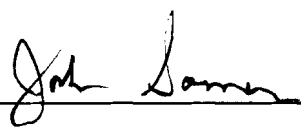
AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Christopher Cameron (name of student) for the Master of Arts (degree)

in English (major) presented on August 9, 1993 (date)

Title: A Translation of the Middle English "St. Erkenwald"

Abstract Approved: 

In this thesis, I provide a translation into Modern English prose of the Middle English alliterative poem, "St. Erkenwald." Rendering the poem into prose frees me from the restrictions of direct line by line translation, which, because of the syntactical and grammatical changes in the language, would require that details be left out. A translation into prose allows for the restructuring of sentences, which resolves any syntactical and grammatical problems encountered in translation. I have also elected not to attempt to duplicate the alliteration in the poem. Changes in vocabulary make an accurate duplication of sound nearly impossible, and a precise reproduction of detail in an alliterative translation is also difficult.

My translation is accompanied by a review of scholarship on "St. Erkenwald," in which I discuss the major controversies surrounding the poem: the history of the text, the question of authorship, the possible sources for the tale, and the theological questions raised by the poem. Although substantial evidence does not exist to support the theory that the Gawain-poet is in fact the author of "St. Erkenwald," several scholars argue that the possibility of common authorship is worthy of consideration. Likewise, some scholars argue that the Erkenwald-poet, like Langland, believes souls can ascend to heaven on the merit of good deeds; however, an overwhelming number of scholars argue, directly and indirectly, against this position. Finally, although the Gregory-Trajan legend seems to be the most direct source for the poem, scholars argue that other possible influences exist in the liturgies of the octave of St. Erkenwald, the New Testament, and the Vitae Erkenwaldi. All of these debates bear directly on the translation, and I have drawn upon them in working with ambiguities raised by multiply interpretable words, lines, and longer passages.

A TRANSLATION OF THE MIDDLE ENGLISH "ST. ERKENWALD"

A Thesis

Presented to

the Division of English

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

---

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

Christopher Cameron

August 9, 1993

John Somma

Approved for the Major Department

Faye N. Vowell

Approved for the Graduate Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest thanks to Dr. Storm for his careful criticism, patience, encouragement, and wit. I would also like to thank Cindy Blakeley for sacrificing her valuable time and energy to help me with this translation.

August 9, 1993
Emporia, KS

C. S. C.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Middle English alliterative poem, "St. Erkenwald," is an anonymous poem about a supposed event in the life of St. Erkenwald, Bishop of London in the late seventh century. The poem has been printed in five editions and five translations since it was first edited by Carl Horstmann in 1881. Of these editions I have chosen the most recent, Clifford Peterson's 1977 edition of the poem, to be my primary text. Peterson's edition is closer to the original than the other editions seem to be. This edition lacks many of the emendations made in previous editions. For example, both Gollancz and Savage changed some spellings, broke the poem into quatrains, and altered the dates the judge cites in lines 207-210 of the poem.

Although this poem receives little attention from scholars until the 1960s, interest increases greatly through the 1970s and 1980s. Now, although the number of critical studies on "St. Erkenwald" is still relatively small, the poem is finally receiving the critical attention it deserves. The first edition of the poem appears in the 1880s and two later editions, by Gollancz and by Savage, appear in the 1920s. Until that time and for years afterward, "St. Erkenwald" receives little attention. In the early 1950s John Clark begins arguing against the theory

of common authorship, but he is the only critic addressing the issue at this time. It is not until 1964 and Larry D. Benson's article against the common-authorship theory that interest in the poem increases greatly. In the 1960s two translations of the poem appear, and by the early-to-middle 1970s scholars are addressing not only the authorship of the poem, but its artistic merits as well. Articles by scholars such as Russell Peck demonstrate the craftsmanship of which the Erkenwald-poet is capable. Through the 1970s and into the 1980s interest in the poem continues, and scholars point out the complexity of the number structure of the poem, the importance of time to the poet, and the poet's use of specific techniques in creating this poem. In the 1980s more scholars turn their attention to the artistry of the poem, and fewer critics examine the on-going authorship controversy. Although this poem will never receive the critical attention a masterpiece such as Pearl receives, this work is certainly not one to be ignored, and the Erkenwald-poet should continue to receive increasingly more attention from scholars.

The plot of the poem is fairly simple, and the poet does a masterful job of disguising the complexities of the poem in such a brief work. He is able to bury the themes of baptism and transformation so effectively that modern critics are still in disagreement about his intentions in the poem. The action of the poem is relatively easy to follow; a summary of the action of the poem follows:

The poem itself begins with an introduction in which the poet

explains that St. Paul's Cathedral was reclaimed from the heathens by St. Augustine, and Erkenwald, as Augustine's successor, is having the church rededicated. As the workmen are razing a section of St. Paul's they encounter a richly decorated and engraved tomb. Inside the tomb, the mayor and townspeople find a crowned corpse bearing a scepter and arrayed in the gown of a king. Although the corpse appears to be recently dead, the scholars can discover no trace of such a king in the chronicles of their history. One week after the discovery of the corpse, word is sent to Bishop Erkenwald, who speeds home where he spends the night praying. The following day, he rises and says mass before visiting the tomb. During mass, he says that if men pray to heaven when they are unable to comprehend what is going on around them, God will send aid. As proof, Erkenwald asks those with him to confirm their faith, and he assures them they will see the power of God at work. He then lifts the dead man's eyelids, beckons him to speak, and asks a series of questions to determine who the corpse is and where his soul rests. The corpse states that he was a judge in New Troy before the coming of the Lord, and his people thought so highly of his honest service that they declared him king of all justices that were ever in New Troy. The judge also states that he has led a righteous life, and God has preserved his body and clothing, but because he lived before Christ's time and was never baptized, he is forced to live in hell. All who are present weep, as does Erkenwald, who then baptizes the judge. When one of Erkenwald's tears falls on the

face of the corpse, the judge is released from hell and his spirit moves to heaven. The corpse then rots, and the people celebrate the conversion of the pagan and the salvation of his soul.

Date of Manuscript

"St. Erkenwald" survives in one manuscript, British Museum Harleian 2250, which is dated 1477 (Peterson 11). The poem itself, however, appears to have been written nearly a century earlier. Most scholars agree that composition took place in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, but the poem resists accurate dating (15). Because the Alliterative Revival seems to have ended by the middle of the fifteenth century, the assumption that the poem was written before the manuscript date of 1477 seems logical.

Although establishing a precise date of composition may be impossible at this time, one theory has gained significant adherents. Both Gollancz and Savage have speculated that the poem was composed in honor of St. Erkenwald at the time of the translation of his body in St. Paul's Cathedral. Savage noted that "in 1386 high ecclesiastical honors were paid to the memory and merits of St. Erkenwald, and coincident with their establishment appears a poem" (Savage Gawain-Poet 8). Although the theory seems to have been generally accepted (even the Middle English Dictionary accepts this date), Peterson feels that the

dating "has been based on no firm evidence and on some doubtful assumptions" (11). Among the major points of his argument, Peterson notes that although the poem may have been composed for an occasion in which the saint was venerated, several such occasions existed and to suggest that it was one specific date may be to assume too much. He also states that if 1386 as the date of composition is accepted, then "the poem would provide the first record of the use in English of more than a dozen words, being the first instance by half a century or more in some cases" (14). Although Peterson argues against dating the poem firmly in 1386, he does agree that the poem appeared probably sometime between 1380 and 1420.

Although both Gollancz and Savage presented logical arguments, Peterson's response is very persuasive. Even though the date suggested by Savage and Gollancz is logical, without firm evidence pinpointing the date of composition, such a narrow estimate limits the possible date too severely. Peterson's suggestion that the date of the composition of "St. Erkenwald" falls somewhere between 1380 and 1420 seems to be a more reasonable estimate. Because the Alliterative Revival does not extend past the middle of the fifteenth century and interest in St. Erkenwald is not revitalized until the later fourteenth century, Peterson's suggested dates seem most appropriate.

Dialect

The dialect of the poem seems to be that of the Northwest Midlands, but accurate placement is the subject of some dispute. James Root Hulbert argues that most of the features of the alliterative poems (a term he uses to include all alliterative poems that have at any time been placed in the Northwest Midlands) are common to northern and midland writing, but the poems cannot be localized more than that (12).[1] He goes on to claim that there is no solid basis for placing the poems in the West, and "the only safe location of these poems is . . . someplace which possessed a Northern and Midland dialect" (16). Robert Menner, in a later article, refutes Hulbert's arguments. He claims that four significant dialectical distinctions place the alliterative poems (specifically Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,) in the Northwest Midlands. His argument is based largely on the evolution of some Old English spellings in the Northwest Midlands. He notes the following patterns peculiar to the Northwest Midlands that occur with greater frequency in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight than their eastern counterparts: words tend to have u-forms as opposed to i or y forms (509), there are more words with o-forms than a-forms (509), and words appear with "eo as u, ue (o), u [which is] recognized by many as a western characteristic" (511). He then notes that the Gawain-poet frequently uses the pronoun "ho," which "is found in all the poems traditionally assigned to the Northwest Midlands" but

rarely in eastern poems (514). Finally, he states that Hulbert's comparison of the language of alliterative poems to the western dialect was unfair because the dialect he needed to address was a Northwestern dialect.

Savage, who generally accepts the northwestern placement of the poem, is unwilling to reject the possibility of eastern influences. He has pointed out three indications of possible eastern influences in the poem:

(1) OE. eo appears as e in the greater number of cases: derke, 117, 294; erthe, 45.

(2) OE. y appears in the majority of cases as y or i: fyrst, 197, 331; myrthe, 350; spyr, 93.

(3) OE. a+n(m) is occasionally written a+n(m) instead of o+n(m): name, 28, 195; wan, 301. (xxxvii-xxxviii)

Although he is unwilling to rule out the possibility of an eastern influence, he does concede that the poem is largely in the West Midlands dialect. He speculates that it is possible the poem was written in the East Midlands and transcribed in the West Midlands (xxxix). Peterson rejects the possibility of eastern authorship. He says that instances of all three of Savage's examples occur in West Midland as well as East Midland writings, and therefore, "There is no reason to suppose an East Midland element in the dialect of the poem" (25).

Menner's theory of northwestern authorship has gained some support in later scholarship. Mary Serjeantson, Clifford Peterson, and J. P. Oakden, among others, have all argued that

the text was composed in the Northwest Midlands. They have all offered Cheshire as a possible locale (Peterson 24). Although accurate placement of the text, like text dating, is impossible to confirm, it seems that there is some accuracy in the criticism to date. Because most scholars agree that the text is largely West or Northwest Midland, the theory is acceptable until new evidence becomes available.

Structure

Gollancz, in his edition of the poem, structured the poem into quatrains. Savage f[illegible]t the poem was "monotonous" before Gollancz emen[illegible] structure, after which he found the poem more enjoy[illegible] clear (xlvii). Savage goes on to say that beca[illegible]ny of the other poets of the time broke their poems in [illegible]uatrains, he would do so with this one. He also notes that the quatrain structure enhances the plot of the poem because it "brings out the major transitions of the story" (xlvii).

However, in the manuscript, the only indications of any break in the poem are the rubricated capitals of lines one and one hundred seventy-seven, and, as many have noted, the poem does not always adhere properly to the quatrain structure. Gollancz and Savage apparently assumed that because Middle English alliterative poems (particularly those of the Gawain-poet) tended to be written in quatrains, "St. Erkenwald" was also supposed to

be broken into quatrains. Morse offers another possible explanation: she notes that frequently in the poem "long series of end-stopped lines are organized in parallel pairs, which are probably what led Gollancz and Savage to believe that the poem was written in quatrains" (32). She goes on to suggest that the poet used his poetry and structure to help emphasize the dramatic nature of the poem.

Russell Peck, in his article on number structure in "St. Erkenwald," has argued that perhaps the poem was written in the following format: "8 stanzas (32 lines) + 144 lines, then 144 lines + 8 stanzas (32 lines)" (Peck 11). Peck supports this theory not only by noting that the action of the poem conforms to such a format, but also by stating that the numbers eight and 144 carry specific religious implications that are relevant to the themes of the poem (11). Peck argues convincingly, and modern editors such as Peterson and Morse have avoided using quatrains. Peterson breaks the poem exactly as Peck has suggested, whereas Morse includes breaks after lines thirty-two and one hundred seventy-six, but not after line three hundred twenty.

Peck's argument helps pin-point the theme of the poem. In translation of the text, the motivation of the author becomes important when difficult passages, such as lines two hundred seven through two hundred ten, when the judge explains the length of time he's lain in the tomb, are encountered. Because Peck notes the care with which the poet has structured the poem around the number eight and its relationship to baptism and

redemption, I attempt to make my translation conform to these themes as closely as possible.

Alliteration and Meter

The poem "St. Erkenwald" was written in the tradition of the Alliterative Revival. The poems of the Alliterative Revival conformed loosely to the rules governing the alliterative tradition of Old English poetry. Although the term "Revival" may imply that the fourteenth-century alliterative verse duplicates the meter of Old English poetry, close study reveals that the later verse has many of its own characteristics. In fact, scholars such as Henry Savage point out that the poems of the Alliterative Revival were "probably not the result of an attempted revival of the Old English alliterative measure on the part of poetically inclined antiquarians" (xliii). Savage goes on to point out that the poets were probably retaining many of the "salient features of Old English alliterative scheme" in order to "carry over into their own days a poetic practice long sanctioned by tradition" (xliii).

The basis, then, for the alliterative poetry of the fourteenth century has very strong roots in Old English verse; however, it is important to note the changes that the Middle English poets brought to their poetry. Among the most noticeable changes, which appear to have been brought about by the evolution of the language itself are "an overall increase in the number of

syllables in the line, changed alliterative rules, and perhaps the use of the full line (rather than the half-line) as a syntactical unit" (Andrew and Waldron 46).

