gothic and Renaissance motifs.

Tractarianism or the Oxford Movement

Church reform in nineteenth-century England did not start with the goal of reversing the previous iconoclasm, but rather with making religion more accessible to the general population. The 1815 publication *The Church in Danger* highlighted the concept that changing populations, especially in industrial areas, resulted in average citizens lacking access to parish churches. For example, while one minister was expected to tend to an average of 640 people in his parish, central London at the time had almost one million people without a parish church within eight miles of St. Paul's Cathedral. This study, as well as John Wade's 1820 *The Black Book, or Corruption Unmasked* – which criticized tithing, patronage, and general offenses – fuelled Parliamentary debate about church reform into the 1830s. Although other political issues took precedence, between 1818 and 1833, six million pounds were spent on the building and restoration of churches in England, an effort which began to provide religious facilities to the full spectrum of the working class. By 1876, this activity had increased the number of Anglican churches in England and Wales by 1,727 and had restored more than 7,000 of them.

However, not all of the changes that took place at this time were intended by worldly authorities. The suppression of Irish bishoprics in 1833 is credited by some as the catalyst for the establishment of the Tractarian movement. Tractarianism, which advocated the return to traditional Catholic practices and doctrines within the Church of England, got its name from a series of writings produced between 1833 and 1841 called *Tracts for the Times* by John Henry Newman, a vicar at St. Mary's church in Oxford. The Tractarian revival involved "the creation of a new sense of the reality of corporate religion, and an assertion of the dignity and authority of the Church. They went far backward in order to go forward – back to the Caroline divines, back beyond the Tudor Reformation, back to the 'Undivided Church.'

Also called the Oxford Movement because many of its members were associated with the University of Oxford, this religious revolution did not begin until the close of the Romantic Period. While their philosophies differed, many Tractarians did admire the late-Romantics such as John Keble as the latter entered a more conservative phase. However, an even more meaningful connection between the two movements is that the Tractarians were medievalists, which was a significant Romantic trend.

Tractarians sought "to rouse the Church from its lethargy, and to strengthen and purify religion, by making it deeper and more real." They did this by advocating the return to ritualism and Catholic doctrines such as apostolic succession, which had become widely forgotten in the Anglican Church in the eighteenth century. The movement grew rapidly, and by 1835, it had a large and varied following that reached well outside of Oxford. But the university remained the center of the issue and religion was the main topic of discussion for several years thereafter since "[a]ll subjects in discussion seemed to lead up to [it] – art and poetry, Gothic architecture and German romance and painting, the philosophy of language"

In 1838, a rift began to form within the Tractarians between the followers of the original movement and a younger generation who were even more closely allied with the Roman Church. Although ultimately their goals were the same, the fractional group wanted Newman and his followers to explain how their clearly Protestant views, found in the Thirty-nine Articles that defined the doctrines of the Church of England, reconciled with being both Catholic but also anti-Roman. Newman eventually dealt with this question in *Tract No. 90* published in 1841. His arguments did not satisfy the dissenters led by W.G. Ward, however, and the controversy around the *Tracts* continued until it became so great that the bishops within the Church of England issued charges censuring them. Additionally, in an attempt to separate itself even more from Rome, the Church strengthened its ties with Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem, as well as with the evangelical Church of Prussia.

One of Newman's last contributions to the quarterly publication *British Critic*, entitled "The Catholicity of the Anglican Church" and published in early 1840, "opened the door for Roman developments in its pages." Although the journal ceased publication in 1844 after Ward included numerous articles that extolled the "belief in Rome as the goal of the Movement," the English theologian continued to disseminate his views through his book *The Ideal of a Christian Church*. The next year, a full convocation was held at Oxford by the heads of the university in order to censure Ward for "six incriminating passages from the *Ideal* . . . said to be inconsistent with the Articles." While this, along with a degradation of the passages, was passed in the subsequent vote amongst the fifteen-hundred attendees, who included future Prime Minister William Gladstone, the third issue on the agenda – the condemnation of *Tract No. 90* – was vetoed by two Proctors to enormous cheers. Within months, both Newman and Ward left the Church of England and converted to Roman Catholicism.

