Veronka Szőke
(Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

Nearu *and its collocations in Old English verse*

Research on collocations – words that show a marked propensity to occur in association with each other – has proven that their analysis can yield interesting results; not only does it allow us to gain insight into their semantics, but it also permits a better understanding of some aspects of the Old English art of poetry. In this perspective, the occurrences in verse of the noun nearu *'confinement', 'oppression', 'affliction', and its derivatives have been analysed, paying special attention to their original use by Cynewulf, who exploited this device to develop and to strengthen the major thematic threads of the poems in which his signature in runes is embedded.*

The survey of nearu *and its associated words has illustrated that in some contexts, especially where the light versus darkness imagery is pivotal,* nearu *may have a further denotation, namely that of 'darkness, obscurity'. Until now, this aspect has only been considered in relation to the formula* nihtes nearowe/nihtes nearwe *'in the confinement/anguish/darkness of the night' (and to its Old Saxon version, which occurs in the Vatican Genesis). Evidence has been added to this hypothesis from the analysis of some further Old English poetic contexts and from Old Norse literature, where the connection between narrowness and darkness is present with reference to some mythological characters.*

1. *The concept of collocation*

A notable, but somewhat neglected, aspect of Old English verse is the occurrence of sequences of mostly alliterating words characterized by a marked propensity to associate with each other as if by mutual attraction; such occurrences are defined as collocations[1]. Contrarily, the phenomenon of collocation has received considerable attention and has been defined in different ways in contemporary linguistics, according to the different perspectives adopted by researchers in studying the features of co-occurring words. As Gledhill points out, they can be analysed on the basis of statistical evidence, and thus be considered in terms of co-occurrence

---

[1] On the phenomenon of collocation in Old English, see Quirk (1968), Lynch (1972), Kintgen (1977) and Tyler (2006).

and recurrence. Collocations have also been studied focusing on the lexical potentialities of recurrent combinations of words and disregarding statistical data. A third possible approach consists in the analysis of the rhetorical impact of fixed combinations of words[2].

The approach adopted in the present research departs from these studies, because of the characteristics of the corpus taken into consideration, that is, Old English verse. The language of Old English greatly differs from that of most corpora analysed in contemporary linguistics, since it is artificial and only rarely authorial, forged by the requirements of alliteration – which play a determining role in word combination within a long line – and by the stylistic feature of variation. In the light of these premises, our aim is to analyze the occurrences of the noun *nearu* and its related forms – the adjective *nearu*, the adverb *nearwe* and the verb *(ge)nearwian* – in Old English poetry, to identify the words with which most frequently associate and to investigate the governing principles that intervene in the process that leads to the combination of two (or more) words[3]. Since considerations on frequency of use will be the starting point of the analysis, another posit must be kept in mind, that is, the fragmentary character of the poetic corpus as handed down to us.

Collocations, usually extending within a long line, may sometimes take place within a single half-line and under rather rigid metrical, grammatical and lexical conditions, thus bringing about formulas[4]. The study of co-occurring word pairs has also drawn attention to their larger metrical contexts (made up of a short sequence of lines), highlighting the fact that collocation also concerns pairs that are more loosely related, not only metrically and syntactically, but also lexically. These sets of co-occurring

---

[2] Gledhill (2000: 7-20). In his recent study on the collocational profiles of some future constructions in several modern Germanic languages, Hilpert points out the process of grammaticalization which they went through and their semantic development over time, and shows the fruitful results which this kind of research may yield (2008).

[3] Lexical data, concerning *nearu* and the words with which it combines, have been gathered with the aid of the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (*DOEC*), and are quoted from the *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (ASPR I-VI), if not otherwise indicated. The occurrences of *nearu* in prose will only be cited when deemed relevant to the analysis. The dictionaries used are the *Dictionary of Old English: A to G on CD-ROM* (2008-) and Bosworth–Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1898), hereafter, respectively, *DOE* and *BT.*

[4] Oral-formulaic theory and the very definition of formula have been the subject of debate and considerable development over the past decades, since the first systematic studies by Parry and Lord. Comprehensive bibliographic indications on this theory may be retrieved through the 'Bibliography section' of the *Center for Studies in Oral Tradition* (http://oraltradition.org/bibliography/).

words that extend over the metrical unit of a long line are known as extended collocations. Not only are these large patterns at the service of single thematic units, but, as Kintgen affirms, they can form "the skeleton for longer sections of poetry" (1977: 309)[5].

In considering associated words, neither the metrical role of alliteration nor the stylistic feature of variation in verse should be underrated. Quirk claims that these demands must be considered in the light of the "natural phenomenon of collocation" (1968: 2), which is endorsed by alliteration in a synergetic relationship. Collocations may be characterized by lexical congruity or syntactic cohesion or both, but these features are not always prerequisites of collocations, and the semantic bond between associated words may sometimes be loose or even absent.

In a survey of the Old English words for treasure, Tyler has shown that the phenomenon of collocation can effectively be applied, within the larger frame of verbal repetition, to study not only single poems or groups of poems, but also the style of Old English verse and the nature of its conventionality. As she points out, "formulas and verbal repetition […] are both rooted in an aesthetics which takes pleasure in the familiar and which creates familiarity by repetition" (2006: 123)[6]. The use of combinations of interrelated words allows the poet to rapidly sketch a situation and concisely recall several layers of associations, relying, for instance, on the semantic relationship that may characterize the members of a collocation, that is, its collocates. Tyler has also proven that the relationship between tradition and poetic activity is not static: poets actively deploy and adapt collocations, and with different levels of independence and art. This explains why collocations are also occasionally used in semantically or thematically unexpected ways, and bring about relationships of opposition or paradoxical associations, sometimes also going against the listeners' expectations (2006: 38)[7].

The present survey of *nearu*'s combinations aims at gaining insight into the techniques which bring about collocative patterns, considering

---

[5] Analysing the co-occurrence of *lif* 'life', *lof* 'praise', 'glory', *leof* 'dear', *lufu* 'love', *geleafa* 'faith', and their related forms in Old English verse, Kintgen maintains that this set of words is functional in expressing one of the major concerns of Christian poetry, that is, its belief that God's mercy will always result in divine help and eternal bliss for the righteous in the afterlife (1977: 309-316); on this cluster, see also Zacher (2002: 363-365).

[6] As already highlighted by Quirk, frequent use of collocations in the compositional process is thought to have been a characteristic feature of oral performance, in which the audience appreciated the recurrence of expected elements and "traditional correspondences being observed" (1968: 4).

[7] See also Quirk (1968: 9-18).

their use to convey thematic or structural cohesion to the poems or to parts of them, as well as the semantics of this word. The occurrences of *nearu* and its derivatives in Old English verse will be analysed stylistically, and a few statistical data will be offered in the concluding section (see § 4). Nominal forms (54x) make up the bulk of the analysis, while the verbal forms, characterised by a more limited range of meanings and metrical relevance[8] (9x, of which 6x are past participles), will only be mentioned when deemed relevant. The survey will be centred on the three words (and their derivatives) with which *nearu* most frequently associates, that is, *niþ* 'envy', 'enmity', 'hostility'[9], *nid* 'need, necessity', and *niht* 'night', dealt with in distinct sections (see §§ 2-2.3.1). These sections will also include references (sometimes only cursory ones, in footnotes) to the words with which *nearu* forms alliterative matches, but which cannot be considered as collocates of *nearu* because of their more limited frequency of use and metrical and semantic relevance.