Much of Middle English alliterative verse was composed in long lines rather than the Old English half-line structure. The poets of the Middle Ages did maintain a variation of the half-line structure by incorporating a medial caesura or break within the line. They then bound the lines together by alliterating the stressed syllables. A typical medieval half-line contains two stressed syllables. The two stressed syllables in the first half-line alliterate with the first stressed syllable of the second half-line, but the final stressed syllable does not alliterate. Therefore, if a represents "alliteration," a typical Medieval half-line pattern is aa/ax. For the most part, "St. Erkenwald" follows this standard pattern, and the third line of the poem provides an example of the standard half-line:

"Ther was a byschop in at burghe, blessyd and sacryd"

Here the initial three stressed syllables, or "lifts," are alliterated: "byschop," "burghe," and "blessyd." (In the Middle English tradition of alliteration, a consonant would alliterate with itself, and any vowel may alliterate with any other vowel and with h. Although scholars disagree about the pronunciation of the final "e" in Middle English of this period, the number of unstressed syllables or "dips," which may vary within a line and from line to line, is all that would be affected by pronouncing it or leaving it silent.

Andrew and Waldron lay down some basic rules that seem to govern most of fourteenth-century alliterative verse. In the following passage, they cite four characteristics that remain fairly consistent over the bulk of the poetry of this period:

> 1 An underlying regularity of pace, marked by four chief stresses to the line.
>
> 2 A central caesura--i.e. a greater syntactical break between second and third stresses than between first and second or third and fourth.
>
> 3 Repetition of the initial sounds (alliteration) of some of the stressed syllables (in principle the first three), which gives extra prominence to these syllables and bridges the caesura.
>
> 4 Variation in the number of unstressed syllables between the stresses. (Andrew and Waldron 47)

The Erkenwald-poet took liberties and "was not ruled by a verse form, [but] he made his syntax order his material" (Morse 32). Peterson has noted that the poet followed the aa/ax pattern for "over 80 percent of the lines in the poem" (Peterson 31). He also comments that many lines contain extra lifts and "the first half-line is especially likely to contain the addition of a third lift" (30). Peterson goes on to note the importance of the internal structure of the poem. He says there are three basic rhythms for the alliterative poet, rising, falling, and clashing:

> In the first, the lifts follow the dips, and the half-

line ends on a lift. Thus line 5a is scanned:

In his tý́me in þat tóun

Falling rhythm is the reverse, as line 20a:

Má́houn to Saynt Márgrete

Clashing rhythm involves two lifts which are not separated by dips, as line 30b:

þat after rí́ght hú́ngride

The first two types are often combined to form the most common rhythm, the rising-falling, as in line 9a:

Þai bé́te oute þe Bré́tons (Peterson 31)

The internal and external structures of the alliterative poetry allowed the poets of that time great flexibility and artistic freedom. Morse notes that the author of "St. Erkenwald" uses the freedoms allowed him by his form to control the pace and indicate important passages within the poem (Morse 32).

The alliterative meter provides challenges to the translator. The continued changes in the language have once again made the meter impossible to reproduce accurately. Like the Middle English alliterative poets who were unable to duplicate the meter of the Old English poets, the modern translator is faced with a similar problem. Once again changes in the syntax of the language make an accurate reproduction impossible. John Gardner, in his translation of the poem, attempts to reproduce much of the alliteration of the poem, but in his efforts he often embellishes and distorts the text somewhat. If one wants an accurate translation, Gardner's falls short of the mark. Margaret

Williams, on the other hand, did not attempt to reproduce the alliteration of the text, and her translation is far more accurate. However, she too is forced to leave details out of the poem. She attempts a line by line interpretation and Modern English sentence structure will not always accommodate Middle English sentence structure adequately in a single line. For example, in lines eighty-one through eighty-four of the poem, Williams leaves out many of the details of the judge's dress. The most accurate and detailed translation has to come in Modern English prose because the translator is at liberty to restructure the sentences of the poem so that they are immediately accessible to the modern reader.

Authorship

On the basis of the alliteration and vocabulary of the five poems (the four poems of the Cotton Nero manuscript and "St. Erkenwald"), the earliest researchers concluded that a single author was responsible for their authorship. Gollancz and Savage subscribe to and defend the common-authorship theory. Savage notes parallel phrasing and stylistic similarities, such as paraphrases for God, as evidence toward common authorship (Savage liv-lxv). Discussing alliterative verse, Savage notes that "there is no wide divergence between the alliterative manner of Erkenwald and that of the Gawain-poet," but he also cautions that the "belief in a common authorship is unjustified insofar as it

is based on tests by means of alliteration" (lv-lvi).

Although Gollancz, Savage, Oakden, and others support the view of common authorship, other scholars voice opposing views. In a series of articles John W. Clark refutes the claims of earlier scholars. In his article, "The Gawain-Poet and the Substantival Adjective," he notes that Oakden's claim that the use of the substantatival adjective (an adjective or adjectival phrase serving as a noun) disproves rather than proves the validity of the common-authorship theory. He claims that the substantival adjective's frequency in Gawain and Pearl is far greater than in the other poems and non-existent in "St. Erkenwald." In another article, "On Certain 'Alliterative' and 'Poetic' Words in the Poems Attributed to the Gawain-Poet," Clark again refutes one of Oakden's claims. Clark contends that words common to both the poems of the Cotton manuscript and "St. Erkenwald" are not proof of common authorship. He states that these words could appear coincidentally, are present in other poems as well, and are often used for different purposes. In a third article, "Paraphrases for 'God' in the Poems Attributed to the Gawain-Poet," Clark claims that the Gawain-poet's use of paraphrases for God is not, as Savage suggested, evidence for common authorship. Clark states that in the poems of Cotton Nero A. x. paraphrases for God often equate God with man, which is something that never happens in "St. Erkenwald."

Clark was not alone in his objection to the common-authorship theory. Larry D. Benson picks up many of Clark's arguments and

develops them more thoroughly. He feels it is unfair to approach the poem as one of the Cotton Nero poems. Benson believes that studies of the Cotton Nero poems must not serve for "St. Erkenwald" as well (395).

Benson, in his argument, contends that the appearance of "St. Erkenwald" in a different, much later manuscript than the Gawain-poems is a fact that must not be overlooked. Unlike Clark, Benson concedes that the possibility of common authorship within the poems of the Cotton Manuscript exists (whether by one poet or a group of poets). Benson continues his argument by reducing the number of words that appear in the five poems and nowhere else to three. Scholars had previously theorized that thirteen such words existed. Benson points out that the poems of the Cotton manuscript contain twenty-one words (a list he calls "by no means exhaustive") common to the Cotton Manuscript that do not appear in "St. Erkenwald" (Benson 396). He contends that the Erkenwald-poet employs a small vocabulary, whereas the Gawain-poet "makes full use of the traditional alliterative vocabulary" (404). He then states that the number of examples of parallel phrasing should be reduced from fifteen to five. Benson goes on to note that Oakden, a supporter of the common-authorship theory, recognized the "power of tradition" in alliterative verse and concluded that "parallel passages are not dependable proofs of common authorship" (396).

Benson then expands on Clark's arguments concerning the paraphrases for God. Benson notes that not only does a

paraphrase for God never include a word which means man in "St. Erkenwald," these paraphrases also reinforce the theme of "God's justice" in the poem. The Gawain-poet, however, seems to use paraphrases to reinforce a particular context. He cites four paraphrases that appear in "St. Erkenwald" but do not appear in any of the Cotton Nero poems:

"þe riche kynge of reson, þat riȝt ever alowes" (267)

"Hym þat al redes" (192)

"He . . . þat loves ryȝt best" (272)

"He þat rewards uche a renke" (275) (Benson 404)

He states that the Erkenwald-poet uses words such as "kynge" and "Prynce" in his paraphrases, whereas the Gawain-Poet uses words such as "wyȝe," "tulk," and "haþel" (all of which mean "man") in his paraphrases (404).

Benson's argument gains support from Ruth Morse in her 1975 edition of the poem. She not only commends his evidence as a "convincing argument," but she also notices a theological inconsistency (Morse 47). Morse claims that the Gawain-poet "was concerned with purity," whereas the Erkenwald-poet was concerned "with good works and man's righteousness as a claim on God's grace" (47). She claims that the Erkenwald-poet believed that salvation could be merited by righteousness, and the Gawain-poet, on the other hand, believed salvation to be a virtue given as "a free gift" (47). To this observation she adds that the "completely masculine London world" in "St. Erkenwald" is inconsistent with the less male-dominated poems of the Cotton

manuscript (47).

Although Benson's argument gained many supporters, Barbara Nolan and David Farley-Hills's article favors common authorship. They begin by summarizing an article in which Ormerod Greenwood claims that the author of Pearl and "St. Erkenwald" is named Hugo Massey. Nolan then argues that the poet's name is John Massey instead of Hugo. To support this argument she develops a theory that the number-conscious poet placed an anagram for his name within the text of the Pearl. Edward Wilson points out that Nolan claims the poet relies heavily on "a kind of poetic analogy" which she does not effectively define (Nolan 296). Wilson notes that Nolan breaks several established rules that must be observed when one is searching for anagrams. According to Wilson, Nolan's search for line numbers is arbitrary and several key numbers are left out. When she finally arrives at a series of letters, she rearranges them and has several left over. According to Wilson, "A surplus of duplicate letters is as pattern-destroying and as useless as a surplus of letters which cannot contribute to the solution" (Wilson 134). Peterson, who authors a second article in which he supports Nolan's findings and expands on them by searching in "St. Erkenwald" and making a similar discovery, later retracts his findings as incorrect by writing that "No hidden signatures have been demonstrated in either Pearl or 'St. Erkenwald'" (57).

Although very few arguments toward common authorship have gone unrefuted, several scholars continue to support the theory.

Clifford Peterson, for example, challenges many of John W. Clark's arguments. (Clark, as mentioned previously, argues that the Gawain-poet did not write "St. Erkenwald," and Clark argues against common authorship among the poems of the Cotton Nero manuscript.) Because many words common to the poems attributed to the Gawain-poet (including "St. Erkenwald") are used differently and have different meanings from poem to poem, Clark suspects diverse authorship. Peterson, on the other hand, argues that the different meanings and uses of words are simply evidence that "homonyms of differing etymologies existed then as now" (16). Clark also claims that the Erkenwald-poet used the word "passe," which is only one of thirty-three synonyms for "go" used in the five poems, four times in his poem, and it is the only one of the thirty-three synonyms used more than once. Although Clark feels this is evidence for diverse authorship, Peterson observes that the poet could have intentionally chosen "passe" for other connotations it may offer. He suggests that one of the themes of the poem is the passage of the soul from one state to another, and therefore, the use of the word "passe" is more appropriate than the use of a more popular synonym such as "ȝede" (17). Peterson also denies that the absence of certain paraphrases for God is significant. He considers the brevity of the poem evidence enough to justify their absence (18).

Peterson admits that Benson "demonstrated the thinness of the case for attributing, on the grounds of style, versification, vocabulary, or parallel phrases, the saint's legend to the Pearl-

poet" (18). Peterson does, however, quarrel with one of Benson's assertions. Benson claims, as does Clark, that the specific difference in paraphrases for God is evidence against common authorship, but Peterson contends that the absence of a certain paraphrase for God is evidence of an artistic motive. He claims that the artistic choice may have been made because the poet lacked adequate space to make the distinction between God and man clear (18). For example, Peterson, elaborating on an idea alluded to by Benson, suggests that the Erkenwald-poet is emphasizing God's role as Judge, and to paraphrase Him as a tulk, wyȝt, or hathel eliminates the poet's focus. Therefore, Peterson concludes that the absence of this specific type of paraphrase "says as much or more about the poetry than about the poet" (18).

Peterson, who seems concerned with keeping the debate alive, then offers a series of speculations toward the authorship of the poem. After noting some surface similarities between the Cotton Nero poems and "St. Erkenwald," he goes on to suggest that the John Massey that Nolan identified "using quite incorrect methods" is possibly the author of the works (20). He continues his speculations by offering information about a John Massey who lived in the late fourteenth century and could have been the same John Massey of which Farley-Hills spoke. (Peterson's article "The Pearl-Poet and John Massey of Cotton, Cheshire" is an investigation into the life of one John Massey, but, admits Peterson, "There is still no direct evidence that John Massey of Cotton did in fact write poetry" [266].) In his edition of the

poem, he goes on to suggest that the letters "oton" which appear on the margin of the manuscript was originally "Coton," identifying the place from which John Massey came (Peterson Saint 22). He also suggested the fleurs-de-lis which appear on both the Cotton Nero manuscript and the Erkenwald manuscript indicate a possible connection between the two. He concludes by stating that there is no "direct evidence that John Massey of Cotton did in fact write poetry (the same is true, of course, of Geoffrey Chaucer, the civil servant)" (22). However, Peterson contends that the John Massey theory "is a very live one" (23).

In a later article, Peterson picks up Farley-Hills's debate and argues as Farley-Hills had that the Hoccleve poem was not a begging poem. Peterson provides evidence that the Massey in the poem was indeed a poet and the Picard mentioned in the poem was a composer. Peterson suggests that not only was Hoccleve lauding the poet Massey, but he was also asking Picard for help with rhythm. Peterson then recaps much of the evidence he had supplied in previous articles to conclude his argument as convincingly as possible (Peterson "Hoccleve").

Although Peterson has done a great deal of research and is one of the leading authorities on "St. Erkenwald" and the Gawain-Poet, convincing evidence of common authorship does not exist. Scholars opposing common authorship have pointed out that no reliable proof of common authorship exists within the texts themselves, and "St. Erkenwald" appears in a different manuscript, which was written nearly a century after the Cotton

Nero manuscript. Although such evidence is not conclusive proof against the common-authorship theory, it is certainly more concrete and less speculative than any evidence in favor of common authorship. Mr. Peterson's findings should be regarded as speculation only, and the theory of common authorship should be rejected until more conclusive evidence is discovered.