Newman had started an important dialogue that cut across classes and backgrounds. He wanted to make religion in Britain suitable for the nineteenth century, as well as to support the country's "secular civilization." However, the influence of ritual within this philosophy was secondary to him. Even though the activities of the movement slowed after 1845, it came to have important lasting effects on church architecture and decoration. In order to try to discredit Tractarianism, *The Catholic Layman* published a sermon in 1857 that called the movement a "mockery of its former self" that had been dwindling in numbers and influence for the past decade, especially amongst the poor. However, both William Peck's *The Social Implications of the Oxford Movement* and Christopher Dawson's *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement*, written for the hundredth anniversary of Tractarianism, highlight its significance in rallying against "an exclusively secular philosophy of civilization" and call it just as much a social movement as a religious one.

Another attempt to curb Tractarianism, directly through iconographic legislation, was the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 that was passed by the English Parliament. The Act sought to regulate more strictly the worship practices of the Church of England. As a staunch Protestant, Queen Victoria was a strong supporter of the Act. The Act established a secular court that had the rights to review and approve any ornamental or ritual alterations within a church, as well as to mandate sentences for non-compliance. It was formally repealed in 1965 through the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measures of 1963 (No. 1).

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIETY, ART, AND CULTURE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

Tractarianism was a major driving force behind social change within Victorian Britain that ultimately affected the arts, but it is not the only one. Andrew Saint, a former professor of architecture at Cambridge University and author of numerous books on British architectural history, stated that there is an "economic explanation for the constant demand for artistic change that we have seen [in England] since 1750." While this is certainly plausible, there are many other factors at work which influenced art in Britain during the nineteenth century. This thesis uses environmental scanning to analyze what these were and how they affected the mosaic industry. Environmental scanning can be defined as "the study and interpretation of the political, economic, social and technological events and trends which influence a business, an industry or even a total market." It refers to forces in the macro environment which an organization cannot directly control, including political, economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and legal factors. This methodology was performed for the period in order to assess whether a particularly friendly environment existed for the resurgence of interest in Venetian enamel mosaics, and if so, what fostered this interest.

The Royal Influence

Alexandrina Victoria of the House of Hanover became the ruler of the United Kingdom in 1837 just weeks after her eighteenth birthday. During her more than sixty three year long reign – still the longest of any British monarch and thereafter known as the Victorian era – Queen Victoria's domain experienced unprecedented cultural, social, scientific, political, economic, and technological changes. She even became the first Empress of India in 1876 for the last quarter century of her monarchy, extending the British Empire further east around the world.

London's International Exhibition of 1851 – the first of its kind and a brainchild of Queen Victoria's beloved husband Prince Albert – began a series of important competitions and presentations in manufacturing, science, and fine arts for the next sixty years. As previously mentioned, Antonio Salviati took part in many of these exhibitions and they were successful in introducing his goods to people in many different countries.

By the 1860s, London was considered to have more Venetian mosaics than any other capital city in late nineteenth century Europe. This was partially thanks to Queen Victoria's general patronage of Salviati. After Albert's death in late 1861, she placed the orders for Sir George Gilbert Scott's remodelled Wolsey Chapel at Windsor (thereafter known as the Albert Memorial Chapel) in which Clayton designed the Salviati manufactured mosaics. Scott, Clayton and Salviati also collaborated on the Gothic-revival Albert Memorial in Hyde Park. Scott's inspiration for the Albert Memorial that was opened in 1872 was a type of medieval metalwork that he called "jeweller's [sic] architecture."

Despite the fact that members of the British Arts and Crafts movement objected to the flat, prefabricated designs of Salviati's cheaper and quicker mosaics, in 1862 the first two of eight decorated spandrels were commissioned for the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. The one of the prophet Isaiah was manufactured in two months for under £600 and installed in 1864. The critics proved to be hard to please, however, because the neo-Byzantine process employed by Sir William Blake Richmond for the main dome that was finished in 1904 was criticized for being too expensive and for taking too long to complete.