The material will be organised according to a categorization of Old English verse into the major groups of poems in which *nearu* occurs: poems signed by Cynewulf (*Elene*, *Fates of the Apostles* and *Juliana*)[10]; the "Cynewulfian group", i.e. a set of poems bearing considerable lexical similarities with Cynewulf's poetic diction (*Andreas*, *Guthlac A*, *Guthlac B*, and *The Phoenix*)[11]. In accordance with its special status in terms of genre, style and length, *Beowulf* will be treated separately. The remaining

---

[8] The verb *nearwian/genearwian* is only involved in alliteration in *Beowulf* and with words that do not occur in the same long line, but in the following one: […] *genearwod / niða genæged* '[…] constrained, assaulted with violence', 1438b-1439a (see § 2.1: 59). For a detailed analysis of collocation in *Beowulf*, see Reinhard (1976). All translations are my own, if not otherwise stated. Emphasis in bold is mine.

[9] The indication of vowel length is omitted. When discussed outside their contexts, words are quoted according to the spelling adopted in *BT*, and spelling variants are disregarded.

[10] The other signed poem, *Christ II*, is not part of the corpus considered here since it does not contain occurrences of *nearu*.

[11] During the XIX century, the issue of Cynewulf's authorship of poems, apart from those carrying his runic signature, was the subject of several in-depth studies, and at that time the tendency to include a large number of poems in this group prevailed. In the following century, the attitude towards this topic became more prudent, when not sceptical. Recently, Orchard has reconsidered the subject of the Cynewulfian canon, and the label of "Cynewulfian group" is adopted on the basis of his studies, which have pointed out that *Andreas*, *Guthlac A*, *Guthlac B*, *Christ III* and *The Phoenix* are the poems that contain the greatest number of shared formulas with the signed poems (2003; 2009: 302-305, 316-318). The status of *Guthlac B* is peculiar since, according to Orchard, the evidence of the high number of verbal parallels between this poem and the signed works seems to suggest that *Guthlac B* may have been composed by Cynewulf (2003: 294-295).

poems have been grouped together solely for the benefit of the present analysis and will be referred to as the "miscellaneous group".

Evidence, mostly from the poems by Cynewulf and from those of the Cynewulfian group, will put to the fore some original uses of collocations, as well as their rhetorical potentialities, and will thus further exemplify the poets' skill and artistry in coping with new ideological needs and in conveying new ideas by receiving, adapting and modifying tradition.

2. Nearu *and its most frequently co-occurring words:* niþ, nid *and* niht

The noun *nearu* commonly refers to a condition of 'confinement, imprisonment', and also to a place of seclusion ('prison'), but it may also define a state of material 'difficulty', and a sense of 'oppression' and 'distress'[12]. These senses also characterize the adjectival and adverbial forms[13], which qualify something as physically 'narrow', or spiritually 'oppressive' or 'generating anxiety' – a situation of dramatic uneasiness stemming from either physical confinement or oppression of the mind or both[14]. The verb *(ge)nearwian* denotes the action of 'narrowing, compressing', as well as that of 'afflicting'[15].

Old English *nearu* and Old Saxon *naru* seem also to imply, in a few attestations, the notion of darkness that stems from the concept of delimitation conveyed in the first place by their root. The denotation 'obscurity', considered so far only in relationship with the Old English formulaic phrase *nihtes nearowe*[16] (and Old Saxon *narouua naht*)[17], will

[12] *BT*, s.v. *nearu.*

[13] *BT*, ss.vv. *nearu* and *nearwe.*

[14] There is wide comparative evidence for the linguistic association between the concepts of narrowness, delimitation and those of anxiety and distress. Gonda (1957: 34-36, 40-41) has pointed out the opposition between the Vedic root *aṃh-* 'narrow', which also denotes 'distress', 'adversity', 'evil', 'tribulation', and its antonym *uru-*, which probably originally indicated spatial 'broadness' (and from which positive denotations such as 'freedom', 'deliverance', and 'relief' developed). The association between delimitation and distress, and difficulties is well attested in the Latin *angustus* 'narrow', *angor* 'feeling of moral oppression; anguish, distress' and *angustia*, most frequently used in its plural form *angustiae* 'difficulties' and 'anguish, distress' (*ibid.*, 57). The Old English adjective and adverb *enge* also share this semantic evolution; not only do they indicate something physically 'narrow', but also an anguished, grievous frame of mind or condition; see *DOE*, ss.vv. *enge* (adjective and adverb).

[15] *BT*, ss.vv. *nearwian* and *genearwian.*

[16] The phrase *nihtes nearowe/nihtes nearwe* '(in) the confines/anguish of the night' is used in *Elene*, *The Fates of the Apostle*, and *Guthlac B*; for its detailed analysis, see § 2.3: 71-73.

[17] The Old Saxon version of the formula occurs in the *Vatican Genesis*, 286a (ed. Behaghel 1958[7]: 245); see § 2.3: 73-74.

be reconsidered and strengthened by analysing the context in which this formula occurs, as well as other collocations in which *nearu* is involved without the noun *niht*. Further evidence, of an onomastic nature, in support of the thesis that *nearu* may also denote a condition of 'darkness', will be quoted from Old Norse sources, which might shed light on the research into the subject.

2.1 Nearu + niþ

Nearu (as a simplex or as a compound) most frequently associates with the noun *niþ*[18] and its derivatives (16x)[19], a pattern that also includes the formulaic phrase *nearwe niþ*[20]. *Niþ* usually denotes a condition or a feeling of 'envy', 'hatred, rancour', and also the result of a situation of 'enmity', such as 'hostility' or 'open war', and also the feelings of 'affliction', and 'grief' connected with that condition[21]. This latter semantic value of *niþ* is close in meaning to that of the adjective *nearu*.

In *Beowulf*, the collocation *nearu* + *niþ*, for which the poet shows a marked propensity (4x), always occurs in passages that deal with Beowulf's major feats, that is, firstly, his juvenile enterprises, then the killing of a water-monster before facing Grendel's mother, and, eventually, the fight against the fire-dragon. When Beowulf recalls the adventures through which he established his reputation on his arrival at Heorot, his difficulty and distress connected therein are effectively expressed, initially through the compound *nearoþearf* 'severe need' (where *nearu* has the role of intensifier), and then through the noun *nið* 'tribulation', which occurs in the following half-line. The adversity to which the lines refer is Beowulf's fight against the fierce sea-monsters (*niceras*) which oppressed the Weders; here the disposition of the two terms (*nearoþearfe* and *nið*) is

---

[18] The nominative form *nearu* will be employed to refer to all nominal forms of the word; similarly, the nominative *niþ* and *nid* will be used to indicate the collocational clusters that they and their derivatives form with *nearu*. In the cluster *nearu* + *niþ*, *nearu* occurs as a compound in the following forms: *nearoþearf* and *nearofag*, *Beowulf*, 422b and 2317a; *nearoþearf*, *Christ I*, 69a, and *nearowranc*, *Vainglory*, 44a. Also *niþ* is used in composition: *niðplega*, *Andreas*, 414a; *nyðgist*, *Guthlac A*, 540a; *niðloca*, *The Descent into Hell*, 64b; *niðsceaþa*, *Riddle 15*, 24a, and *Niðhad*, *Waldere II*, 8b.