The question of authorship influences translation in that one may interpret certain words and lines as the Gawain-poet would have used them. Because I do not subscribe to the common-authorship theory, I have attempted to translate each line as it relates to the major theme of baptism in the poem.

The Life of Erkenwald

The poem, "St. Erkenwald," involves an event in the life of the seventh-century saint. Few details of the actual saint's life exist, and not all the surviving biographies are factual. The earliest and most reliable account of Erkenwald's life comes from his contemporary, Bede, in the Ecclesiastical History. Most biographers rely heavily on Bede's account of Erkenwald's life.[2] Because Bede says little about St. Erkenwald, most later biographies contain basically the same information and are rarely more than a few paragraphs in length. A typical biography contains the following information: St. Erkenwald was born of royal lineage in the seventh century. His father, a pagan king of the East Angles, was named Offa, not to be confused with

either the famous Offa, King of Mercia, who lived in the late eighth century, or King Offa of the East Saxons, who lived in the early eighth century and was a monk in Rome when he died (Peterson 35-36). Prior to being named Bishop of London, Erkenwald founded an abbey at Chertsey and a nunnery at Barking. He became the abbot of Chertsey and his sister, Ethelberga, became abbess at Barking. In 675 St. Theodore chose Erkenwald to be the Bishop of London.

As Bishop of London, Erkenwald was credited with miraculous powers of healing. Even though his poor health required that he be carried about in a litter during his later years, many believed that by touching him or the litter in which he was carried they would be healed. Even after his death people traveled miles to visit his litter in hopes of being healed. People believed that "God honoured Erconwald with miracles, and even in his own day healing properties were attributed to the litter in which the holy bishop had been carried when he was ill" (Thurston 300). This litter was kept at St Paul's where Erkenwald was buried, and the legend of its healing properties continued in following centuries. His popularity seemed to increase after his death, and he remained a popular figure throughout the Middle Ages.

Most biographers attribute little more than the miracle of healing to Erkenwald; however, some biographies contain several additional miracles that were performed by or for St. Erkenwald. Ruth Morse printed one such biography, which she claims is one of

"two independent Latin lives from the twelfth century which survive in five manuscripts. They are typical pious expansions of suggestions in Bede, and borrowings from the numerous miracles of the corpus of legends" (Morse 14-15). According to the biographer Morse cites, Erkenwald and his sister stretched a beam that the builders at Barking had cut too short. The biographer also included an event in which one of the wheels on Erkenwald's two-wheeled horse-cart fell off, but instead of falling and causing Erkenwald any pain, the cart continued on its course without the wheel. Another miracle performed by God for Erkenwald occurred after the saint's death. In order to resolve the controversy over where his body should rest, God parted the waters of a river so that the bearers of Erkenwald's body could pass on their way to St. Paul's.

Even though this biographer includes these miracles associated with St. Erkenwald, there is no mention of the event with which the poem is concerned. The most apparent source for the story told in the poem is the legend of Gregory the Great and Trajan. Because the poet does not concern himself with more than one event in the life of St. Erkenwald, the poem is obviously not a typical Saint's Life. In fact, the poem is the only account of a saint written in alliterative verse, and furthermore, it does not deal with any of the matter typically associated with a Saint's Life, the saint's "lineage, realization of vocation, mission, passion, death, posthumous miracles" (Morse 15-16). Therefore, Morse concludes that "St. Erkenwald" is not "a Saint's

Life or Legend at all" (15). Because the poet ignores all of Erkenwald's own miracles and chooses one associated with another saint, it is probable that the poet chose the Gregory-Trajan legend, altered it to include an orthodox Christian message, embellished it with some popular medieval themes, and associated it with Erkenwald because of his on-going popularity.

[1] For additional information on the dialect of this and other poems of the Alliterative Revival see the following articles: Hulbert "A Hypothesis Considering the Alliterative Revival," Salter, and Serjeantson.

[2] The following is a brief list of works containing biographies of St. Erkenwald: Dugdale, Henschenio and Papebrochio, whose work contains some of Capgrave's text, Horstmann, who also includes text by Capgrave, and Simpson, who includes Caxton's version of Erkenwald's Life.

CHAPTER TWO

The Sources and Theology of the Erkenwald-Poet

The Question of Sources

When investigating the possible sources for this poem, we must bear in mind that, as Yerkes notes, "'St. Erkenwald' derives from no known overall source" (Yerkes 63). A study of the poem makes it clear that the poet was drawing upon not only the Gregory-Trajan legend, but also possibly the liturgy of the octave of Erkenwald, the Vitae Erkenwaldi, and, as Allen Frantzen suggests, the biblical story of Lazarus.

Perhaps the most recognizable source for the poem is the Gregory-Trajan legend. According to the legend, which was first attributed to Gregory the Great, Trajan, a Roman emperor on his way to battle, is confronted by a grieving widow who beseeches him to punish her son's murderers. Trajan hesitates, then leaves his military affairs to conduct a trial for the widow, and he honors her by sentencing her son's murderers justly. (In some versions of the legend Trajan must sentence his own son.) Years later as Gregory is passing Trajan's column he learns of Trajan's deed and cries for the righteous heathen. God, moved by Gregory's tears, releases Trajan's unbaptized soul from hell.

Early scholars who searched for the source of "St. Erkenwald" settled on the Gregory-Trajan legend as the narrative

from which the poet probably borrowed most heavily. Henry Savage mentions other possible sources but concludes that the Gregory-Trajan legend bore the closest resemblance to the poem. Although Gollancz believed a Latin original of the poem must have existed, Savage found no evidence to substantiate the claim (Savage xiii). After researching the saint's history and vita, Savage concludes that "Four separate Latin Vitae of the saint exist, but none mentions any miracle performed by him that resembles in the slightest degree the one here ascribed to him" (xii-xiii). Savage also remarks that "With the exception of a single reference in one work--the Summa Praedicantium of Bromyarde (fl. 1390)--whose accuracy is in serious doubt, there is no mention in any of their [the monks who chronicled the history of London and St. Paul's Cathedral] histories of any incident that could be connected with our story" (Savage xiv).

In his article, "Heathens and Saints: 'St. Erkenwald' in its Legendary Context," Gordon Whatley[1] argues that the Gregory-Trajan legend was indeed the closest source for the poem. He indicates that the Italian version of the legend by Jacopo Della Lana is the version with the most parallels to "St. Erkenwald." He notes that in both versions a body is found, brought back to life, and baptized. Among other parallels, Whatley states that in both tales the discovery of the body causes a great stir in the community, the corpse's identity is unknown, and books are consulted to discover whose body it is. Whatley feels that although there is no way of knowing for certain that the

Erkenwald-poet was familiar with this version of the legend, the poet definitely came up with a very similar interpretation.

Although most scholars accept the Gregory-Trajan legend as a likely source for the story of "St. Erkenwald," critics such as Allen Frantzen offer alternative possibilities. Frantzen believes that the story of Lazarus parallels "St. Erkenwald" more accurately than the Gregory-Trajan legend does. Frantzen feels that most scholars who have approached the poem have ignored some important biblical parallels. He suggests that because critics of the poem tended to approach it with the Gregory-Trajan legend in mind, they have incorrectly defined the poet's theological intentions. He argues that "the poem's themes of rebirth and resurrection contradict the theological views traditionally ascribed to the poet" (158).

Frantzen contends that a more direct source for the poem may be found in the biblical story of Lazarus. He notes that an important thematic parallel exists between the story of Lazarus and "St. Erkenwald." In both tales, "as the miracle worker raises one man from the dead he simultaneously recalls the witnesses from 'death' of another kind--from the loss of their faith" (159). And, in the story of Lazarus, as well as in Exodus and the Harrowing of Hell, two stories often associated with the story of Lazarus, Lazarus's resurrection "was seen as a figure for the release of people from captivity" (161). Frantzen feels that the resurrection of the judge's soul parallels Lazarus's resurrection because the people are freed from their "weak faith

which binds them to their fear" (161). He feels that the entire discourse between Erkenwald and the judge is not only a summons to the judge himself, but to the people as well. As the unbaptized judge confirms his faith, the on-lookers are inspired by this miracle to do so as well.

Frantzen concludes that the strong thematic parallels that exist between "St. Erkenwald" and the story of Lazarus are compelling evidence that the biblical tale was a source for the medieval poet. He believes that Erkenwald was meant to represent Christ and the judge Lazarus. He feels that the message of the poem was meant to be similar to the message of the Lazarus tale in which "Christ's call to Lazarus was not only a call to come forth from sin, but also, according to the Catena Aurea, a sign for the trumpet which would call all men to final judgement" (166).

Gordon Whatley, in his article, "The Middle English 'St. Erkenwald' and its Liturgical Context," offers additional biblical and liturgical references as possible sources. Whatley claims studies have ignored "the Saint's cult which inspired its [the poem's] composition" (277). In the following passage, Margot King defines the importance of a saint's cult:

> The cult of the saints, as it was called, provided the impetus for all those manifestations that are now the object of hagiographical research: the Lives or Passions of the saints, inscriptions, liturgies (including offices and processionals), martyrologies, accounts of the

> transferral of relics from one location to another (translatio), and the description of the miracles effected by those relics. (King 65)

Whatley points out that McAlindon, who cited inventions as types of hagiographical narratives, missed the Invention of the Holy Cross, which was commemorated "at St. Paul's on May 3, simultaneously with the octave of St. Erkenwald" (278).

Whatley believes that "the central themes of the poem, and some of its most important narrative features, are derived not from the Gregory-Trajan legend, but rather from the liturgies of St. Erkenwald himself and of the Invention of the Holy Cross" (279). In the poem as in the liturgies, Erkenwald has specific roles for which he is extolled. For example, in both the liturgies and the poem Erkenwald is "repairer and builder of the visible church, . . . protector of his people and their city, and strengthener of their faith" (281). Whatley also notes that very little information about the life of Erkenwald exists, and he suggests that the poet was trying to make Erkenwald "the living embodiment of the episcopal ideal . . . envisioned in the 'common' portions of the Saint's liturgy" (282).

He also notes the parallels between the poem and the Vitae Erkenwaldi, in which prayer to God provides the answer to the question of where Erkenwald's body should be placed. In the poem as well as in the Vita, God answers the prayers of Erkenwald (in the poem) and the bearers of Erkenwald's body (in the Vita) with a miracle that calms the people and inspires faith in God at the

same time. Another comparison Whatley makes is between the closing lines of the Vitae Erkenwaldi and the episode in the poem in which the people have become distressed over the identity of the corpse. He claims that the narrative pattern of the episode in "St. Erkenwald" mirrors that in the Vitae Erkenwaldi. On the basis of these findings he suggests that the Erkenwald-poet had some knowledge of the Vitae Erkenwaldi and may have borrowed some details from it.

Whatley suggests that another possible source for some of the doctrine of the poem comes from the liturgy of the Invention of the Holy Cross. He states that some of the important "links" between the poem and the Invention of the Cross are "features" of the poem that do not come from the Gregory-Trajan legend (284). He contends that the Invention of the Holy Cross and "St. Erkenwald" share a similar plot. In both tales a pagan temple is torn down before a Roman Christian church can be built on the same site. He comments that the Church is always visible in the poem but not in the legend, and "Erkenwald's elaborate liturgical preparation for his encounter with the corpse, and the strongly ecclesiastical atmosphere of the latter part of the poem, reinforce the importance of the visible Church and the sacraments in the salvation of the judge" (285). All the information Whatley provides is information that is absent from the Gregory-Trajan legend but present in the liturgies that surround the octave of St. Erkenwald. In fact, the only connection that legend has with the church is the ultimate salvation of the

judge, and typically the Gregory-Trajan legend makes exactly the opposite religious statement. But, as Whatley points out, the message of "St. Erkenwald" is obviously that the sacrament of baptism is necessary for the ascension of the soul into heaven.

Although Whatley is unable to draw any definite conclusions from his findings, he feels that his examination of the liturgy surrounding the octave of Erkenwald provides some possible sources. He suggests that the poet may have embellished the Gregory-Trajan legend with borrowings from various passages in the cult literature of Erkenwald.

Although it is impossible to prove that any one source for this poem exists, the parallels Whatley and others have drawn between "St. Erkenwald" and the Gregory-Trajan legend suggest very strongly that it is one of the poet's primary sources if not the primary source. The similarities in the events of the two tales make the Gregory-Trajan legend impossible to ignore, and it seems likely that the poet would have been familiar with the story. Considering the subject of the poem, the liturgies of St. Erkenwald's octave are certainly a source to be acknowledged. The Erkenwald-poet may well have relied on the liturgy of Erkenwald's octave to provide some of his themes. And, judging from the poet's obviously orthodox religious stance, the possibility of biblical and liturgical sources is somewhat increased.

The Poet's Theology

An on-going debate over the Erkenwald-poet's theological intentions in the poem pervades much of the scholarship on "St. Erkenwald." The debate over whether the poet intended to promote the importance of the sacrament of baptism is crucial to translators and scholars as well. Some critics, such as Morse and McAlindon, feel that the Erkenwald-poet is suggesting, as Langland does, that a righteous heathen may earn his way to heaven through good works, and other critics, such as Whatley and Frantzen, feel that the poet is conveying the opposite message, that one must be baptized and have faith in God in order to earn salvation.