The Role of Religion

Tractarianism began in 1833 to "revive spirituality" and ultimately, it also brought back the old styles of worship, which in terms of architecture meant that it supported the return to Gothic style churches. It gave suggestions for the decoration and arrangement of church interiors (such as removing pews) that would aid in following proper ritualistic practices. During the first decade of Queen Victoria's rule, there was a noticeable increase in the use of flowers in churches, as well as in the demand for stained glass, partly thanks to the return to the romantic medievalist belief of members of the Oxford Movement that they were "an aid to seemly worship."

The Cambridge Camden Society was "a religious and ethical movement" that dominated church-building architecture in mid-nineteenth century Britain. They advocated a Decorated or English Gothic style, and their aim was to document medieval church-building, as well as to campaign for the restoration of chancels and altars within existing churches. Additionally, they laid out strict guidelines for building new churches including orienting them East, dividing them into secular and lay areas, and dictating the location of certain accessories such as baptismal fonts, all of which were for religious, and not for aesthetic, reasons. However, the Society did find the representation of allegorical figures in art to be "unreal and pagan."

The Ecclesiologist was the Cambridge Camden Society's monthly newsletter, published between 1841 and 1868, that originally intended to give general information to its members about the organisation's work. It ultimately came to contain architectural criticism and advocacy of the society's beliefs in returning to a medieval style in church architecture through the Gothic Revival style.

By 1843, the Society had started to gain influence over architects designing churches with the backing of its 700 members, two archbishops, sixteen bishops, and 31 members of Parliament. In 1845, it renamed itself the Ecclesiological Society and moved to London. According to Reginald Turnor, a mid-twentieth-century architectural historian, "[i]t is to be feared that Oxford and Cambridge were largely responsible for everything that is worst in the Gothic Revival: the first, indirectly, through the Tractarian Movement; the second, by means of a vehement propaganda, through the Camden Society."

In addition to the Tractarian movement and the philosophies of the Cambridge Camden Society, other religious issues in the nineteenth century affected British society. As a response to the massive Irish Catholic immigration caused by the Great Famine, Roman Catholic hierarchies were restored in England and Wales in 1850, although those in Scotland took another 28 years.¹⁸ Publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* in 1859 brought to the popular consciousness, perhaps for the first time, a questioning of God's involvement in the creation process. It has been argued that stained glass windows from the 1860s and 70s depicting the Creation story were a direct response to this theory. Although the book of Genesis does not seem to be represented significantly in Salviati mosaics from this period, perhaps the depiction of other well-known biblical scenes helped to serve a similar purpose. Finally, William Ewart Gladstone, who served as British Prime Minister four times between 1868 and 1894, was an avid private collector of art and it has been theorized that his fascination with Christian art, including that manifested as Salviati mosaics, influenced his later political stance on the relationship between church and state.

Gothic Revival Art and Architecture

The original Gothic architectural style began in twelfth-century France and was characterized by pointed arches, ribbed vaults, flying buttresses and colorful stained glass windows.²¹ Westminster Abbey is a prime

example of a Gothic church found in England. The Renaissance style replaced the Gothic style with more classical forms of architecture, but it was not until the 1700s that it began its appearance in England.

According to Turnor, the Renaissance continued to influence the English Tudor style as late as in the eighteenth century. However, the greatest revolution in English architecture, according to the same architectural historian, was the Gothic Revival, which he believed dealt more with morals than aesthetics. The movement progressed from classicism to romanticism in a backward looking and “reactionary” manner, having begun in theory with Batty Langley’s 1742 publication *Gothic Architecture Restored and Improved* and first used in 1753 with Horace Walpole’s rebuilding of Strawberry Hill in Twickenham. During the Georgian period, Gothic architecture was “used purely as a romantic decorative skin stretched over a normal classic structure” that had no religious or moral ties. It was not until popular, but often controversial, architect James Wyatt began designing in the Gothic Revival style at the turn of the nineteenth century that it began to gain recognition; however, up until the 1840s an Anglo-Graeco-Roman style dominated.