[19] The figure also includes the occurrence in *The Rune Poem*, in which the noun *niþa*, the genitive plural of *niþþas* 'men', co-occurs with its near-homophone *niþ* and with *nearu* (see § 2.2: 67).

[20] The formula occurs in three distinctive poems: *Beowulf* (*nearofages nið*, 2317a), *Genesis B* (*þone nearwan nið*, 697a) and *Christ and Satan* (*in þæt nearwe nið*, 632a).

[21] *BT*, s.v. *niþ*.

unusual, since they do not belong to the same long line, a distribution which, in relationship with *nearu*, only occurs in a few contexts[22]: [...] *on yðum slog / niceras nihtes, nearoþearfe dreah, / wræc Wedera nið* '[...] amid the waves [I] slew water-monsters at night and suffered severe need; I avenged the affliction of the Weders' (421b-423a).

The depiction of the episode preceding Beowulf's revenge on Grendel's mother, guilty of having killed Æschere, is thematically and metrically very similar. Once Beowulf arrives at the water-dwelling of Grendel's mother, he kills one of the sea-monsters living in the lake into which he will plunge for his fight. Shot by an arrow, the monster suffers great agony before Beowulf drags him to the edge of the lake. Here the collocation is made up of the past participle of the verb *nearwian* at the end of the long line (*genearwod*, 1438b), followed by *niða*, which marks the beginning of the following line: *Hræþe wearð on yðum mid eoferspreotum / heorohocyhtum hearde genearwod, / niða genæged* 'Swiftly he [the sea-monster] was fast constrained among the waves, with barbed boar-spears, assaulted with violence' (1437-1439a). Beowulf's journey to the lake takes place through *stige nearwe, / enge anpaðas, uncuð gelad / neowle*[23] *næssas* 'narrow paths, strait ways, an unknown road, craggy headlands' (1409b-1411a)[24].

In the long section that describes Beowulf's final feat, the fight against the fire-dragon, *nearu* occurs in combination with *niþ* twice. The wrath of the dragon is triggered by the theft of a golden cup from the treasure-hoard he kept in his barrow: *Beorh eallgearo / wunode on wonge wæteryðum*

[22] Beside the two instances in *Beowulf* (422-423a; 1438b-1439a), the phenomenon of the co-occurrence which involves two usually contiguous long lines is attested in relation with other words with which *nearu* associates: the verb *niman* (*genam / + nearwum + Niðhades*, *Waldere II*, 7b-8; *geneahhe / + nearonessa + naman*, *Paris Psalter, Psalm 118*, 143, 1b-2); *enge/engu* 'narrow' / 'narrowness' (*nearwe + nydcleofan / + engan*, *Elene*, 711-712a; ᛁ [*nid*-rune] + *nearusorge / + enge*, *Elene*, 1260-1261a; *nearwe + nægledbord / [...] / enge*, *Genesis A*, 1433; 1435a), and *neah* (*neah*, / + *niwe + næsse + nearocræftum*; *Beowulf*, 2242b-2243).

[23] The co-occurrence of *nearu + neol* is also attested in *Riddle 84*, 6 which deals with a personified natural element, that is, 'water'; in this context, the compound *nearograp* refers to the clutching grip of water, which is firm and reaches deep down (*neol is nearograp. Nænig oþrum mæg*).

[24] The topographical indications conveyed in the passage hint at the difficulty of the journey, and emphasize both the ominous quality of the landscape, as well as that of the imminent fight against Grendel's mother. The battle is perceived as physically difficult and demanding in spirit. The line *enge anpaðas, uncuð gelad* 'strait ways, an unknown road' also occur in *Exodus*, 58, in the description of the perilous journey of Moses and his people across the desert, towards the Promised Land. The image of the 'narrow ways' is attested in *Riddle 15*, 24, in which the *niðsceaþa* 'cruel foe', probably indicating the fox, covers *nearwe stige* 'narrow paths'.

neah, / niwe be næsse, nearocræftum[25] *fæst* 'A place of burial was waiting on the open plain all ready, near the waves, newly-built by the cliff, skilfully built to hold treasure closely' (2241b-2243). This violation provokes the dragon's anger and subsequent reaction (referred to through the formulaic expression *nearofages nið* 'the violence of the oppressively hostile one', 2317a): he unleashes several attacks on the population *nean ond feorran* 'near and far' (2317b), and Beowulf, in spite of his old age, challenges him without the support of his retinue because: […] *he ær fela / nearo neðende niða*[26] *gedigde / hildehlemma* '[…] he [Beowulf] had overcome adversities venturing into many hostilities and clashes of battle' (2349b-2351a). Beowulf's last fight proves to be far more demanding than any of the other hostilities he had previously faced, and the hero suffers cruel adversity under the fire-dragon's attack; in this context, *nearo* collocates once again with *niwan* (*stefne*, 2594a): *Hyrte hyne hordweard (hræðer æðme weoll) / niwan stefne, nearo ðrowode* 'The guardian of the hoard [the fire-dragon] took courage; his breast heaved with breathing again. [Beowulf] suffered distress' (2593-2594).

In religious poetry, the referent of the collocation *nearu + niþ* changes, and the emphasis shifts to various aspects of spiritual and moral distress: the devils' punishment and subsequent suffering because of their act of insubordination (*Guthlac A*); the hatred and hostility that resulted from the punishment inflicted on them by God, leading not only to the Fall of Adam and Eve (*The Phoenix*, *Genesis B*), but also to acts aimed at inflicting misery on man (*Guthlac A*, *Vainglory*, *The Descent into Hell*). This poetry very often describes man's condition under the Old Law in

[25] On the basis of the compound *nearocræft* (*Beowulf*, 2243b), Holthausen emends, in *Solomon and Saturn II*, the half-line 386b *cræfte tyð* as *[nearo]cræfte tyd* (ed. Menner 1973: 137).

[26] The line containing *nearo* and *niþa* is aurally strongly marked, since it is enriched with the present participle form *neðende* (which is in a paronomastic relationship with *niða*), bringing about the triplet *nearo + neðende + niða*. The verb *neðan* also collocates with *nearu* in the poems, *Juliana* (§ 2.1.1: 66), *Solomon and Saturn II*, and *Riddle 53*. In *Solomon and Saturn II*, the lines in which the collocation occurs (see note above) deal with the contradictions inherent in man's life, which also involve natural elements such as water: […] *ne mot on dæg restan, / neahtes neðeð [nearo]cræfte tyd* '[…] [water] cannot rest by day, ventures boldly by night and drags with oppressive power', 385b-386 (ed. Menner 1973: 99). In *Riddle 53*, whose solution is a 'battering ram', the noun *nearu* refers to a situation of danger: […] *se ærra fær / genamnan in nearowe neþan moste* '[…] his head must brave danger for a comrade in distress' (12b-13). The noun *genamna*, based on an emendation by Holthausen and meaning 'comrade', also goes with *nearu* in *Riddle 52*, 3. This *Riddle* probably refers to two 'well-buckets': *þa wæron genamnan, nearwum bendum* 'the comrades were taken, in narrow bonds' (on this emendation, see ASPR III: 348).

terms of confinement and slavery to sin[27], and the destiny of those men who will not take advantage of the redeeming perspective made possible by Christ (*Christ and Satan*) is also depicted in similar terms.