Ruth Morse, in her edition of the poem, discusses the theological problems the poet faced when he decided to recast the Gregory-Trajan legend. Because she believes that the poet wished to avoid the controversy surrounding the salvation of the righteous heathen, he addressed the issue of baptism, which was typically left out of the Gregory-Trajan legend. She suggests the following questions were probably dominant concerns in the poet's mind:

> If Trajan was in Hell, where men are committed forever, how could he be saved? If, as was indubitably true, the sacrament of Baptism was necessary for Salvation, how could an unbaptized heathen ascend to heaven? Did Gregory presume to question God's decision to damn

> Trajan? If Trajan could be saved without the machinery of the Church, did that not threaten her claim to hold the keys to eternal life? To theologians the most important question was that essential one about the power (potentia) of God: is God free to contradict his own ordinances? (Morse 20)

Morse suggests that the poet may have simply changed the ending to avoid the theological problems, or reinterpreted "the theology of salvation" (Morse 20-21). She contends that the poet of "St. Erkenwald" added the judge's belief in God because Trajan didn't have one and a religious belief would allow the judge to earn the Baptism of Repentance, by means of which (quoting Thomas Aquinas) "'a man can obtain salvation without being actually baptized, on account of his desire for Baptism . . .'" (Morse 23).

Although Morse's argument seems at first convincing, she fails to recall the Harrowing of Hell as a possible means of salvation. When Christ harrowed hell, he saved many souls who had been condemned to hell for eternity. The tale of the Harrowing did not call into question the claim of the church to "hold the keys to eternal life." In fact, Christ's reclaiming of souls from hell is an assertion of the power of heaven. This type of salvation resembles that which the judge receives; however, it is important to note that the judge receives the sacrament of baptism as well. The fact that he is baptized should not be dismissed as a simple change in the ending of the

poem; it is evidence that the poet had a specific agenda in mind and intended his work to make a definite theological statement, that baptism is necessary for salvation.

Morse also contends that the Erkenwald-poet is interested, as was Langland, in the acceptance of a soul into heaven on the basis of good deeds. She believes the message of this poem finds its closest counterpart in Piers Plowman: "If we look at other poems in which the problem of salvation appears, the close resemblance of Piers Plowman and 'St. Erkenwald' seems the more striking" (Morse 29). Morse notes instances of parallel phrasing to suggest that Langland and the Erkenwald-poet share some of the same language as well as the same theme. Whatley opposes Morse's statement by saying that "similarity of phrasing is no guarantee of a similar point of view: two people who disagree on a given issue often use the same terminology" (337).

Morse sees the complexities of recasting the Gregory-Trajan legend as the major problem confronting the poet. What Morse fails to note is the fact that this version of the legend has one important difference from the original legend. In this poem the major thrust of the action is to convey the importance of baptism. It is not, as the recasting of the Gregory-Trajan legend in Piers Plowman is, a suggestion that salvation is possible without the sacrament of baptism.

McAlindon, like Morse, sees the poem as a recasting of the Gregory-Trajan legend in which a righteous heathen is rewarded with salvation for his good deeds. However, McAlindon suggests

that the poem's primary concern is with "the discovery, incorruption, and honouring not of a Christian Martyr or confessor, but of a pagan judge" (475). Unlike Hulbert, who felt, that the poem was unsuccessful because the emphasis of the narrative fell on the judge instead of Erkenwald (Hulbert "'St. Erkenwald'" 489), McAlindon suggests that the poet successfully blends "traditionalism and individuality" to create a work that celebrates the righteous heathen's ascension into heaven (McAlindon 472). He compares the narrative of the poem to the traditional hagiographical format and classifies it as "an intentional hybrid" of an inventio (475). He believes that the poet gave saintly qualities to the judge and reversed some of the typical characteristics attributed to saints in hagiographies. For example, the uncorrupted body is usually associated with deceased saint, thus suggesting the power of God.

McAlindon and Morse have suggested that "St. Erkenwald" is a recasting of the Gregory-Trajan legend in which the pagan judge receives salvation as a reward for living a just life. Allen Frantzen, on the other hand, argues that salvation is only granted to the judge through the sacrament of baptism. Frantzen believes that the church and the necessity of baptism for salvation are the central themes in the poem.

In the Gregory-Trajan legend, a heathen is granted salvation purely on the basis of his good works. However, in "St. Erkenwald," the judge confirms his own faith in God, addresses Christ in a form of catechumen, and is baptized by Erkenwald.

Frantzen contends that these three acts are acts of faith which Trajan never performs. In addition, Frantzen notes that there is an important element of audience participation which is not present in the Gregory-Trajan legend. At the end of the poem, St. Erkenwald has not only resurrected a man and saved his soul, he has succeeded in reaffirming the faith of his audience. Frantzen also states that the subject of the poem is St. Erkenwald and "the power that resurrects the dead," and he believes that McAlindon and others have skewed the point of the poem "by stating that the text glorifies a 'heathen saint'" (158-59). Because Frantzen believes faith and baptism are central themes of the poem, the salvation of a righteous heathen through his good works is an inadequate reading. For these reasons, Frantzen feels that "the theological controversy surrounding the [Gregory-Trajan] legend is ultimately irrelevant to ['St. Erkenwald']" (166).

Gordon Whatley, in his article, "Heathens and Saints: 'St. Erkenwald' in Its Legendary Context," also argues against Morse and McAlindon's position. Whatley believes that one of the major themes of the poem is the importance of the church's role in an individual's salvation. He states that the poet probably knew Langland's version of the Gregory-Trajan legend, but he disagrees with Morse's belief that Langland and the Erkenwald-poet had similar interpretations of the legend. He contends that the themes of the two poems are the opposite of each other: while Langland feels good deeds should merit one's passage to heaven,

the Erkenwald-poet believes that the sacraments are necessary for salvation. In fact, Whatley feels that the Erkenwald-poet is making a conscious effort to keep the church at the center of his discourse, and that "The entire episode, . . . including the eventual baptism and salvation of the pagan judge, is a consequence of the historical activity and triumphant progress of the visible Christian church" (337).

Whatley contends that the poet makes the presence of the church obvious in the poem by allowing it to be the instrument by which all mysteries are solved. When the people in the poem are unable to discover the identity of the corpse, they rely on Erkenwald and his prayers. Thus, the poet makes the "limitations of natural intelligence" obvious, and he dramatizes "the inferiority of secular modes of thought" (338). Whatley also states that when the bishop prays for guidance, he prays not for himself, but for "the spiritual welfare of his parishioners whom the corpse has so disturbed" (340). In this instance, Erkenwald is putting the duties of his office and the church at the center of his consciousness. It is through his office and his faith that he will ultimately solve the mystery of the corpse. Throughout the rest of the poem, Erkenwald relies on the liturgy and "orthodox ecclesiastical formalism" to guide his people and inspire renewed faith in Christ (340). Whatley notes that Erkenwald's celebration of a mass honoring the Holy Spirit before opening the tomb helps make the church part of the central message of the poem, and it is an episode not found in any of the

other versions of the Gregory-Trajan legend.

Whatley defines the just pagan. He states that a just pagan is a virtuous one who preceded Christ or lived in such an area that he never had any contact with Christianity. According to Whatley there are only two ways such a pagan might be allowed into heaven without baptism: the first is that the pagan might be given secret knowledge of Christ and have faith in Him. The second is that a pagan might have "implicit" faith, a trust that there is a just God. The Trajan of the Gregory-Trajan legend did not fit into either of these categories: he did not live before Christ's time, and he had the opportunity to know God and Christianity. The theologians of the time, according to Whatley, justified his salvation by saying that he had experienced a "miraculous resuscitation" (344).

Trajan had the opportunity to know Christianity but failed to accept the faith. Because he did not accept the Christian faith, Whatley contends that Trajan did not experience the kind of resuscitation reserved for the just pagan, and he should never be considered a righteous heathen. Whatley finds it illogical that when Langland and Wyclif created their versions of the Gregory-Trajan legend, they considered Trajan to be a righteous heathen. Whatley suspects that the Erkenwald-poet created his poem to oppose these versions of the legend directly.

In his poem, the Erkenwald-poet makes it clear that even though his judge is just, he still must receive the sacrament before he can ascend to heaven. Whatley believes that the

character of the judge was created to appear like the just heathens of earlier literature. He notes that in prior works heathens who were predecessors of Christ were unearthed and found with messages written in gold proclaiming their faith in Christ. The Erkenwald-poet's heathen has a message written in gold, but no one is able to decipher it. Whatley suspects that this may have been intentional because the poet's audience expected to discover that the message is a proclamation of faith. The judge also resembles the typical Trajan of the legends. He is perfectly just, and Whatley suspects that early readers of the poem would expect the judge's righteousness to earn him passage to heaven.

However, the judge reveals that he is in hell, which indicates that the runes on his tomb were not meant to show a faith in Christ. When Erkenwald realizes the fate of the judge, the bishop baptizes him, and weeps. Whatley points out that Erkenwald does not weep out of pity, nor does he pray for the judge's salvation as Gregory did for Trajan. Erkenwald does not commit "any such error or sin of presumption" (351-52). Instead, Erkenwald "wishes that the corpse were alive, using the past subjunctive or conditional form of the verb 'have' and keeping the deity discreetly in the third person" (352). Thus the bishop avoids the sin of presumption by wishing only "to do his duty" (352).

Thus, Whatley concludes that "St. Erkenwald" is a poem written in direct contradiction to the typical contemporary

ersion of the Gregory-Trajan legend. He asserts his belief that he poet intentionally keeps the orthodox church at the center of his narrative. According to Whatley, this version of the legend as written to emphasize the importance of the church and acraments to the medieval pagan, whether or not he is righteous. He believes that the poem was created as a "theologically conservative response to radical, antiecclesiastical interpretations of the Gregory-Trajan legend and to certain liberal ideas and legends concerning the fate of the pre-Christian righteous heathen with which the Trajan figure came to be associated in the later Middle Ages" (353).

Whatley and Frantzen argue more convincingly than Morse and McAlindon. Morse indicates that she believes the poet recast the Gregory-Trajan legend and changed the end to avoid theological controversy. However, the ending of the poem does more than avoid theological controversy, it changes the message of the poem. The baptism at the end of the work provides the judge with an orthodox Christian salvation, something Langland and Wyclif were attempting to de-emphasize. It seems that a poet with a motive such as theirs would welcome controversy. Thus, the inclusion of the baptism itself is a strong indicator that the poet believes in the necessity of the sacrament for salvation. McAlindon, on the other hand, believes the heathen to be the subject of the poem. Because, as Frantzen notes, the poem is named after the bishop, and the bishop is the one who performs the miracle and saves the judge's soul from eternity in hell, it

seems clear that Erkenwald and the church are the main focal points of the poem.

Because they are, in my opinion, the obvious focal-points of the poem, I translate the poem to conform to this reading. Without the guidance of scholarship, a translator could end up with an ambiguous version of the poem. When scholars have offered different readings of specific lines, I have chosen the interpretation closest to my own reading of the text. I believe the theme of baptism and the importance of the church are the major messages the Erkenwald-poet wished to convey.

The foregoing critical articles discuss the poet's position on baptism and its relevance to the judge's salvation. The following essays, on the other hand, are examinations of other themes in the poem. A review of these articles reveals that several critics, other than those I have previously reviewed, agree that the church and the sacrament of baptism are central themes in the poem. Although these critics do not argue directly against the positions of scholars such as McAlindon and Morse, the points of their arguments make their implicit disagreement obvious. Scholars such as Russell Peck, William Quinn, Lester Faigley, Julian Wasserman and S. L. Clark, Mary-Anne Stouck, Vincent Petronella, and Tim Lally seem to agree that the poet conveys an orthodox Christian message. Many of these critics argue that the major theme of the poem is the transformation of the judge from an unbaptized pagan to a baptized Christian.

Russell Peck provides a detailed examination into the number

structure of "St. Erkenwald." In his study, Peck makes the following observations: the poem, when broken into quatrains by Gollancz and Savage, contains eighty-eight stanzas. Also, the poem is three hundred fifty-two lines long: the first thirty-two lines contain an introduction, the following one hundred forty-four lines are devoted to the events leading to Erkenwald's opening of the tomb, and the final one hundred seventy-six lines contain the dialog of bishop and judge, the baptism of the judge, and the celebration following the miracle. Each of these numbers is divisible by eight, and the action of the poem takes place over eight days.

From his examination, Peck concludes that the number eight seems to carry the predominant metaphor of the work, the metaphor of baptism. He notes that "Eight is the baptismal number," and in addition to representing baptism, eight also represents resurrection (12). Peck reports that

> because of the 7-day week and the 7 moving spheres, the Pythagoreans and Platonists had viewed 8 as a return to unity (or eternity) after mutable diversity. . . . Christian commentators, believing that Pythagoras learned his number lore from Moses, readily adopted pagan numerology for their own purposes. (12)

In support of Peck's observation of the number structure of the poem, Whatley mentions that St. Erkenwald's feast "was celebrated with a liturgical octave, that is, with eight days of masses, offices and commemorations" (277).

Peck demonstrates the symbolic function of the number eight in the poem. As a representative for baptism and resurrection, eight parallels not only the judge's baptism but the "reconversion of England after it fell to Satan in the days of Hengist" (which is explained in the first eight stanzas) and St. Erkenwald's renovation of the reclaimed St. Paul's Cathedral (13-15).

Peck also points out that eight represents justice. In the Middle Ages, the Pythagoreans viewed the cube as the model of justice because it is the figure of "equability or exact justice" (13). The cube has eight right angles, and eight is the only primary number that is cubed. Also, "St. Augustine postulates that not only does the 8th sphere embody the fixed stars beyond the mutable 7 spheres, but so too is Judgment Day beyond the 7th Age and the end of time" (13).

Peck explains the presence of justice, "the second most dominant motif in 'St. Erkenwald,'" which the number eight also symbolizes (15). Not only is the judge a representative of law, but Erkenwald also represents two forms of law: he governs the city and he is "an instrument of God's power" (15). Because Erkenwald represents Christ's law, he represents the "New Law" from which the old judge (representative of the "Old Law") must seek his justice. Thus, the theme of justice ultimately reflects "Christ, the supreme judge, [who] has made man's home just and steadfast" (15).