The Gothic Revival style was fuelled by an 1845 paper entitled “Development of Roman and Gothic Architecture,” which was delivered by Edward Augustus Freeman to the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture and consequently reviewed in *The Ecclesiologist*. The work extolled the idea of looking back at history and at various foreign civilizations in order to combine their styles in a modern manner, rather than just presenting an ancient model. This idea eventually became known as the High Victorian Gothic style. The writings of Augustus W.N. Pugin, Ruskin and William Morris all greatly influenced the newly emergent style because “these men equated art with morals in a manner all together new” and “it took the newly discovered Victorian guilty conscience to work up anxiety over good and evil.” Early English was a competing architectural style to the Gothic Revival, but it was mostly avoided by churches in both large towns and villages because it “risked the appearance of poverty.” In contrast, according to Turnor, the Gothic Revival style consisted of “Romance, Religion, and Respectability.”

A change in iconography within church decoration became evident from the late 1860s onward. Previously used narrative disappeared and was consequently replaced by individual figures of saints, fathers of the church, or prophets. Around 1870, Victorian architecture split into two distinct styles: the slowly emerging arts-and crafts movement that had a secular approach to building, and an even more religious phase of the Gothic Revival that looked at buildings as sacramental. In explaining why there was such a revolution in church design in the second half of the nineteenth century, Michael Hall, the author of “What do Victorian Churches Mean? Symbolism and Sacramentalism in Anglican Church Architecture, 1850-1870,” stated that the “search for new, lighter styles in the decorative arts, the unfolding of the Queen Anne and aesthetic movements, nationalism, liturgical change, and the influence of women in church patronage and design all played their part in the replacement of an ideal of power with one of refinement.” However, Hall also pointed to the emergence of Tractarianism as a lesser understood, but even more important factor in shaping the “changing attitude to the way that churches embodied religious meaning.” This was because “ecclesiastical architecture had, through its new emphasis on development, attempted to embody ideas not just of modernity and progress, but also, to some degree, even of scientific thought through its acceptance of new concepts of time and change.”

Sir George Gilbert Scott was “the leading architect of the Gothic Revival.” In 1860, he had designed the British Foreign Office in the Venetian Gothic style. George Edmund Street was also a well-known British Gothic Revival architect and former assistant to Scott. Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burne-Jones and Street were friends, as well as frequent collaborators. Pre-Raphaelite artists paid great attention to detail and colour, used asymmetrical composition, combined realistic and romantic figures, and extensively used plant and flower designs often seen in medieval tapestries. The London Times called Burne-Jones a genius for his mosaic design for the Anglican-Episcopal Church of St. Paul’s Within the Walls, Rome. However, Burne-Jones objected to mosaic tesserae that were “too regular, too mechanical”.

Architect William Butterfield was called “the darling of ecclesiologists.” In his book *William Butterfield*, Paul Thompson asserted that “[t]he key to understanding Butterfield’s architecture ... is Tractarian Christianity.” The most prolific and significant period in Butterfield’s career was the 1850s and 60s since the Tractarian movement slowed after 1870. In the later Victorian period, there was a decline in private financing for churches, which was replaced by building committees as a possible means of “resecularisation of the upper classes after the first wave of religious enthusiasm.”

Travel and Orientalism

Ruskin and Layard were both Englishmen who spent a considerable amount of time abroad, especially in Italy. In addition to spreading knowledge about their travels through writings and lectures, they were also founding members of the Arundel Society, or the Society for Promoting the Knowledge of Art, which was established in 1848. The society worked for half a century to popularize and make accessible to the public copies of famous European masterpieces, starting with frescoes, oil paintings, and then sculpture. Ruskin personally advocated the reproduction of Venetian mosaics in oils and watercolours for display in English museums.

Up until the early nineteenth century, only wealthy, male members of society could undertake the Grand Tour, which involved travelling around Europe for months at a time in order to study art and culture. But for those who could not go on these tours, popular literature that referred to Venice, such as Ruskin's previously mentioned *Stones of Venice* and Mark Twain's 1869 travel book *The Innocents Abroad*, also helped to disseminate information about foreign cultures. However, after steam powered transportation made the trip both faster and cheaper, and it became more acceptable for young women to travel as part of their formal education, more of the English were able to visit Venice in the latter part of the century. An 1894 article in the British publication *The Decorator and Furnisher* even praised Venice for its "irresistible" wares and touted the city as the premier location for shopping, surpassing its peers in both Europe and the Near East.