In *Christ I*, the compound *nearoþearf* 'severe need' (69b) does not refer to the oppression of sin, but to the pressing, almost painful, urge felt by those awaiting Christ's intervention in human history in order to loosen the bonds of sin: *bringeð blisse þe, benda onlyseð / niþum genedde. Nearoþearfe conn, / hu se earma sceal are gebidan* '[Christ] brings bliss to you, loosens bonds evilly compelled on you. He knows the severe need, how the wretched await grace'(68-70).

Here the collocation *nearu + niþ* also includes another element, the verb *genedan* 'to compel, force'[28], which belongs to the second cluster of words (*nid* and its derivatives) with which *nearu* most frequently associates. The verb is a near-homophone of *niþ* and semantically close to it. The triplet created in this poem – *niþum + genedde + nearoþearfe* – brings together the imagery of oppression connected with sin and evil and that of the compelling urgency of grace.

This collocation, made up of three members, is also employed in *Genesis B* and in the Saxon poem *Heliand*[29]; in *Genesis B*, *nearu* alliterates both with *nið* and the adverb *niede* 'of necessity, necessarily', in describing Adam and Eve's punishment that ensues from the violation of God's command. The paronomastic link between *nið* and *niede* effectively underscores both the idea of the oppressive pain and that of the ineluctability of the punishment: […] *hellgeþwing, / þone **nearwan nið niede** onfon* '[…] [Adam and Eve had to] endure necessarily the constraint of Hell, the oppressive distress' (696b-697).

In the corpus, there is also one example of the usage of *nearu + niþ* that

---

[27] This imagery often recurs both in the Bible and in exegetic works. See, for instance, the Pauline epistles: Gal 5: 13; 1 Pet 2: 16; Rom 6: 17-18; 8-21. For an analysis of the metaphor of spiritual bondage, see Rendall (1974: 498-512) and Fish (1975: 12-16).

[28] For other instances of collocations of *nearu + (ge)nedan*, see *Exodus*, 68 (*nearwe genyddon on norðwegas* 'adversities compelled them [the Jews] onto Northern ways') and *Riddle 62*, 8 (*on nearo nathwær, nydeþ swiþe* 'then the southern man thrusts me back in some tight place, pushing hard').

[29] In *Heliand*, the three words are used to describe how Christ was taken captive and enchained by the Jews: *narauo ginodid, thar ina niðhuata, / fiond antfengun* 'tightly constrained in bonds, the enemy took him [Christ]' (5489-5490a; ed. Behaghel 1958[7]: 189). *Heliand* contains two occurrences of the adjective *naru*, one of which is used to indicate physical narrowness (3300b; *ibid.,* 115); the second attestation has metaphorical implications, since the poet uses the phrase *narouuaro thing* to refer to the 'more oppressive condition' of those whom damnation awaits (1350b; *ibid*., 49).

goes against the paradigmatic associations of disobedience – punishment or sin – suffering brought about by the combination. Only once does Cynewulf use *nearu* (the adjective *nearolic*) in combination with the noun *niþ*, but this deploy is startling since it is paradoxical; the collocation occurs in *Elene*, in the words used by the devil to define Christ as the author of *feala hearma* and *niða nearolicra* 'many pains' and 'grievous tribulations' (911-912a). The negative connotation which Christ receives in this context – though he is named *hælend* 'Saviour' (911a) – depends on the perspective of the speaking persona, the devil, who, after the recovery of the Cross, complains harshly about the damage done by Christ: *Feala me se hælend hearma gefremede, / niða nearolicra, se ðe in Nazareð / afeded wæs* 'The Saviour caused me many pains, grievous tribulations, he who was raised in Nazareth' (911-913a). Through this peculiar reversal, the poet effectively stresses the implications of Christ's sacrifice by subverting the normal cause and effect relationship (man is bound by sin – Christ looses these bonds by forgiving man's sins, thereby opening the perspective of salvation for him).

Nearu also occurs in association with *niþ* in poems belonging to the Cynewulfian group (*Andreas*, *Guthlac A* and *The Phoenix*) and in "miscellaneous poems" (*Vainglory* and *The Descent into Hell*). In *Andreas*, *nearu* collocates with *niðplæga* 'fight, battle' to refer to the hardships of a martial context (*æt niðplegan nearu þrowedon* 'faced adversities in a fight', 414). In *Guthlac A*, the compound used to define the devil is *nyðgist* 'hostile spirit'[30], and the tribulations inflicted on Guthlac by the fiend are effectively described in terms of confinement: […] *he sylfa adreag / under nyðgista nearwum clommum*[31] '[…] he [Guthlac] suffered under the oppressive bonds of the evil spirits' (539b-540).

The devil is once again the referent of the collocation *nearu + niþ* in

---

[30] The meaning of the compound is not univocal; it could be translated not only as 'hostile spirit', but also as 'hostile visitor' since in Old English verse, wordplay on the senses *gyst* 'visitor, stranger' and *gast/gæst* 'spirit, soul' is frequent (see *DOE*, ss.vv. *gast/gæst* and *gyst*). In *Beowulf*, 2699a, the compound *niðgæst* is used with reference to the fire-dragon.

[31] The significance of the internal formula *under nearwum clommum* is strengthened by the fact that both its constituents denote delimitation and imply suffering and affliction. The same formula is also exploited in Guthlac's verbal contest with the demons, when the saintly hermit recalls the eternal punishment that Christ inflicted on the rebellious angels (*Guthlac A*, 597b-598): […] *in hæft bidraf / under nearone clom, nergende Christ* '[…] the Saviour Christ drove [the rebellious angels] into captivity, under the oppressive bond'. Here *nearone* and *nergende* are closely linked aurally and combined with a contrastive function, since the poet aims at opposing damnation to salvation.

The Phoenix, where the poet insists on how he 'craftily deceived' (*nearwe beswɛac*)[32] Adam and Eve. The line in which the collocation occurs is ingeniously constructed: it brings together *nearwe* with the noun phrase *nædran niþ* (413a), associating two aurally and semantically interrelated words that fit aptly into the context centred on the enmity and guile: *Forþon hy eðles wyn / geomormode ofgiefan sceoldon / þurh nædran niþ, þa heo nearwe biswac / yldran usse* 'Therefore, they [Adam and Eve], sad of mind, had to give up the joy of their home, because of the serpent's enmity, when he craftily deceived our parents [...]' (411b-414a)[33].

The reflections on the manifestations of sin in man's postlapsarian life are at the core of the homiletic poem *Vainglory*, which elaborates the opposition between arrogant pride and humility. The poet lingers on the characterization of the man affected by *oferhygd* 'pride', and on the analysis of the acts resulting from this sin; *niþum nearowrencum* ('with violence, with anxiety causing acts of wile', 44a) is one of the phrases through which this negativity is effectively pointed out. The tight bonds bestowed on mankind through sin[34] can only be loosened by Christ, as John the Baptist announces in a long speech delivered on behalf of the prophets and patriarchs dwelling in Hell, awaiting the redeeming grace of Christ (*The Descent into Hell*). His speech also contains a parenthetic note which suggests that the Lord's benign support and grace will be granted to every man if his faith in God does not fail: *ne bið he no þæs nearwe under niðloc* [… / …] *bitre gebunden under bealuclommum* 'But

---

[32] In *Homiletic Fragment I*, 27, *nearwe* associates both with the verb *beswican* and with the temporal expression *æt nehstan*, in dealing with the contrast between flattering words and feelings of envy, proclaimed trustfulness and readiness to betray (*þonne hie æt nehstan nearwe beswicaþ* 'as soon as possible they craftily deceive'). *Nearwe* also co-occurs with *æt niehstan* in *Solomon and Saturn I*, 133, in the section describing the runes and letters that make up the Pater Noster as personified warriors. The *gear*-rune is described as the one that *æt niehstan nearwe stilleð* '[…] soon and forcibly makes [the fiend] still'.