Peck also mentions two additional metaphors within the poem

related to the number eight. The old judge's baptism Peck sees as a "Connotation of New Jerusalem and 'return home'" to the Lord in heaven (16). The final metaphor is represented by the "unlockings" and "openings" in the poem. Peck notes that men are able to unlock or open physical things such as doors, books, tombs, and even eyes, "But ultimately only Christ's grace can unlock life" (17). Although the men in the poem can approach the tomb and the body, they can not, with all the wisdom they have acquired, unlock the mystery; only Christ can do that.[2]

Finally, Peck points out that Gollancz's and Savage's emendations to lines 208 and 210 are inconsistent with the actual lines of the manuscript. Peck states that line 208 of the manuscript reads "fife hundred ȝere," and line 210 reads "a thousand." However, both Gollancz and Savage opted for emending line 208 to read "aght hundred" and 210 "þre hundred." Gollancz rationalizes that "aght hundred" was consistent with the alliterative pattern, which is broken no where else in the poem, and Peck admits that "aght hundred" is consistent with the number structure. Also, Gollancz chose "þre hundred" because "a thousand" puts the date of the judge's life too far back to be consistent with the history he discusses (Gollancz xxx-xxxi). Although Peck finds Gollancz's arguments for both emendations reasonable, he contends that the original also makes sense numerologically. Peck notes that the judge is dealing with two systems of dates, "first with reference to Brutus, the pagan founder of his city, and then with reference to Christ, the

divine restorer of the true city" (18-19). Five hundred years, according to Peck, would be a reference to pagan date from the time of Brutus because "one of five's most characteristic glosses" is with reference to the old law (19). He also states that three hundred is often interpreted as the number of the cross, but "a thousand" could imply that the judge lived before Christ's coming. Peck concedes that the lines do pose some serious difficulties and finds "no easy solution to the textual and exegetical problems of lines 205-212" (22).[3]

Peck, in his article, argues convincingly that the main metaphors of the poem are baptism, resurrection, and justice. Using the complexities of the number structure in the poem, Peck points out that the poet emphasizes the importance of baptism to the resurrection of the soul, and he notes that the judge must adhere to the "New Law" and Christ, the Almighty Judge. Therefore, Peck sees the poet's quest as an attempt to emphasize the importance of Christian orthodoxy.

Another critic who mentions the poet's struggle to maintain a Christian orthodoxy in the poem is William Quinn. Quinn argues that the poet makes line 192 of the poem intentionally vague. Clifford Peterson glosses "sum lant goste" of line 192 as "the Holy Ghost which at Pentacost gave the gift of 'speaking in tongues' to the apostles" (Peterson 104). Although this reading of the line satisfies a Christian agenda, Quinn feels that Peterson's reading of the line may be flawed. Quinn proposes that the poet intentionally refuses to identify the spirit that

brings life to the corpse of the judge (180). He suggests that the poet wants the line to remain ambiguous so that he may maintain the orthodox Christian theme of the poem.

Quinn argues that by making the "goste"-reference vague the poet avoids referring to the judge as specifically alive or dead. Quinn states that Christian theologians of the Middle Ages subscribed to Thomas Aquinas's definition of life. Aquinas says that the body's union with the soul defines life. According to Quinn, the Erkenwald-poet is careful to make the distinction between the "goste" and the judge's soul clear. Quinn cites the judge's claim that his soul is actually languishing in hell as he speaks with Erkenwald as evidence that the body and soul of the judge are not unified. Thus, the judge can not be alive. Quinn further contends that the poet's use of first person plural during the judge's speeches later in the poem helps emphasize the separation of body and soul, as does the judge's switch to third person singular when referring to his soul in heaven following salvation.

Not only does the poet avoid referring to the judge as alive, but, according to Quinn, the poet also avoids identifying the judge as dead. Quinn believes that the poet is careful not to indicate that the judge is dead because in the New Testament "life begins at birth and does not terminate" (183). To call the judge dead would be to negate everlasting life. Quinn sees Erkenwald's command "Lie you no longer" as evidence that the poet is unwilling to refer to the judge as dead. In this command, the

bishop simply orders the judge to get up because to command the judge to come to life would imply that the judge is not alive.

Because the poet maintains that the soul of the judge and his body are separate, Quinn speculates that the spirit which inhabits the judge's body is his sentient soul. The "goste lyfe" allows the body to communicate with Erkenwald, and that power is associated with the sentient or conscious soul (190). However, Quinn also notes that the soul can be conceptually divided into three parts, but it can not be actually divided into three parts (189). Quinn suggests that the Erkenwald-poet avoids this heresy by dividing the judge's soul or anima into "three chronologically sequential stages . . . (discovery, resuscitation, and salvation)" (189). Through this chronological division the poet creates a "miraculously incomprehensible" conception that is free from potential heresy.

Quinn suggests that perhaps critics of the poem should have addressed the question, '"Who or what is being baptized?'" before addressing the importance of the baptism itself (190). In answer to this question, Quinn concludes that the poet creates a ghost life that exists between life and death, and he creates a category between the righteous and the justifiably damned, "the mercifully obscure" (190) Quinn also believes that the poem celebrates "the orthodox conduct of Bishop Erkenwald and the unrestricted mercy of the High Priest" (190). In this statement, Quinn is obviously asserting his belief that the poem was written to emphasize the importance of the church and the

power of God.

Like Quinn and Peck, Lester Faigley feels that the central message of the poem concerns the power of God and the importance of orthodox Christianity. Faigley, like Quinn, addresses the theme of the New Law of Christianity. Faigley makes comparisons between the Old Law of pre-Christian times and the New Law of Christianity, and he believes that the poet incorporates some typology into this poem.

Faigley contends that the poet deliberately establishes a blurred time-frame early in the poem. He feels that the poet is invoking "a sense of timelessness while simultaneously anchoring the narrative in a concrete historical setting" (282). In this time-frame, Erkenwald becomes a specific and obvious feature in the foreground, and the motif of Christianity throwing out paganism is emphasized. As the workers rebuild St. Paul's Cathedral they are casting down pagan idols and renaming pagan temples; thus, the metaphor of transformation is established early in the poem.

The time-frame also allows the poet to juxtapose the pagan judge with St. Erkenwald. Faigley sees this juxtaposition "as a contrast between a just judge and a Christian judge, who are not the same in the poet's eyes" (384). The time-frame also sets up the metaphor (and typology) of the New Law being built on the Old Law. The New Law is "supplementing instead of supplanting the Old Law" (385). According to Faigley, the Old Law is void of meaning without the spirit of the New Law.

Faigley argues that the judge does not expect salvation because he knows he must be baptized before he can ascend to heaven. However, the judge and the Old Law do not know the mercy of God and the New Law. Erkenwald, as a stand-in for Christ, continues His ministry by connecting true justice with Christianity. Erkenwald invokes Christ by name and weeps showing "the spirit of mercy behind the letter of the law" (387). Erkenwald's tear links humanity with divinity so that the pagan judge can feel God's mercy. Faigley suggests that the moment of baptism is the climatic moment in the poem. At this moment, he contends that the transformation is complete and the Mosaic Law has been replaced by the New Covenant (390).

Faigley believes that the poet is able to communicate through this transformation that "the 'marvel' of the bright body is the 'marvel' of human existence, [and] that through the mercy of the New Law made possible by the death and resurrection of Christ, fallen man can be redeemed" (390). Therefore, baptism and the divinity of the church is central to Faigley's interpretation of the poem. Faigley believes that the poet uses time and the theme of transformation to investigate the importance of the church's role in the redemption of man.

Julian Wasserman and S. L. Clark also investigate the poet's use of time. They, too, note the importance of the work at St. Paul's Cathedral to the overall message of the poem. Like Faigley, Clark and Wasserman examine the juxtaposition of past and present in "St. Erkenwald."

S. L. Clark and Julian Wasserman concern themselves with a discussion of the Erkenwald-poet's "spiritual itinerary." According to Clark and Wasserman, the poet "maps a spiritual itinerary that depends heavily upon a shifting sense of time and space, and that ultimately results in the very sense of eternality and unity in multiplicity which Dante and the Pearl-poet evoke" (257). By this they mean that the poet establishes a temporal and spatial unity by juxtaposing the past and future in the present. They believe that the past is represented by the judge and the future by the supper in heaven and that these two stages in time come together in the present during the judge's salvation. In other words, the past represents the evil pagan world and the future represents heaven, while the present represents earth. Like Christ in the Harrowing of Hell, Erkenwald must make a journey into the past, hell (the world without Christian Law), so that he can bring forth the pagan judge and save his soul.

Clark and Wasserman note that the "tripartite schema" that the poet develops depends heavily on the delving image created in the poem. The image first occurs early in the poem when the poet mentions that the workers are digging in St. Paul's Cathedral. From this point the image becomes central to all the activity of the poem. Clark and Wasserman note that the poem begins with a delving into and explanation of the narrator's immediate past. They claim also that the members of Erkenwald's audience are forced to delve into their pasts as well. Clark and Wasserman

feel that the members of Erkenwald's audience must confront their pasts so that their present lives can benefit from knowing Christ. Clark and Wasserman believe that "One cannot have a conversion unless one has the awareness of one's unworthy state; one cannot assume the new unless one has seen the old for what it is" (265-66). They cite the attitude of the workmen as evidence of their conversion. The workmen are joyous before the discovery of the corpse; they are fearful and distraught when they are unable to identify this man from the past; finally, the on-lookers feel happiness and grief at once following the salvation of the judge. Clark and Wasserman feel that this is evidence of the conversion of the workmen. Because the workers have delved into their past, they have learned of their woe, and "Their experience . . . will give insight not only into their future and their past, but also into their present" (266).

Like Faigley, Clark and Wasserman find the theme of conversion or transformation important to the poem. In both articles the examination of a time scheme and the juxtaposition of the past with the present (or even future) has led the critics to emphasize themes of Christian orthodoxy in the poem. Although Clark and Wasserman note the conversion of the on-lookers specifically and Faigley examines the conversion of the judge specifically, they all agree that the theme of transformation or conversion is central to the poem. Clark and Wasserman note specifically the importance of the time scheme on which the poem is constructed. It provides for the poet a vehicle with which he

is able to make one man's salvation the reaffirmation of a community's faith. The time scheme also allows the poet to convey his message that people must confront their pasts before they can look to a future in heaven.

In another study that examines the importance of the theme of transformation, Mary-Anne Stouck discusses the characters of the judge and the bishop. Stouck also comments on the importance of the "mournynge and myrthe" in line three hundred fifty of the poem. Her discussion of these elements of the poem, reveals that she believes the poet conveys an orthodox Christian message.

Early in her study Stouck contrasts "St. Erkenwald" with typical fourteenth-century hagiographies. She notes that Lives of Saints followed specific patterns in which the following events in the chronology of the saint's life were included: "omens foretelling [the saint's] birth, childhood, conversion, miracles, interrogation by the pagan tyrant, torture, execution and translation of the body to its final resting place" (243). Although "St. Erkenwald" is concerned with only one event in the life of the saint, Stouck contends that the poet is able to preserve the bishop's importance as a figure of saintliness. She contends that the poet is able to emphasize the bishop's superior spiritual strength when he deciphers the mystery that so many others could not. She also states that the poet maintains Erkenwald's spiritual distance through his qualities of faith and charity, whereas in the typical Saint's Life, he would display a superhuman immunity to pain (244).

According to Stouck, the typical pagan in a Saint's Life is portrayed as a tyrant who tortures and kills the saint. Stouck notes that the Erkenwald-poet intentionally changes this stereotype. She contends that while the bishop evokes admiration from the on-lookers, the judge, through his speeches, evokes compassion. In his speeches the judge's spiritual isolation, moral perfection, and earthly mutability combine to create an atmosphere of sympathy and humanism in the poem (246). Stouck feels that the poet stresses the judge's isolation by the townspeople's inability to identify him. Not only is he isolated from the baptized townspeople in Erkenwald's time, but he is also isolated from the community of God in heaven and the false people of his own time (246).

Stouck then mentions that "Ultimately the magistrate's love of 'riȝt,' with God's grace and Erkenwald's piety, gains for him entry into paradise" (248). In this passage Stouck emphasizes that the judge did not earn passage to heaven through good deeds alone, divine assistance was required. She notes that the poet stresses the importance of baptism through the judge's repetition of phrases referring to his baptism. In lines 321 and 329 the judge refers to the bishop's baptismal speech and his tear.

Finally, Stouck introduces the theme of mutability. At the end of the poem the people celebrate the baptism and passage of the judge's soul into heaven, but they also mourn the loss of the beauty of the physical body. She suggests that the loss of beauty combined with the immanence of time and the unavoidable

mutability of the human condition inspire sadness in the people: "They rejoice for the bliss into which the soul has entered, while mourning for the decay of earthly beauty, for the passing of human experience" (253). Ultimately, although the common people in "St. Erkenwald" may have faith in the next world, they realize they must give up everything in their present world, especially the flesh of their bodies, which provides them with the only life they know. She contends that the poem "conveys the nature of true piety," by noting the bishop's "acceptance of the ascetic life" in opposition to the conflict in the human emotions of others (253). Through his unwavering acceptance, the poet allows the saint to retain his "superior stature" among his people (253).

Stouck, in her article, emphasizes the importance of Bishop Erkenwald's piety and his role in the baptism of the judge. While indicating that the poet believes Erkenwald should possess characteristics of piety that separate him from the common people, she points out the necessity of baptism for the judge's salvation. Without the prayer and tear of the bishop, the judge's soul would remain in Limbo. Thus, Stouck stresses the importance of the theme of transformation as well.