In addition to the Venetian influence, European interest in the culture and buildings of the Near East increased greatly during the second half of the nineteenth century, and this "new orientalism" influenced Victorian architecture, particularly through its interpretation of Islamic and Byzantine styles. While Salviati was noted in an 1881 article to have completed the restoration of the cupola mosaics in the Minster at Aix-la-Chapelle (now known as Aachen Cathedral), the same issue of *The Foreign Art Chronicle* listed numerous concurrent archaeological discoveries of ancient art in Egypt and Greece. Another entry in the English periodical *The Collector* from 1892 praised Salviati glass, including a reproduction of a fourteenth-century Arab lamp, as "representing high-art." Salviati's impact and influence on the arts was so great that even as late as 1883 other English mosaicists were creating works "after the manner of Salviati" and forming schools to instruct the technique locally. The interest in these mosaics is not surprising because at the same time, a Venetian Salon – decorated with stained glass, marbles, and paintings, set up amongst others at the Holborn Restaurant in London – was receiving much praise and admiration.

Even the design of the Albert Memorial – with allegorical figures at its four corners, each representing a major continent group – reflected both the British people's fascination with the world and their dominant position in it. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, the imperialistic attitude of the past had declined and other changes were on the horizon. In terms of design, machine-made, mass-produced art began to replace hand-manufactured works like Salviati's mosaics. Alternatively, the Arts and Crafts movement, which did promote and advocate hand-manufacturing, was against Salviati's technique because it was too prefabricated. Eventually, the beginning of modernism during this time, particularly through the mosaic works of Antonio Gaudi, completely changed the role of this medium in twentieth-century European art and architecture.

CHAPTER FIVE

SALVIATI MOSAICS IN BRITISH CHURCHES

By 1867, Antonio Salviati had written that "already in more than fifty Catholic and Protestant Churches in England, there are Venetian mosaics that I have installed on the altars, the walls, the choirs, the pavements, the baptismal fonts etc." The following list [not included in this copy. See original online thesis] begins to catalogue churches in Great Britain which contained enamel mosaics manufactured by artisans working for the various companies established by Salviati from the opening of his first workshop in 1859 until his death in 1890. These works are thereby generally attributed to him, even though he was only active in the companies' operations for 24 of those years (1859-83). Although most have survived, those that did not are noted accordingly. The locations are presented chronologically by the date of the installation of their mosaics in order to determine the most likely

firm of their origin. Where an exact year is unknown, the date is estimated based on the year the church was built or restored. [See original thesis online].

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Antonio Salviati was interested in the right thing at the right time. He sought to restore the damaged mosaics of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice when the local mosaic manufacturing industry was at its lowest point in centuries, but it was ultimately his resulting relationship with master craftsman Lorenzo Radi which put him on the path to success. Radi's revolutionary method for manufacturing enamel mosaic tesserae, as well as the new application technique that Salviati's mosaicists employed, proved to be unfavourable for the restoration of St. Mark's, but ideal for the creation of new mosaic works.

Even though international trade exhibitions were just starting to take place, Salviati recognized their importance in self-promotion. Thereby, the successful showing of his companies' products brought them to the attention of a wide audience. His keen business sense also allowed him to make the right kind of connections, such as the one which created his financial partnership with Layard. It was through this relationship that Salviati was able not only to locate his shop in London, but also to gain the critical attention of Queen Victoria and her key Gothic Revival architects such as Scott.