[33] The expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden is visually conveyed through the image of the holy plain firmly barred behind them (*fæste betyned*, 419b). The violation of God's command resulted in the need to seek a new home 'in this valley of death' (416a), where life is *hleostre bihyded* 'covered by darkness' (418a). The use of *hleostre* is meaningful, since it underlines that the Fall does not only involve exclusion, but also loss of the previous splendour; the necessity of facing the new experience of obscurity is well stressed by the parallelism *hleostre bihyded* 'covered in darkness' – *fæstre bityned* 'firmly closed'.

[34] The imagery of binding is also used in *Christ I*, in which the human condition is described in terms of oppression, the agents of which are the devils: *hearde genyrwad, / gebunden bealorapum* 'fast constrained, bound by pernicious ropes' (364b-365a).

none [of men] is so closely and severely / bound in grievous confinement under baleful bonds'[35] (64-65).

On the other hand, damnation awaits those who show themselves to be deaf to Christ's message. According to *Christ and Satan*, on Judgement Day sinners will be thrust into the *nearwe nið*[36] 'oppressive tribulation', whence they will never be released, as the alliterating adverb *no* stresses: *scufað to grunde / in þæt nearwe nið, and no seoððan / þæt hie up þonan æfre moton* '[the devils will] thrust them [the damned] into the abyss, into that oppressive tribulation, and never afterwards will they be allowed up from there'[37] (631b-633).

2.1.1 Nearu *in onomastic word combinations*

Adversity, and more precisely captivity, but of a secular kind, is the focus of the onomastic collocation *nearu + Niðhad* in *Waldere II*, the subject of which is an episode that goes back to the heroic tradition. The extant lines of the fragment celebrate a famous sword, which had been presented by King Ðeodric to the warrior Widia as a token of gratitude for the help received in a difficult situation: […] *hine of nearwum Niðhades mæg, / Welandes bearn, Widia ut forlet* '[…] Niðhad's kinsman, Weland's son, Widia released him [Ðeodric] from adversity' (8-9).

The combination *nearu + Niðhad* is particularly appropriate and probably implies wordplay, since it stresses the concept of imprisonment, associating *nearu* with Niðhad, a character having 'enmity in his nature' and notorious for having imprisoned Weland, Widia's father. Here, by opposition, the poet refers to Widia, Niðhad's grandson, who set Ðeodric free from captivity.

Another effective onomastic collocation, only employed in poetry by Cynewulf, involves *nearu* and the name of the emperor *Nero* (Frank 1972:

---

[35] The poor condition of the page in the manuscript, which corresponds with these lines and their immediate context, makes interpretation difficult. For this reason, here I follow Mackie's interpretation and translation of the lines (1934: 176-177).

[36] In *BT*, a noun *niþ* is listed as a distinct entry from *niþ* 'enmity', and translated as 'a place low down, abyss'. This interpretation is, however, not followed either by Clubb (who, in his glossary, gives the following meanings: 'enmity, hatred', 'spite, malice', 'affliction, tribulation'; 1972: 163) or Finnegan (who follows Clubb; 1977: 140).

[37] The ample passage in which the poet lingers on the lot of the condemned sinners is primarily focused on the characterization of Hell, which appears as a dark and deep prison where oppression reigns (630b-636a). The importance of this imagery is further stressed in this poem, where deprivation of light marks the loss of God's favour (442-445; 447b-448, 450b-454b).

216)[38]. This lexical association exploits paronomasia, often used by Cynewulf[39] to organize his verse according to paradigmatic relationships, in which either homophonic or semantic closeness among words, or indeed both, play a determining role.

The combination of sound and meaning in *nearu + Nero* is effective since it concisely sums up the idea of spiritual suffering and physical persecution closely related to the Roman tyrant, the very oppressor. Cynewulf twice makes use of this paronomastic word pair to recall Nero's guilt in the death of the Apostles Peter and Paul. In *The Fates of the Apostles*, the rhyming noun phrase *nearwe searwe* 'oppressive treachery' (13b)[40] establishes a close link between Nero and the *nearu* he had caused through his *searu*[41]: *frame, fyrdhwate, feorh ofgefon / þurg Nerones nearwe searwe, / Petrus ond Paulus* 'Valiant and bold in warfare, Peter and Paul yielded up their lives through the oppressive treachery of Nero'[42] (12-14a). The same connection between persecution and its agent is also

---

[38] These word combinations are also part of a tradition in which attention to name-meanings, to their 'real or fancied onomastic significance', was fundamental (Robinson 1993a: 186-187 and 1993d: 224). In *Genesis A*, 2216, for instance, Sarah's name is pseudo-etimologically associated with the adjective *sar* 'sad', possibly pointing out the old and sterile woman's mood. Similarly, as Frank has noted (1972: 216), the Pharaoh is referred to as *fah* 'guilty' (*Genesis A*, 1860), and the adverb *yfele* 'evilly' is applied to Eve once she violates God's command (*Genesis B*, 791). For specific and detailed studies on the etymologizing of proper names and onomastic wordplay in Old English literature, see Robinson (1993a-d, republished).

[39] One of the most prominent examples of paronomasia in Cynewulf's poems involves the nouns *rod* 'cross' and *rodor* 'heaven' (and related forms), employed 15x, with the aim of pointing out a founding Christian paradox: "the lowest thing (*rod*) juxtaposed with the highest (*rodera wealdend*, *rodorcyning* 'lord of the heavens'), the mystery of Divinity's historical impact on mankind" (Frank 1972: 210). On this example of paronomasia, see also Bridges (1984: 242), Bjork (1985: 63) and Wine (1993: 72-73). As noted by Zacher, the pair *rod + rodor* is sometimes enriched through words such as *reord* 'voice' or *ræd* 'counsel' (2002: 362-363).

[40] Other instances in which *nearu* combines with *searu* are offered in *Elene* (where the compound *nearusearwe* [1108a] is used in the passage describing the recovery of the holy nails; see § 2.3.1: 76-77) and in *The Riming Poem* (*sinc searwade, sib nearwade*, 37). In the latter context, the interpretation of *nearwian* poses several problems. According to Macrae-Gibson, the verb conveys a negative connotation, since it refers to the reversal of the familiar bonds, which usually imply help and support, transformed here into oppression ('treasure was cunningly wrought, kinship brought oppression'; ed. 1983: 8-9, 33, 47); see also ed. Mackie (1922: 513).

[41] On the importance of onomastics for the interpretation of *The Fates of the Apostles*, see Ginsberg (1977).