Vincent Petronella also thinks that the theme of transformation is a major theme in the poem. He states that the verbs of the first thirty-two lines help reinforce the theme of transformation. Petronella cites the following verbs as important to the transformation theme: "peruertyd" (10),

"conuertyd" (14), "turnyd" (15), "clansyd" (16), and "chaungit" (18), (Petronella 534). He also cites the movement from light to dark in the poem as symbolic of transformation. He states that the judge is brought from the "derke dethe" of line 294 when he sees the "leme" of line 334. Petronella also indicates that the bishop goes out into the morning light after spending a night in prayer. Finally, Petronella notes that the coffin is brought from the dark earth and opened to the light of day. In consequence, he believes that the poet intended to reinforce the theme of transformation from the dark of paganism to the light of Christianity.

The final image Petronella associates with the theme of transformation is the "mournynge and myrthe" of line 350. Petronella believes that the tears of sorrow for the judge's soul in Limbo are transformed to tears of joy for the judge's salvation. He believes that the on-lookers have gone from mourning the condemned pagan to celebrating the salvation of the converted Christian.

Petronella also points out that the only character given both an occupation and a name is Erkenwald. Petronella cites the bishop's importance to the salvation of the pagan as a possible reason for identifying him in both capacities. Christ's name is also given special recognition in the poem. Christ's name is used when the churches are being blessed early in the poem, and His name is used by Erkenwald when he arouses the judge. The theme of transformation gives importance to both the names

singled out by the Erkenwald-poet. Bishop Erkenwald baptizes or transforms the judge and the invocation of Christ's name makes it possible.

Petronella acknowledges the importance of the orthodox baptism of the pagan judge. He, like stouck and others, focuses on the theme of transformation as a major aspect of the poem. He also addresses the importance of Christ and the invocation of His name. Petronella's position, like the positions of the other scholars mentioned above, is antithetical to that of McAlindon and Morse. These critics see the transformation of the pagan judge's soul from heathen to Christian as the major action of the poem. None of these critics argues that the pagan judge earned his passage to heaven through good works alone. Each scholar emphasizes the importance of baptism and the church in the salvation of the judge.

Another critic who comments on the importance of the sacrament and God's presence in the poem is Tim Lally. Lally investigates the influence of the Gothic aesthetic in the poem and concludes that this artistic technique leads to the success of the poem and reveals the importance of the orthodox religious beliefs of the poet.

Tim Lally, in his article on the Gothic aesthetic in "St. Erkenwald," states that "The Gothic aesthetic of 'St. Erkenwald' informs the art work which allows for holding in suspension the disparate narrative elements, attitudes, image patterns, and effective designs" (10). His entire argument consists of a

comparison between tenets of the Gothic aesthetic and the corresponding elements in "St. Erkenwald." For example, Lally notes that the Bishop's history is fused with the history of London, which gives Erkenwald a more saintly and Christian background. This fusion of the two histories provides a discontinuity which, according to Lally, is an important characteristic of the Gothic aesthetic. In this simple fusion, two "major aspects" of the aesthetic are evident: "juxtaposition (Erkenwald and Augustine) and tension between the phenomenal and the ideal (Erkenwald and sainthood)" (30). Lally claims that much of the poem's success depends upon the poet's ability to control his narrative effectively enough to maintain balances such as these while sustaining the action and credibility of the story.

One way the poet controls his narrative is by avoiding sensationalism. Lally thinks, as Stouck did, that the poet avoids sensationalism (he mentions that early hagiographers had a penchant for exaggerating suffering in order to make saints more impressive) and chooses instead to make his poem more suspenseful. For example, in his treatment of the judge, the poet avoids sensationalizing the judge's suffering in hell. Instead, he chooses to evoke a feeling of sympathy from his readers by depicting the judge as "a man otherwise ordinary in his vulnerability to suffering" (7).

Lally then turns to the narrative concerning Erkenwald. He notes that two forces are at work in the narrative: the merit of

good deeds and the importance of the ecclesiastical ceremony. Lally contends that this clash of rituals (good deeds and ecclesiastical ceremony) fits into the framework of the Gothic aesthetic. He maintains that one of the most important elements of the Gothic is the "discontinuous relationship between form and content" (8). That is to say, the details of the piece mean little if the gap to understanding is not bridged. Lally uses the sacrament of baptism as an example. Although Erkenwald performs the ritual of baptism, the judge is not a living human, and he (Erkenwald) must rely on faith for the completion of the sacrament. When he realizes he can do no more, he weeps, and "his greatest moment is the one of his greatest humility" (8). Thus, the discontinuity between the form or ritual of the sacrament and the content or purpose for the sacrament come when Erkenwald baptizes the judge verbally and realizes he has done as much as he can do. His weeping represents his humble stature as a human and his reliance on God's mercy, which joins the ritual with its purpose; Erkenwald's faith and God's mercy complete the miracle of baptism.

Finally, Lally comments that the theme of discontinuity continues in the imagery of the poem. He notes, as Petronella and McAlindon stated before him, that images seem to be grouped in pairs. Lally sees Gothic discontinuity in the pairings of images such as both Erkenwald's and the judge's darkness (Erkenwald's night of prayer and judge's tomb) before "each figure emerges from darkness to the light of Pentecost Sunday"

(9). Discontinuity is also revealed in the juxtaposition of restoration and regeneration. He sees restoration fail when the church is being rebuilt, but construction is never completed in the poem. Also, even though the people expect Erkenwald to solve the problem and calm the people of the city, it is not Erkenwald who solves the problem; God does, and the people are still upset and crying at the end of the poem. However, the modest hope for the baptism and ascension into heaven are fulfilled, thus concluding the theme of regeneration.

Lally also believes the poet uses the formal organization of the poem to help maintain his narrative. The poem is organized so that the narrative will not follow a logical time sequence. Because the poem does not follow a logical time sequence, the poet is able focus on God's importance through the actions and humility of Erkenwald. Lally also points out that this type of leap in time is consistent with the leap in time characteristic of the Gothic aesthetic.

Lally, then, like the other scholars, notes the importance of God and baptism in the poem. Lally's investigation of the tenets of the Gothic aesthetic leads him to conclude that although the baptism itself occurred under unusual circumstances the mercy of God allowed for the completion of the sacrament. Lally also emphasizes that the poet focuses on the importance of God throughout the poem. Lally believes that God's divine grace, more than Erkenwald's administration of the sacrament of baptism, is responsible for the salvation of the pagan's soul.

Lally's argument, then, is consistent with that of other scholars who do not deal directly with the question of the necessity of baptism for the resurrection of the judge's soul. These critics seem to interpret the poem as Whatley does. Although few critics discuss the same elements of the poem in their articles, they seem to agree that baptism was necessary for the salvation of the pagan's soul. Many of the critics believe that the transformation of the pagan to Christianity is the major theme in the poem. This theme is easily recognized not only in the rebuilding of London and St. Paul's Cathedral, but also in the implementation of the New Law and the conversion of the judge from paganism to Christianity. The sacrament of baptism is necessary for the salvation of the pagan soul, and London is receiving a similar baptism in the renaming of its churches. One can not become a Christian without the sacrament of baptism; therefore, if the transformation theme of the poem is carried to its completion, the judge himself must be transformed.

Although McAlindon and Morse argue that the judge is awarded salvation in heaven solely because of his good deeds, it seems that the bulk of scholarship argues against them. Most scholars believe that the Erkenwald-poet is interested in conveying an orthodox Christian message to his audience and that he does so in this poem. The evidence against Morse and McAlindon's points seems overwhelming. Thus, I believe it is apparent that the Erkenwald-poet did indeed have orthodox Christian motives for composing this poem. He wished to stress the importance of the

sacrament of baptism and the church in general through his narrative.

[1] Gordon Whatley has also authored a book entitled The Saint of London: The Life and Miracles of St. Erkenwald. Text and Translation, in which he reprints all the liturgies and miracles, in the original Latin and translated into English, associated with St. Erkenwald. The book does not address how these liturgies and miracles may have influenced the Erkenwald-poet.

[2] Christ himself, as Peck informs us in a footnote, has long been associated with the number eight (17n). Not only is the association made through baptism, resurrection, and parousia but also through the Christian Cabalist's "process known as gematria (totaling numerical equivalents of letters to get numbers for words)" (17). According to these Cabalists, the numerical equivalent to the name Jesus is an eight, and Messiah equals eighty-eight (17).

[3] The text I have chosen (Peterson's 1977 edition) contains the unemended lines. Peterson notes that Gollancz's "solution supposes multiple, and major, scribal errors following no small error on the part of the poet in dating from the founding of Rome instead of backward from the birth of Christ" (106). Although Peterson offers no alternative solution, he does not accept Gollancz's emendations, and he suspects that perhaps the poet was not trying to arrive "at the same date from two different bases" (106). He goes on to note that the lines still appear ambiguous and perhaps other emendations, such as a comma following "Crist" in line 209 which would alter the relationship between the dates, are necessary (106).

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

Five translations of "St. Erkenwald" have been published.[1] Because I am able to locate only the translations by Gardner and Williams, they are the only translations I review. Although both of these translations are well done, I find that both of the translators are restricted by the poetic structure of their translations. Both Gardner and Williams render the poem into Modern English verse, which occasionally forces them to leave details out of the poem. Because of changes in the language, changes in syntax, and multiple interpretations for some of the words and lines, the text is difficult to translate precisely. However, I have attempted to reproduce the poem as accurately as possible in Modern English prose.

My goal in rendering this translation is to provide for students and scholars a Modern English version of the poem in which none of the original details is left out. Because John Gardner exercised some artistic license in his rendering of the poem, his accuracy is on several occasions questionable. His text, though it is artistically appealing, is not always accurate, and I do not recommend it for a scholarly reader. Likewise, because Margaret Williams translated the poem line by line, she is often forced by Middle English syntax to leave out details. However, her short-comings in translation are few, and I recommend her version over Gardner's to anyone seeking an

accurate translation. I have not confined myself to a line by line translation, and I believe I have left nothing out of the poem. Also, I am confident that my Modern English version of the poem is as accurate as the changes in the English language will allow.

I have chosen to translate the poem into prose because I feel that I can duplicate the language of the poem more accurately in prose than I could in meter. The syntax of Middle English presents a problem to any translator, and by translating the text into prose, I avoid some of the difficulties faced by scholars such as Williams. I often restructure sentences in order to make the text as immediately readable and comprehensible as possible. Because Williams restricts herself to a line by line translation, she is not able to restructure sentences as freely as I am, and I believe her translation does not read as smoothly because of it. Also, because she maintains short lines in her translation, she is forced to leave out many of the details I include. I believe this translation captures the spirit of the poem and conveys clearly and accurately its action.

Another consideration I have kept in mind is the importance of previous scholarship to my translation of the poem. Because I believe the poet intended to promote the importance of the church and the sacrament of baptism, I have attempted to make any ambiguous passages clear in relationship to the baptismal theme. Also, because I do not subscribe to the common-authorship theory, I am influenced by interpretations similar to those used by

translators of the Gawain-poems only as they relate to the theme of baptism.

A Translation of "St. Erkenwald"

In London, England, not very long after Christ suffered on the cross and established Christianity, there was a blessed and consecrated bishop in the city;[2] I believe that holy man was called St. Erkenwald. [5] In his time, the greatest of all temples in that town was pulled down--one part of it[3]--to be dedicated anew, for it had been a heathen temple in the days of Hengest whom the warlike Saxons had sent here. They beat out the Britons and brought them into Wales and perverted all the people who dwelt in that place. [10] It was then that this kingdom renounced its religion for many rebellious years until St. Augustine was sent into Sandwich by the Pope. Then he preached the pure faith here and planted the truth, and converted all the communities to Christianity again. He changed the nature of temples that at that time belonged to the devil [15] and cleansed them in Christ's name and called them churches; he hurled out their idols and brought in saints, and he first changed their names and bound them by oath for the better; what was Apollo before now was Saint Peter, Mahomet was changed to St. Margaret or St. Mary Magdalene. [20] The pagan temple of the sun was assigned to Our Lady, Jupiter and Juno to Jesus or James. So he rededicated all that had before been assigned to Satan in Saxon

times to honored saints.

What is now named London had been called the New Troy, [25] and it evermore has been the metropolis and the master town. A mighty devil owned a great pagan temple therein, and the title assigned to the temple was his name, for he was the most honorable lord of idols praised and his sacrifice was the most solemn in pagan lands. [30] His was the third temple reckoned to be in the Triapolitan[4]: only two others were within all Britain's coasts. Now Erkenwald, who teaches law in beloved London-town, is the bishop of this Augustinian province; he presides with fitting demeanor in the episcopal office of the St. Paul cathedral [35] that was the temple Triapolitan as I told previously. At that time, it was demolished and beaten down and built new again, a noble business in this particular instance, and it was called the New Work. Many merry masons were compelled to work there, cutting hard stones with sharp edged tools. [40] Many diggers of the earth searched the ground to find the first-laid foundation still firm on its footing.[5] As they worked and mined, they discovered a marvel of which the memory is still made known in the keenest of chronicles, for as they created and dug so deeply into the earth, [45] they found a wonderfully beautiful tomb built on a floor; it was a coffin of thick stone excellently cut with gargoyles decorating all of the gray marble. The bar of the tomb that locked it on top was properly made of the marble and gracefully smoothed, [50] and the border was decorated with bright gold letters, but the rows of sentences that stood there

were mysterious.[6] The characters were very precise, and many observed them and pondered out loud about what they could signify. Many priests with very broad tonsures [55] in that cathedral busied themselves but were unable to bring the letters to words.[7] When tidings of the tomb-wonder took to the town, many hundreds of worthy men hurried to the tomb at once; craftsmen, heralds, and others followed as well as many craft guild members of diverse trades; [60] youths left their work and leaped in that direction, running quickly in a disorderly crowd ringing with noise; many people of every kind came there so quickly that it was as if the world were gathered there within an instant. When the mayor with his retainers, who by assent of the sexton guarded the area around the alter, caught sight of that marvel, [65] he requested that they unlock the lid and lay it beside the coffin; they would look on that vessel to see what dwelt within. With that, strong workmen went to it, applied levers to it, pinched one under, [70] caught the corners with iron crowbars and, although the lid was very large, they laid it by the coffin soon. Then the men who stood about and could not understand such strange cleverness were bestowed with an abundance of wonder. The bright spot within was so beautiful, all painted with gold, [75] and a blissful body, arrayed in a luxurious manner in royal clothing, lay upon the bottom. His gown was hemmed with glistening gold, with many precious pearls set there, and a girdle of gold encircled his waist; [80] a large gown was trimmed on top with miniver fur, the cloth of very well-

made wool and silk with handsome borders; and a very ornate crown was placed on his close-fitting headdress and a dignified scepter was placed in his hand. His clothes were without any flaw, stain, or blemish; [85] neither were they moldy, spotted, or moth-eaten. And they were bright with shining colors as if they had been closed in that casket just yesterday. And fresh was his face and so was the naked flesh by his ears and hands that visibly showed with a proud red, [90] like that of the rose and his two red lips, as if he were in sound health and suddenly had fallen asleep.[8] There was a profitless interval of time in which men asked each other what body it might be that was buried there. How long had he lain there, his face so unchanged, and all his clothing unspoiled?[9] [95] This every man asked.