Colourful and metallic mosaics portray an apparent luxury that signifies wealth and expense, but Salviati's new methods made them affordable even to country parish churches. Since the Middle Ages, Italianate style wall mosaics were favoured in western Europe over others and Murano gained a favourable international reputation for its quality production of enamels. The fact that Salviati's 1865 academic presentation about mosaics was delivered in Leeds – a major metropolitan area with a population at the time of over a quarter million¹ located 200 miles north of London in the middle of the island of Great Britain – should not be undervalued. This was a geographically central place from which ideas could be disseminated to the rest of England, Scotland and Wales equally fast, which is proven by the high number of church commissions which he received in the subsequent years.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Britain was in the midst of the Industrial Revolution and the newly developed prefabrication process that Salviati's mosaicists used not only fit in with the spirit of the era, but also saved considerable time and money. The aesthetic ideals of the time meant that people also appreciated and demanded both the colours which Salviati's workshops were able to produce for their tesserae, as well as the painting-like results. This was no longer true only half a century later; however, the success which Venetian mosaics achieved during this time was enough to carry their manufacturers through the subsequent changes in artistic styles. Because of this, Venetian glass and mosaic factories still exist in Murano, which may not have been the case if Antonio Salviati had not taken an interest in this industry.

Industrialization in the United Kingdom also meant a growth in population and the movement of people from the countryside to cities. This had a direct effect on church architecture, as well as did the increased religious freedoms to practice Roman Catholicism within England, granted to Irish immigrants fleeing starvation caused by famine. The construction of railways and steamships sped up international travel, allowing for more people to be able to see more foreign countries more quickly, thereby aiding in the spread of the art and style of different cultures. The British Empire's expansion into India, the Italian peninsula's ultimate liberation from foreign rule, and the rediscovery of classical antiquities in Pompeii and Herculaneum also all fuelled nineteenth-century interest in ancient and foreign art.

However, just having an innovative product that was liked by a few influential individuals would not have been enough to give Salviati's mosaics their ultimate popularity. Several factors in the overall environment of mid-nineteenth century Britain proved to be favourable for the success, and many of these can be attributed to the Anglo-Catholic revival.

John Newman and his original followers within the Oxford Movement waged a lengthy battle with the Church of England concerning the nature of religion within Britain in the nineteenth century. Facing increasing opposition from within, Tractarianism nevertheless left a strong physical impression on the religious climate through its strong advocacy of the Gothic style in church architecture. The surge in church-building and restoration during the middle of the nineteenth century increased the supply of these virtually blank canvases for architects and artists to create and decorate. It is very difficult to state exactly how many British churches are adorned with Salviati mosaics, but without this construction boom, it is likely that far fewer churches in Britain – especially those in rural areas – would have them.

After the iconoclasm of the eighth century, icons in the Byzantine world – and not just those restricted to churches – became even more popular and prevalent than before, becoming “a constantly repeated declaration of faith.” In a similar manner, the lack of religious images within British churches between the late-sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries created a vacuum that the tenets of the Anglo-Catholic revival could easily fill. Not only did the images, flowers and stained glass windows add lavish decoration, but the newly installed mosaic scenes also made Biblical stories visually accessible to a still highly illiterate population. This is especially clear from the extensive use of the Last Supper in chancel decorations by the Salviati companies between 1860 and 1900. In the forty-two representative samples presented in Table 1, ten – or nearly one quarter – depict this particular story. Christ’s passion is the second most prominent theme found in these mosaics, accounting for seven scenes.

Antonio Salviati’s determination and timing were crucial to the success of his mosaics in British churches, but it was the Anglo-Catholic revival that provided the ideal environment for a renewed interest in Venetian enamel mosaics. The movement’s effects on church decoration, along with a boost in church building in general, opened up venues for elaborate mosaic work that would previously have been proscribed due to the Church of England’s earlier attitude against adornment. Had Salviati attempted the revival of Venetian enamel mosaics any earlier, he would not have found a favourable reception within British churches. On the other hand, had his attempt to introduce mosaic decoration into British society been delayed by a few decades, the environment would also have been significantly different. The massive population growth of the preceding decades meant that even though a significant number of new churches had been built, a smaller percentage of the public was attending religious services. The social impact of Tractarianism had also diminished by this time. By the end of the nineteenth century, Britain’s imperial ambitions had begun to collapse and instead of interest in antiquities, modernism was making a powerful influence in the art world.