[42] In *Meter 9*, 44, the name of Nero collocates with the adverb *nede* in a passage pointing out the extent of the reign over which the tyrant wielded his oppression. In Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* (*Passio Sancti Dionisii et sociorum eius*), the name of the emperor collocates with *nearu*. The referent of the description is Domitian, Nero's successor, who […] *æfter nero genyrwde ða cristenan* '[…] after Nero oppressed the Christians' (ed. Skeat 1966: 180).

brought about in Cynewulf's *Juliana*, where Nero's devilish nature is further stressed, since the devil, in confessing his misdeeds to the imprisoned Juliana, ascribes the persecutions promoted by the emperor to his guileful and corrupting influence: *Neþde ic nearobregdum þær ic Neron bisweac, / þæt he acwellan het Cristes þegnas, / Petrus ond Paulus* 'I ventured and seduced Nero by oppressive tricks, and he [Nero] ordered Christ's servants, Peter and Paul, to be put to death' (302-304a).

These examples show the generative force of phonetic similarity, which is also confirmed by the cluster *nearu + nergend* attested in *Guthlac A*[43], as well as by further occurrences, such as *nearu + neorxnawang* (*Genesis A*[44] and *Andreas*; see § 2.3.1: 77) and *nearu + norþweg* (*Exodus*)[45]. The presence of the verb *neðan* (see § 2.1: 60 and n. 26) in the cluster recalls *niþ*, which is one of its near-homophones. It is also phonetically very close to *nid*, the second most frequent collocating word with *nearu*, and thus it is part of the large cluster that includes – beside *niþ* and *nid* – other similar words, such as *nædre* (see § 2.1: 62-63), *niþþas* (see § 2.2: 67), and *neoþan*[46].

2.2 Nearu + nid

The noun *nid*, a near-homophone of *niþ*, denotes 'need, necessity', and, more specifically, 'difficulty, hardship, distress'[47], and its derivatives are the adverb *nide* 'of necessity', 'under compulsion'[48], and the verb *nidan/genydan* 'to force, urge, constrain'[49]. The semantic relationship between *nearu* and *nid* is also close (13x)[50], and the strong attraction

[43] See n. 31.

[44] *Genesis A*, 944: *neorxnawange on neorore lif.*

[45] See n. 28.

[46] The cluster *nearu + neoþan* is attested in *Elene* 1114 (see n. 86) and in two *Riddles*. The subject of *Riddle 10* – which begins with the line *Neb wæs min on nearwe, ond ic neoþan wætre* 'My beak was in a narrow place, and below water' (1) – is a 'barnacle goose'. A 'helmet' or a 'shirt' is the referent of *Riddle 61* (*Siðþan me on hreþre heafod sticade, / nioþan upweardne, on neoro fegde* 'Then he would introduce his head into my breast, fixing it in the narrow part, up from below', 5-6).

[47] *BT*, s.v. *nid. Nid* goes with *nearu* both as a simplex (*Elene*, 1260a; *The Fates of the Apostles*, 104b; *The Rune Poem*, 27a; *Riddle 62*, 8b; *Meter 25*, 64a; *Exodus*, 68a) and as a compound (*nydcleofa, Elene*, 711a; 1275a; *nydcosting, Guthlac B*, 1153b; *nydgripe, Beowulf*, 976a). In this group of collocations, *nearu* occurs twice as a compound (*nearusorg, Elene*, 1260b; *nearuned, Andreas*, 102a).

[48] *BT*, s.v. *nide.*

[49] *BT*, ss.vv. *nidan/genydan.* For the use of this verb in relationship with *nearu*, see § 2.1: 61 and n. 28.

[50] The figure also includes the occurrences in which *nearu* and *nid* also associate with *niþ* (*Christ I* and *Genesis B*); see § 2.1: 61.

between *nearu*, *niþ* and *nid* is highlighted by the extended collocations in which *nearu* co-occurs with both words (or their derivatives), as pointed out by the occurrences in *Christ I* and *Genesis B* (§ 2.1: 61). Furthermore, the occurrence in *The Rune Poem* is also part of a combinatory cluster that involves *niþ* and *nid*, as well as other near-homophones (*nædra*, *neðan* and *neoþan*) which are semantically unrelated to *nearu*, but phonetically close to its two main collocates (*niþ* and *nid*): ᚾ *[nyd] byþ nearu on breostan, weorþeþ hi ðeah oft niþa bearnum / to helpe ond to hæle gehwæþre, gif hi his hlystaþ æror* 'ᚾ [hardship] is oppressive to the heart, but it often becomes an instrument of help and salvation to the children of men, to everyone if he had previously paid attention to it' (27-28)[51].

Unlike in the case of the combination *nearu + niþ*, the poet of *Beowulf* only makes use of the coupling *nearu + nid* once, whereas Cynewulf employs it more frequently (4x) in two of the three signed poems in which *nearu* occurs (*Elene* and *The Fates of the Apostles*). The frequency of its usage in the poems belonging to the Cynewulfian group (*Guthlac B* and *Andreas*), and in the "miscellaneous group" is very similar to that of the cluster *nearu + niþ*. The syntactical relationship between the members of the collocation is usually loose[52], and *nearu + nid* does not have any formulaic use.

The referent of the collocation can be a place of confinement and seclusion that also has spiritual implications (*Elene*, twice; *Andreas*, § 2.3.1: 77). In some other contexts, as in the case of *nearu + niþ*, it is exploited to indicate man's anguish due to the experience of sin (*Elene* and *Guthlac B*). Finally, it also generically denotes physical difficulty (*Beowulf*), a situation of danger (*Exodus*) or the material action of 'pressing on; compelling' (*Riddle 62*)[53].

In *Beowulf*, the adverb *nearwe* goes with the compound *nydgripe* 'firm grasp' when at Hrothgar's court the hero recollects Grendel's defeat and death. This lexical association aims at emphasizing the firm control with

---

[51] This three-member-collocation reverses the negativity connected with the *nid*-rune; just as the Christian religion had reversed the pagan beliefs and world view, the new religion can change man's present, and especially his future life, since it can transform *nid* into an instrument of salvation, if man chooses to live according to the established moral precepts.

[52] There are two exceptions to this feature; one is a verb phrase in *Exodus* (*nearwe genyddon*, 68a; see n. 28). The second example is the compound *nearoned* 'oppressive constraint' (*Andreas*, 102a; see § 2.3.1: 77).

[53] See n. 28.

which the wounds operate like fetters on the monster's body: […] *hyne sar hafað / mid nydgripe*[54] *nearwe befongen, / balwon bendum* '[…] The wounds have taken him [Grendel] tightly in their firm grasp, in their evil bonds' (975b-977a).