"But such a man as this should stand long in the memory," said the on-lookers. "It seems obvious he has been king of this place, yet he lies buried this deep; it is an astonishing wonder that a man can not say he has seen him." [100]

But all this meant nothing, for none could claim from any inscription or symbol, or from any tale that was ever written down in that city or noted in a book, that such a man, either highborn or low, was remembered.[10]

In a while, the message of that buried body and all its [105] marvelous wonder was brought to the bishop. The primate, Sir Erkenwald, with his prelacy, was away from home, visiting an abbey in Essex[11]. Men told him the tale of trouble among the people and that such a cry about a corpse was spoken loudly again

made wool and silk with handsome borders; and a very ornate crown was placed on his close-fitting headdress and a dignified scepter was placed in his hand. His clothes were without any flaw, stain, or blemish; [85] neither were they moldy, spotted, or moth-eaten. And they were bright with shining colors as if they had been closed in that casket just yesterday. And fresh was his face and so was the naked flesh by his ears and hands that visibly showed with a proud red, [90] like that of the rose and his two red lips, as if he were in sound health and suddenly had fallen asleep.[8] There was a profitless interval of time in which men asked each other what body it might be that was buried there. How long had he lain there, his face so unchanged, and all his clothing unspoiled?[9] [95] This every man asked.

"But such a man as this should stand long in the memory," said the on-lookers. "It seems obvious he has been king of this place, yet he lies buried this deep; it is an astonishing wonder that a man can not say he has seen him." [100]

But all this meant nothing, for none could claim from any inscription or symbol, or from any tale that was ever written down in that city or noted in a book, that such a man, either highborn or low, was remembered.[10]

In a while, the message of that buried body and all its [105] marvelous wonder was brought to the bishop. The primate, Sir Erkenwald, with his prelacy, was away from home, visiting an abbey in Essex[11]. Men told him the tale of trouble among the people and that such a cry about a corpse was spoken loudly again

and again; [110] the bishop sent heralds and letters to put an end to the uproar and hastened to London soon afterward on his horse. By the time that he came to the well-known church of St. Paul, on that landmark, he met many people who, with a mighty clamor, told him of the marvel.[12] He ordered silence, and, staying away from the dead one, calmly passed into his bishop's palace and closed the door after him. [115] The dark night passed away and the day-bell rang, and Sir Erkenwald, who had recited his prayers all night, was up in the pre-dawn before then to implore his Sovereign of His sweet grace [120] to vouchsafe to reveal the identity of the corpse to him by a vision or something else.

"Though I am unworthy," he said weeping, "may my Lord grant this through His noble humility: in confirmation of Your Christian faith help me to explain the mystery of this marvel that men wonder openly about." [125]

And he begged for grace so long that he had a favor granted, an answer from the Holy Ghost, and afterwards dawn came. Cathedral doors were opened when the first of the canonical prayers were sung; the bishop solemnly prepared himself to sing the high mass. The prelate in his bishop's vestments was dressed in priestlike fashion. [130] With his ministers, he properly began the mass of the Holy Spirit, for his assistance in a wise manner,[13] and the pleasant voices of the choir burst into song with very beautiful notes.[14] Many great, richly dressed lords were gathered to hear it--the most elegant of the realm went there often--[135] until the service was ended and the concluding part

was said; then all of the high company proceeded from the altar.

The prelate passed on to the open space, and there the lords bowed to him. Richly dressed in ecclesiastical garments, he proceeded to the tomb. Men unlocked the enclosed area for him with clustered keys, [140] but the throng that passed after him was troubled of mind. The bishop came to the tomb with his barons beside him, the mayor with many mighty men and mace bearers before him. The dean of the beloved place first described everything, pointing to the strange finding with his finger. [145]

"Behold, lords," said the man, "such a corpse is here that has lain locked up below, how long is unknown; and yet his color and his clothing have caught no damage, nor his flesh nor the vessel he has lain in. There is no man alive who has lived so long [150] that he can remember in his mind that such a man reigned, or speak of either his name or his reputation; although many poorer men are put into the grave in this place, they are recorded in our burial register and remembered forever;[15] and we have searched through our library these long seven days, [155] but we could never find one chronicle of this king. To look at his nature, he has not lain here long enough yet to have passed away so out of memory--unless something extraordinary has occurred."

"You speak the truth," said the man who was a consecrated bishop. "It is a marvel to men that comes to a trifle [160] in comparison with the providence of the Prince who rules paradise when it is pleasing to Him to unlock the least of his powers. But when man's might is rendered helpless and his mind surpassed,

and all his thinking faculties are destroyed and he stands without resources of wisdom, then it hinders Him very little to loose with a finger [165] what all the hands under heaven never might. Whereas when man's skill of wisdom fails, he requires the attention and spiritual comfort of the Creator.[16] And so we should now do our deed, and engage in speculation no further. As you see, we receive no benefit seeking the truth by ourselves;[170] but we all openly rejoice in God and ask His grace, who is generous to send counsel and comfort, and does that in confirmation of your faith and true belief. I shall inform you so truly of His virtues that you may forever believe that He is Lord almighty [175] and trust your desires will be fulfilled if you believe Him a friend."

Then he turns to the tomb and talks to the corpse; lifting up his eyelids, he set free such words: "Now corpse that you are, lying there, lie you no longer! Since Jesus has determined to make manifest his joy today, [180] be obedient to his commandment, I bid on his behalf; as He was bound on the Cross when he shed his blood, as you [the dead] certainly know and we [the living] can only believe, answer here to my command and conceal no truth! Since we know not who you are, inform us [185] of what world you were and why you lie thus, how long have lain here and what law you used, whether you are joined to joy or judged to damnation."

When the man had said this and thereafter sighed, the bright body in the tomb moved a little, [190] and he forced out words speaking mournfully through some spirit-life lent by Him

who governs all.[17] "Bishop," said this same body, "I hold your command in high regard; I can only submit to your command, even if I were to lose both my eyes as a result[18]. All heaven and hell and earth between hold to the name that you have mentioned and called me in the name of.|195| First, to tell the truth about who I was: one of the unluckiest men who ever on earth went, not a king nor emperor nor even knight, but a man of the law that the land then used. |200| I was put in charge and made a leader here to judge trials; I had charge of this city under a prince of rank of pagan's law, and each man who followed him believed in the same faith. I have been lying here for an incalculable period; |205| it is too much for any man to calculate. [19] After Brutus first built this city, it was not but eighteen years lacking from five hundred [482] before your Christ was conceived by Christian account: a thousand and thirty and threefold eight years [1054].[20] |210| I was of eyre and of oyer in the New Troy in the reign of the noble king who ruled us then[21], the bold Britain Sir Belinus--Sir Brennius was his brother[22]. Many insults were hurled between them in their ruinous warfare while their wrath lasted. |215| It was then that I was appointed judge here in noble pagan law."

While he spoke from the tomb, there sprang from the people no word for all the world, no sound arose, but all were as still as stone as they stood and listened with much unsettled wonder, and very many wept. |220| The bishop bade that body, "Reveal your reason, since you were not known as a king, why you wear the

crown. Why do you hold the scepter so high in your hand? You had no land or vassals or control of life and limb?"

"Dear sir," said the dead body, "I intend to tell you, [225] as it was never my will that brought about this as it were. I was deputy and principal judge under a noble duke and this place was put altogether in my power. I governed this proud town in a noble manner, and always in an attitude of good faith, for more than forty winters. [230] The people were wicked, deceitful, and perverse to rule--I suffered harms very often to hold them to what is just; but for no danger or riches,[23] for no anger or fear, for no power or reward or fear of any man, did I ever depart from the right, according to my own reasoning. [235] I never delivered a wrong judgement on any day of my life, nor diverted my conscience for any kind of avarice on earth, nor made any crafty judgements, nor committed any frauds for the sake of deference no matter how noble a man may have been; neither man's threats nor mischief nor remorse [240] moved me from the high path to deviate from what is right in so far as my faith regulated my conscience. Though it had been my father's murderer, I offered him no wrong, nor false favors to my father, though it fell to him to be hanged. Because I was righteous, upright, and quick of the law, [245] when I died sorrow filled all Troy with confused noise; all lamented my death, the greater and the lesser ones, and thus to my honor they buried my body in gold, dressed me in the most refined clothing that the court was able to hold, in a long gown for the most compassionate and manliest one on the judicial bench; [250]

they girded me as the most skilled and competent governor of Troy, furred me for the truest of faith that was within me. They crowned me the most famous king of learned justices who ever was enthroned in Troy or was believed ever should be, [255] to honor my honesty of highest virtue, and they handed the scepter to me because I always rewarded right."

The bishop, with anguish in his heart, asked him still, though men honored him so, how it might come to pass that his clothes were so clean: "To rags, I think, they must have rotted and been torn into tatters long ago. [260] Your body may be embalmed; it does not disconcert me that no rot touched it, nor any loathsome worms; but the color of your cloth--I know no manner by man's science that might allow it to remain and last so long."

"No, bishop," said that body, "I was never embalmed, [265] nor has man's learning kept my cloth unspoiled, but the noble King of Reason who always approves justice and loves wholeheartedly all the laws that pertain to truth; and He honors men more for bearing justice in mind than for all the reward-producing virtues that men on earth acknowledge; [270] and if men have thus arrayed me for justice, He who loves right best has allowed me to last."

"Yes, but tell of your soul," then said the bishop. "Where is she placed and situated if you so properly performed? He who rewards each man as he has served justice [275] could scarcely ignore to give some branch of His grace. For as he says in his true psalm written: 'the righteous and the spiritually

pure come always to me.'[24] Therefore, tell me of your soul, where she resides in bliss, and of the noble restoration that our Lord handed to her." [280]

Then he who lay there murmured, moved his head, gave a very great groan, and said to God: "Mighty Maker of men, Your powers are great; how might Your mercy come to me anytime in the future? Was I not an ignorant pagan who never knew Your covenant, [285] the measure of Your mercy, or the greatness of Your virtue, but always a man lacking in the true faith who failed to know the laws in which You, Lord, were praised? Alas, the painful times! I was not of the number for whom You were ransomed, suffering affliction with the blood of Your body upon the sad Cross. [290] When You harrowed the pit of Hell and took Your remnant out from limbo, You left me, and there my soul remains that it may see no farther, languishing in the dark death that was created for us by our father, Adam our ancestor, who ate of the apple [295] that has poisoned many blameless people forever. You all were poisoned along with his teeth and taken into the moral corruption,[25] but with a medicine you are cared for and made to live--that is through baptism in the baptismal fountain and true belief, and both have we all missed without mercy, myself and my soul included. [300] What have we who always did right won with our good-deeds, when we are sorrowfully damned into the pit of Hell, and so exiled from that supper, that solemn feast, where those who hungered after righteousness are fully refreshed? My soul may sit there in sorrow and sigh very coldly, [305] dimly in that

dark death where morning never dawns, hungry within the pit of Hell and desire meals for a long time before she [the soul] can see either that supper or a man to invite her to it."

Thus mournfully this dead body described its sorrow, until all wept with woe for the words that they heard, [310] and with grief the bishop turned down his eyes; he had no opportunity to speak,[26] so he quickly sobbed until he took a pause and looked with cleansing tears to the tomb, to the body where it lay. "Our Lord grant," said that man, "that you would have life by God's leave,[27] [315] long enough that I might get water, and cast it upon you, fair corpse, and speak these words, 'I baptize you in the Father's name and his noble Child's and of the gracious Holy Ghost,' and not a moment longer.[28] Then, even though you dropped down dead, it would endanger me little."[29] [320]

With that word he spoke, the wetness of his eyes and tears streamed down and landed in the tomb, and one fell on the face, and the man sighed. Then he said with a sad sound: "Our Saviour be praised! Now praised be You, exalted God, and Your gracious Mother, [325] and blessed be that blissful hour in which She gave birth to You! And also be you, bishop, the relief of my sorrow and the alleviation of the loathsome mournful places that my soul has lived in! Through the words that you spoke and the water that you shed, the shining stream of your eyes, my baptism is attained. [330] The first drop that fell on me diminished all my grief to nothing; right now my soul is placed at the table to

supper. For with the words and the water that cleansed us of pain, softly flashed in the abyss of Hell below a ray of light which immediately caused my spirit to leap with unrestrained religious joy [335] into the Upper Room where all the faithful ones eat supper solemnly; and there with honor greatest of all a marshall greeted her [the soul], and with reverence he gave a room to her forever. I therefore praise my high God, and also you, bishop, who have brought us from anguish to bliss, blessed are you!" [340]

With this his sound ceased, he said no more, but suddenly his sweet face diminished and vanished, and all the color of his body was as black as the soil, as decayed as the musty substance that rises in dust powder. For as soon as the soul was possessed by bliss, [345] the craftwork that covered the bones was corrupted, for the ever-lasting life that shall never cease rejects each vainglorious thing that avails so little. Then was the praising of our Lord upheld with love; much mourning and joy were intermingled. [350] They passed forth in procession, and all the people followed, and all the bells in the city resounded simultaneously.

