

MELCHIOR LECHTER AND EDWARD BURNE-JONES:
THE WALL PAINTING IN THE PALLEMBERG-SAAL,
COLOGNE

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The influence of Edward Burne-Jones's work on other European artists at the end of the nineteenth century, especially in Belgium and France, has been well researched.¹ Yet comparatively little is known of his effect on German painters, as interest in Germany in the Pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts movement has focussed on the book arts and on theories concerning relationships among art, crafts, and society. The relationship between works by Burne-Jones and the German painter Melchior Lechter is especially interesting when we recognize the ways in which the content of a work can change radically in the interaction process. Analysis of the details that link a mural and a tapestry demonstrate that, in spite of clear formal dependence on Burne-Jones's work, Lechter gave his own painting a totally different meaning, based on a conception of the artist and artistic creation that had virtually nothing in common with Burne-Jones's ideas on the subject.

My focus is on Lechter's mural painting of *Die Weihe am mystischen Quell* [The Consecration at the Mystic Spring] (fig. 1), an ambitious work inspired by Burne-Jones's *The Attainment: The Vision of the Holy Grail to Sir Galahad, Sir Bors and Sir Percival* (fig. 2), the last tapestry in the six-part cycle executed from 1891 to 1895 by William Morris's Merton Abbey workshop for the dining room of Stanmore Hall near Uxbridge, the country retreat of William Knox D'Arcy.

Lechter painted his mural for the Pallenberg-Saal on the first floor of the Kunstgewerbemuseum Köln, the Cologne arts and crafts museum. It formed part of his overall decoration of the room, which was carried out from 1897 to 1902, and was almost entirely destroyed during the Second World War. The Pallenberg-Saal was financed by Jakob Pallenberg, the owner of a furni-