Uniformity of use characterizes the combination of *nearu + nid* in two poems by Cynewulf (*Elene*, and *The Fates of the Apostles*), in which two different clusters are present (*nearu + nydcleofa* and *nearu + nid*-rune). The association of *nearu + nydcleofa* (*Elene*, 711), a compound only attested in Cynewulf and employed to indicate a prison, occurs in the section of lines dealing with Judas' liberation from imprisonment when he decides to reveal the place where the holy Cross had been hidden by the Jews. This represents one of the climactic moments of the poem, since it marks the transition from captivity to freedom. Here, beside the motif of constraint and release, the importance of the dichotomy of darkness versus light emerges – first pointed out by Stanley B. Greenfield (1965: 114) and analysed in more detail by Stepsis and Rand; the latter two scholars maintain that the poem's backbone is made up of oppositions, such as darkness versus light, concealment versus revelation, and blindness versus sight, and that the poem's development is marked by the movement from one condition to another (1969: 277-280)[55]. This transition involves Constantine, Elene, Judas, the Jews, and the poet, as well as the Cross and the holy nails. The distribution of *nearu* in this context is carefully organised by Cynewulf: *of nearwe* 'from the prison' (711a) marks the beginning of the "envelope-pattern" which encloses the section focused on the subject of Judas' release from imprisonment[56]; then it is varied by

---

[54] The manuscript reads *mid gripe*, a corrupt form emended by Klaeber as *nidgripe*, but interpreted as *nydgripe* by editors like Dobbie, since the spelling *nid-* is unattested in poetry (2008[4]: 34, 418). Fulk claims that *niðgripe* 'hostile grip' is a better emendation, since it is also more consistent with the phrase *balwon bendum*, which he translates as (with) 'pernicious bonds' (2007: 163-164). The compound *nydgrap* is used in *The Riming Poem*, 73a, in association with the noun *neaht*: *þonne flanhred dæg / nydgrapum nimeþ, þonne seo neaht becymeð / seo me eðles onfonn* 'Arrow-hastening comes the day / to seize with inescapable grip; the night comes / which grudges me my dwelling' (72b-74a; ed. Macrae-Gibson 1983: 35). The verb *niman* also occurs in *Psalm 118* (*Paris Psalter*), in combination with the noun *nearoness* 'distress', in a line referring to man's anxieties during worldly existence (143, 2). *Niman* is also attested in combination with *nearu* in *Waldere II* (*genam / + nearwum + Niðhades*, 7b-8; see § 2.1.1: 64).

[55] These oppositions are part of a major pattern of "movement from restriction or limitation to expansiveness", according to a structuring that can be applied to most of the micro-episodes forming the poem, in a journey from spiritual darkness to sapiential light (Anderson 1983: 160-161).

[56] As noted by Calder, "Judas' grave becomes the physical embodiment of the darkness of his ignorance, the symbol of the depths to which he has been taken by his blindness" (1972: 206).

fram þam engan hofe 'from that narrow dwelling' (712a)[57] and eventually conjured up through *of carcerne* 'out of the dungeon' (715a)[58].

The notions of physical and spiritual entrapment to describe the condition prior to the conversion to Christianity is also present in the Latin source of *Elene*, but Cynewulf chooses not only to exploit this imagery, but also to develop it within his reflection on conversion, which is the unifying thematic thread of the poem[59]. The poet amplifies the short and matter of fact description of Judas' confinement in the *Acta*[60] and stresses his gloomy frame of mind by insisting on his confinement, which is both physical and spiritual (Fish 1975: 2-12, 24-25).

The pattern *nearu + nydcleofa* is also used in the biographical part of *Elene*, where the poetic persona ponders on the transient quality of earthly life by comparing it with the wind which roams until it finally settles in its underground abode and is enclosed in the Earth's bosom. The very idea of confinement is effectively conveyed not only through the two alliterating words, but also through the verb *geheaðrian* (*in nedcleofan nearwe geheaðrod* 'in its chamber of constraint straitly repressed', 1275)[61] and through the semantically analogous phrase *þream forþrycced* 'strictly restrained' (1276a)[62]. The hapax *nydcosting* 'distressing tribulation', which is employed in *Guthlac B*, is similar to *nydcleofa*[63], and is used

---

[57] The co-occurrence of *nearu + engu* is also attested in the final part of the poem, where the poet refers to man's postlapsarian life, characterized by sorrow and limitation, through the runic acrostic: ᛚ *gnornode /* ᚾ *gefera, nearusorge dreah, / enge rune* 'The [disused] bow, his [man's] companion in need, mourned, suffered oppressive sorrow, an anxious secret' (1259b-1261a; Elliott 1996a: 289; translation by Elliott). The phrase *enge rune* probably involves a pun through which the poet indicates not only the oppressive mystery of earthly life, but also alludes to the runic letters ('narrow rune') that make the biographical passage cryptic (ed. Gradon 1992: 73n.; see also Lampugnani 1993: 306).

[58] The rhetorical accuracy of the lines is further confirmed by the anaphoric disposition of the internal verb phrases *up forlete* 'would release [him]' (712b) and *up gelæddon* 'led [him] out' (714b).

[59] The thematic unity of the poem is represented by the revelation and by the ensuing conversion, topics which are "incrementally elaborated, explored and developed" (Campbell 1996: 232).

[60] In the *Acta Cyriaci*, the description of Judas' imprisonment is very concise: […] *iussit eum mitti in lacum siccum usque in septem dies sine cibo manentem* '[…] [Elene] ordered him [Judas] to be cast into a dry pit and to stay there for seven days without any food' (ed. Holder 1889: 7-8).

[61] This conception of the wind reflects medieval ideas, and is also the subject of *Riddle 3* (see § 2.3.1: 78).

[62] The phrase *þream forþrycced/þream forþrycte* is employed in poems signed by Cynewulf and in *Guthlac B*. It occurs, for instance, in *Juliana*, in the devil's reference to the suffering imposed on him by Juliana (*þream forþrycte*, 520a). In *Guthlac B*, its referent is the frame of mind of Guthlac's disciple, afflicted by the imminent death of his master (*þream forþrycced*, 1198a).

[63] In the light of the critical view that ascribes *Guthlac B* to Cynewulf (see n. 11), it may be worth noting that the use of *nydcosting* in line 1153 (*nearwum* + past participle *genæged* +

in relation to the progress of Guthlac's illness, conveyed in martial terms. He is accordingly represented as if in the throes of a relentless attack (*nearwum genæged nydcostingum* 'with distressing tribulations oppressively assaulted', 1153)[64], according to an imagery which is not inherited from the *Vita Guthlaci* by Felix[65].

As regards the poems by Cynewulf, Frese has demonstrated that the biographical sections of the signed works have a close relationship with the central parts of the poems (1975: 314)[66]. Congruity and cohesion between the main sections of the poems are achieved through figures of repetition, parallelisms and/or antitheses through which the poet confirms ideas (Anderson 1983: 177). This is seen in *Elene*, for instance, where conversion is also at the core of the runic passage, which deals with the poet's meditation and implies a deeper awareness of the ephemeral nature of man's condition and of the meaning of Christ's intervention into history. The compound *nearusorg* 'oppressive care' (1260b) – which alliterates with the *nid*-rune 'need, necessity' (1260a) and is then varied by *enge rune* 'confined secret' (1261a) – well expresses the characterization of the human condition prior to Christ's redeeming death[67].

The Old English version of the *Metra* by Boethius inherits from his source the concern for the dichotomy between the fleetingness of secular life and the everlasting joy of life after death. *Nearu* is used three times in three distinct *Metra*, each time corresponding to the Latin source, but only once occurs in alliterative combination. Not only does the danger of neglecting the needs of the soul concern common people, but also and

---

nydcostingum) is similar to the employ of *nydcleofa* (*nedcleofan* + *nearwe* + past participle *geheaðrod*, *Elene*, 1275). Furthermore, as it will be shown, *Guthlac B* is the only poem in which the formula *nihtes nearwe* '(in) the confines/anguish/darkness? of the night' is employed beside *Elene* and *The Fates of the Apostle*; see § 2.3: 71-73.