[1] In addition to the translations done by Margaret Williams and John Gardner, Peterson includes the following translations in his bibliography:

Loomis, R. S. and R. Willard. "St. Erkenwald." Medieval English Verse and Prose in Modernized Versions. New York, 1948. 239-49.

Mockler, Alice C. "St. Erkenwald." Master's thesis, University of Washington, Seattle, 1951.

Stone, Brian D. The Owl and the Nightingale, Cleanness, St. Erkenwald. Harmondsworth, 1971.

[2] I have chosen to alter the structure of the sentence in line 3 to get the modifier, "consecrated," closer to "bishop." In the original, as well as in Williams's translation, the nearest antecedent for "consecrated" was "burghe" or "city" respectively.

[3] Prior to my translation, "*þ*at one dole" of line 6 was glossed "one part of it" by both Williams and Burrow and Turville-Petre.

[4] Triapolitan refers to the three metropolitan cities of pagan Britain. These cities were the centers of religious activity.

[5] Peterson glosses "grubber" as "one who digs" (Peterson 124), and judging from the context of the sentence the word appears to be a noun; however, Williams glosses the word as the verb, "grubbed," which has a similar Modern English meaning.

[6] Burrow and Turville-Petre gloss line 49 as "The lid of the

tomb which shut it on top" (202). However, "sperl" refers specifically to the bar or bars that hold the lid of the tomb down. Peterson, Morse, Gardner, and Williams all gloss "sperl" similarly to my glossing. Gardner and Williams, however, make specific reference to three such bars, but I find no numerical specificity in the text.

[7] A tonsure is the shaven area on the head of a priest or cleric.

[8] For "ronke" in line 91, Morse suggests abundant, and Gardner glosses it as "rich and ruddy." However, Peterson makes the point that "ronke" also represents "proud" in Middle English. Although "abundant" is an equally valid interpretation, "proud" seems to embody something of the regality with which the judge was attired. It seems more appropriate to the text to suggest pride when describing the preservation of such a royally attired corpse.

[9] Savage, Peterson, and Morse all gloss "lere" as "face." Williams glosses it as "lineaments," which although it carries connotations of "face," seems to be a less specific term.

[10] I have borrowed Gardner's gloss of "more ne lasse" in line 104. The reference seems to be to the corpse itself and the discussion of its identity; therefore, as simple "more or less" (or "nothing more, nothing less" as Williams glosses the line) seems to be far less significant than a reference to the identity of the body.

[11] The members of the prelacy are high ecclesiastical

dignitaries.

[12] In line 114, Peterson glosses "meere" as "landmark," but Gardner, Williams, and Morse have suggested "mare" or "horse." I, like Peterson, feel that the reference is most likely to St. Paul's cathedral because it is more important to the poem and it is referred to similarly in line 6.

[13] Several glosses for line 132 exist as well. Gardner's gloss seems least likely. He translates the second half of the line as "for success in the hour." I see no time references in the line. Williams glosses the second half of the line as "with deep intent," which I find a bit vague, but I admit that even my gloss seems a little unsatisfactory.

[14] "[Q]ueme questis" is the subject of a short article by Thomas A. Ryan. He notes that Savage felt that the line referred the different voices of the choir representing individual voices in a pack of crying of hounds that are tracking a scent. Peterson calls the image "absurd" and notes that it would make high mass "ridiculous" (99). He suggests the choir may have been singing hymn Veni Creator, a hymn to the Holy Ghost (99). Ryan agrees that "queme questis" may have referred to a specific mass and suggests that "queme quaeritis" was actually how the line was to read. He suggests that the poet may have been referring to the Easter liturgy, "Quem Quaeritis in Sepulchro, O Christicolae?" (2). Ryan admits that he has never heard of any instance in which this trope was sung at a mass other than Easter; however, he notes that the liturgy is a gentle rebuke to

the three Mary's for their lack of faith, and he suggests this singing is a firm rebuke to the populous of London. Although the theme is consistent with that of Erkenwald, I feel that his suggestions are still too speculatory and unsupported.

[15] Williams glosses "martilage" as martyrology; however, because the passage is referring to lesser men and greater men, it seems unlikely that both should be remembered in a burial record so specific.

[16] Lines 167-8 present some difficulty for most scholars. Peterson suggests that "þe . . . þe . . . þe" should translate "the . . . the . . .thee." Thus, Erkenwald is addressing his audience directly. Peterson also glosses "cure" as heed (101). Williams and Gardner have translated the line similarly to the way I have.

[17] Line 192, as noted earlier in the text, is glossed by Peterson as a reference to the Holy Ghost. Because the capitalization of the first letter of "Goste" in this edition is his emendation, I have not identified "goste" with the Holy Ghost. However, I do not subscribe to Quinn's theory, which seems to rest heavily on speculation that, although carefully thought through, makes the intention of the poet far more complex..

[18] I have borrowed this glossing from Burrow and Turville-Petre because their translation of this difficult passage seems most accurate.

[19] "[L]ewid," typically glossed as ignorant, here seems to

represent unknown or incalculable.

[20] Both Gardner and Williams translated lines 207-210 as emended by Gollancz and Savage. The dates as emended are 782 and 354.

[21] Line 211 has had multiple glossings, but the glossing by Peterson and Gollancz requires less emendation of the text. However, as Peterson points out, although this solution seems to be the best one, the "emended line still does not make good sense" because the offices named served markedly different purposes (Peterson 106). The poet seems to make reference to the two posts held by the judge, the court of eyre, in which an itinerant judge tried cases on a circuit every seven years in medieval England, and the commission of oyer and terminer, which was the commission or writ that directed the holding of a court to try offenses. This translation of the line first appears in Gollancz's edition and is supported by Peterson in his, more recent, edition of the poem.

Other translations of this line are as follows:

Williams glosses the line as "I was then heir, in New Troy, of the court of Oyer." Burrows and Turville-Petre translate it "I was inheritor of affliction." John Gardner offers "At that time I was justice of the Iter in New Troy" as his translation.

[22] According to Burrow and Turville-Petre, "Belinus, king of Britain, quarrelled with his brother Brennius, but the two were eventually reconciled" (208).

[23] For "wothe ne wele" in line 233, Morse suggests "for

better or worse" (111); Williams suggests "for no ill- or well-being," and Gardner translates "for woe or weal or wrath." I have decided to translate the words individually and avoid attaching any connotations that come with a phrase.

[24] Line 278, according to Burrow and Turville-Petre, refers to "Psalm 14 1-2: 'Lord . . . who shall rest in thy holy hill? He that walketh without blemish, and worketh justice'" (210).

[25] As suggested by Peterson, I have glossed "glotte" in line 297 as moral corruption (Peterson 111). William Quinn has suggested that "glotte" refers to throat and the line would read as follows: "You were poisoned by his teeth and took it in the throat."

[26] Williams glosses line 312 as the bishop "could say nothing." I believe that is the poet's implied message, but I tried to offer an accurate word-for-word interpretation of the line.

[27] Gardner has the bishop speaking in third person when clearly Erkenwald is addressing the corpse in second person.

[28] William Quinn in his article, "A Liturgical Detail and an Alternative Reading of 'St. Erkenwald,' Line 319," suggests that "grue" means "nothing more," and line 319 should read as follows: "say the baptismal formula and nothing more" (341). However, most scholars gloss the line as a reference to time, as I have done.

[29] Peterson suggests that "daungerde" of line 320 is endangered. He reasons that Erkenwald is concerned with failing

at his office by failing to save the judge's soul (112). This glossing is consistent with my interpretation of the poem, and therefore, I accept his reading of this line.

Works Cited

Andrew, Malcolm, and Ronald Waldron, eds. Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. University of California: Berkeley, 1978.

Benson, Larry D. "The Authorship of 'St. Erkenwald.'" Journal of English and Germanic Philology 64 (1975) 393-405.

Burrow, J. A. and Thorlac Turville-Petre. A Book of Middle English. Blackwell: Cambridge, MA, 1992.

Clark, John W. "The Gawain-Poet and the Substantival Adjective" Journal of English and Germanic Philology 49 (1950) 60-66.

---. "Paraphrases for 'God' in the Poems Attributed to the Gawain-Poet." Modern Language Notes 65 (1950) 232-36.

---. "On Certain "Alliterative" and "Poetic" words in the Poems Attributed to the Gawain-Poet." Modern Language Quarterly 12 (1951) 387-98.

Clark, S. L., and Julian N. Wasserman. "St. Erkenwald's Spiritual Itinerary." American Benedictine Review 33 (1982) 257-69.

Dugdale, William. The History of St. Paul's Cathedral. London, 1658. 181-84.

Faigley, Lester L. "Typology and Justice in 'St. Erkenwald.'" American Benedictine Review 29 (1978) 381-90.

Frantzen, Allen J. "'St. Erkenwald' and the Raising of Lazarus." Mediaevalia 7 (1981) 157-172.

Gardner, John. The Complete Works of the Gawain-Poet.

Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965.

Gollancz, Israel, ed. St. Erkenwald. London, 1922.

Henschenio, G. and D. Papebrochio, eds. Acta Sanctorum: Aprilis Tomus III. Vol 2. Paris and Rome, 1866. 780-87.

Horstmann, Carl, ed. Nova Legenda Anglie. 2 vols. Oxford 1901. 391-405.

Hulbert, James Root. "A Hypothesis Considering the Alliterative Revival." Modern Philology 28 (1931) 405-22.

---. "'St. Erkenwald' and the 'Trental of Gregory.'" Modern Philology 16 (1918) 485-93.

---. "The 'West Midland' of the Romances" Modern Philology 19 (1921) 1-16.

King, Margot H. "Hagiography, Western European." Ed. Joseph R. Strayer. 64-71.

Lally, Tim D. P. "The Gothic Aesthetic of the Middle English 'St. Erkenwald.'" Ball State University Forum 20.3 (1979) 2-10.

McAlindon, T. "Hagiography into Art: A Study of 'St. Erkenwald.'" Studies in Philology 67 (1970) 472-94.

Morse, Ruth, ed. St Erkenwald. Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975.

Nolan, Barbara and David Farley Hills. "The Authorship of 'Pearl': Two Notes." Review of English Studies 22 (1971) 295-302.

Peck, Russell A. "Number Structure in 'St. Erkenwald.'" Annuale Mediaevale 14 (1975): 9-21.

Peterson, Clifford ed. Saint Erkenwald. University of Pennsylvania, 1977.

---. "Hoccleve, the Old Hall Manuscript, Cotton Nero A.x., and the Pearl-Poet." Review of English Studies 28 (1977) 49-56.

---. "'Pearl' and 'St. Erkenwald': Some Evidence for Authorship." Review of English Studies 25 (1974) 49-53.

---. "The Pearl-Poet and John Massey of Cotton, Chesire." Review of English Studies 25 (1974) 257-266.

Quinn, William A. "A Gloss of 'Glotte' in 'St. Erkenwald,' Line 297." English Language Notes 24.4 (1987) 10-11.

---. "A Liturgical Detail and an Alternative Reading of 'St. Erkenwald,' Line 319." Review of English Studies 35 (1984) 335-41.

---. "The Psychology of 'St. Erkenwald.'" Medium Aevum 53 (1984) 180-93.

Ryan, Thomas A. "'Queme Questis' in 'St. Erkenwald.'" English Language Notes 23.1 (1985) 1-3.

Salter, Elizabeth. "The Alliterative Revival." Modern Philology 64 (1966-7) 146-50 & 233-37.

Savage, Henry L., ed. St. Erkenwald: A Middle English Poem. Yale: New Haven, 1926.

---. The Gawain-Poet: Studies in his Personality and Background. University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, 1956.

Serjeantson, Mary S. "The Dialects of the West Midlands in Middle English." Review of English Studies 3 (1927) 54-67.

Simpson, W. Sparrow. Documents Illustrating the History of St.

Paul's Cathedral. London, 1880. 186-90.

Stouck, Mary Anne. "'Mournynge and Myrthe' in the Alliterative 'St. Erkenwald.'" Chaucer Review 10 (1976) 243-54.

Strayer, Joseph, ed. Dictionary of the Middle Ages. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985.

Thurston, Herbert S. J. and Donald Attwater, eds. Butler's Lives of the Saints. Vol 2. Burns and Oates: London, 1956. 299-300.

Turville-Petre, Thorlac and Edward Wilson. "Hoccleve, "Maistir Massy" and the Pearl-Poet: Two Notes." Review of English Studies 26 (1975) 129-43.

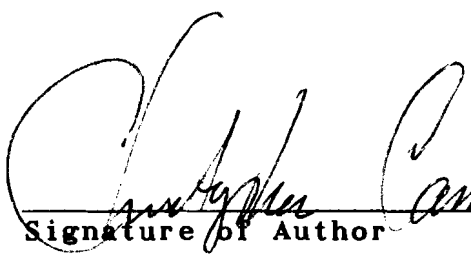
Whatley, Gordon. "Heathens and Saints: 'St. Erkenwald' in its Legendary Context." Speculum 61 (1986) 330-63.

---. "The Middle English 'St. Erkenwald' and its Liturgical Context." Mediaevalia 8 (1982) 277-306.

Williams, Margaret. The Pearl Poet: His Complete Works. Random House: New York, 1967.

Yerkes, David. "Hagiography, Middle English." Ed. Joseph R. Strayer. 64-71.

I, Christopher Cameron, hereby submit this thesis/report to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available for use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author.



Signature of Author

August 9, 1993
Date

A Translation of the Middle English "St. Erkenwald"
Title of Thesis/Research Project

Signature of Graduate Office Staff Member

8-10-93
Date Received