[64] The formula *nearwe genæged* has previously been used in association with *næfre*, in the same context (1013a), that is, in the description of Guthlac's pain, his being worn out by illness. The verb *genæged* is associated with *niða* in *Beowulf*, 1439a, where the phrase varies *hearde genearwod* (1438b); see n. 8.

[65] The fiftieth chapter of the *Vita Guthlaci* by Felix is considered the source of *Guthlac B* (ed. Colgrave 1985: 150-161).

[66] For bibliographical indications on studies concerning the runic signature, see Frese 1975: 312, n. 1. On the thematic relationship that ties the biographical section to the previous major parts of the poem, see also Fish (1975: 22-23).

[67] *Nearu* also co-occurs with the *nid*-rune in *The Rune Poem* (§ 2.2: 67) and in *The Fates of the Apostles* (§ 2.3: 72-73). The adjective *enge* and the noun *engu*, when used in combination with *nearu*, usually occupy the long line that follows the one in which *nearu* occurs; see n. 22.

above all, powerful earthly kings, who pursue worldly values and are therefore *nede* 'necessarily' (*Meter* 25, 64a)[68] inclined to vice: *Sceal ðonne nede nearwe gebugan / to ðara hlaforda hæftdome* 'He [the earthly king] must then necessarily incline to the captivity of those lords [vices]' (*25*, 64-65)[69].

2.3 Nearu + niht

The third association of words that will be considered in detail is made up of *nearu + niht* (7x), which occurs in each of the four groups into which the Old English poetic corpus has been conventionally divided for the purpose of our survey. In most instances, the association between *nearu* and *niht* is very close, and occurs in the noun phrases *nihtes nearowe/ nihtes nearwe* '(in) the confines/anguish of the night' (*Elene*, *The Fates of the Apostle* and *Guthlac B*) and *nearo nihtwaco* 'confining/anxious night-watch' (*The Seafarer*). In addition to its use in Old English verse, the formula *nihtes nearowe/nihtes nearwe* is also attested in the Old Saxon *Genesis* (*narouua naht* 286a; ed. Behaghel 1958[7]: 245). In the remaining attestations (*Beowulf*[70], *The Rewards of Piety*, and *Solomon and Saturn II*)[71], the words are less strongly connected with each other, since they do not belong to the same phrase.

In Christian poetry, night conveys both positive and negative associations. It means rest and relief from the fatigue of daily work, and favours prayer and meditation. Negative connotations prevail, however, in relation to this physical reality that often becomes the "objective correlative" of spiritual realities such as distress and anxiety: the night frequently prompts oppressive thoughts and anxiety since the burden of

---

[68] *Book IV*, 2, 10: *Non facit quod optat ipse, dominis pressus iniquis* '[the king] does not what he would since many unrighteous lords [vices] oppress him' (ed. Bettetini 2010: 166).

[69] Fame and glory often bring man to focus on worldly life and to forget how restricted the corners of the Earth are (*nearowan* [...] / *eorðan sceatas*, *Meter 10*, 16a, 17a, which corresponds to the Latin *artumque terrarum situm* 'of the narrow site of the Earth'; *Book II*, 7, 4; ed. Bettetini 2010: 78) compared with the immeasurable extension of the heavenly kingdom. Man is bound tightly by the vain love of secular life and its joys (*nearwe gehefted*, *Meter 21*, 5b), which often make him neglect the search for the bliss of the after-life. The reading offered by *Meter 10* (*Book III*), 1-3 runs as follows: *Huc omnes pariter uenite capti, / quos fallax ligat improbis catenis / terrenas habitans libido mentes* 'Hither come, all you prisoners, whom deceitful Lust – which in worldly minds dwells – ties with harsh chains' (ed. Bettetini 2010: 130).

[70] See § 2.1: 58-59.

sin and the awareness of one's fragility come to the fore. These emotional and moral realities are usually described in Old English verse by making use of the metaphor of bondage and the imagery of obscurity, employed separately or intertwined. These images are also utilised regarding the greatest scriptural experience of redemption, which allows sin and death to be overcome[72].

The phrase *nihtes nearwe*, employed in *Elene*[73] at the beginning of the runic passage (1239a), is connected to the peculiar perception of isolation and spiritual dejection that the absence of light induces in the poetic persona's meditation on life, under the shackles of sin and the fetters of worldly cares. Earthly transience and the ephemeral nature of worldly pleasures are also juxtaposed in the final part of *The Fates of the Apostles*, where *nihtes nearowe* (104a) collocates with the *nid*-rune. In this context, the interpretation of the formula depends on the reading chosen for the two runes occurring in the previous line (103), which are the subjects of the verb *neosað*: *Þonne* ᚲ *ond* ᛁ *cræftes neosað / nihtes nearowe, on him* ᚾ *ligeð*[74]*, / cyninges þeodom* (103-105a).

The first rune, *cen*, is usually interpreted as 'torch', while *yr* is more problematic. Elliott, for instance, considers it as referring to a 'bow', and claims that this weapon and the torch symbolize two important aspects of Anglo-Saxon life: the convivial gatherings in the hall in the fire of torches and the martial activities that played a determining role in men's life. He translates the passage as follows: 'While torch and bow continue to use their skill, constraint, the King's servitude, lies upon them in the anguish of the night'. The scholar also maintains that these lines establish an opposition between those who still live their earthly life and those on whom the constraint of death was laid by the Lord, considering *nihtes*

---

[71] See n. 26.

[72] Accordingly, Christ is seen as the light that "shineth in the darkness" (Jn 1, 5). In his *Hymnus ad galli cantum*, Prudentius invokes Christ's intervention in history as follows: *Tu, Christe, somnum dissice, / tu rumpe noctis vincula, / tu solve peccatum vetus, / novumque lumen ingere* 'Do Thou, O Christ, scatter our slumbers. Do Thou undo our long-established sin, and pour in upon us the light of the new day' (97-100; ed. Thomson 1962: 12-13).

[73] In this context, the phrase *nihtes nearwe* has been translated as 'in the anguish of the night' (ed. Gordon 1970: 233), or 'painstakingly by night' (tr. Bradley 2003: 195), where both constituents are considered as adverbs.

[74] The *c*- and *y*-runes, as well as the *nid*-rune, are supplied by the editors because of the poor condition of the part of the folio where these lines are transcribed. Whereas consensus on their insertion is general, their meaning is controversial.

nearowe as a reference to the darkness of the tomb, to which the light of the *cen* is juxtaposed (Elliott 1996b: 296-297)[75].

The idea of isolation and the ensuing painful anxiety lies behind *nihtes nearwe* (1210a) in *Guthlac B*, in the passage concerning the conversation between Guthlac's servant and his master regarding the identity of the mysterious – angelic – guest with whom Guthlac often conversed 'in the confines of the night'. The collocation *nearu + niht* occurs as *nearu nihtwaco*[76] in *The Seafarer* (7a), in the description of the hardships and suffering associated with life at sea, due to harsh weather, lack of food and the absence of the comforting company of relatives and friends[77]. This kind of context is evoked by the poetic persona as he recollects the 'night-watch' he was once obliged to perform at the ship's prow, as his boat was passing by the cliffs[78].

If in the occurrences mentioned so far the formula seems to combine the idea of nocturnal isolation with the anxiety that night-time often brings, the context of the Old Saxon occurrence, in the *Vatican Genesis* (*narouua naht*, 286a), hints more clearly at an ampler semantic spectrum of *naru*/*nearu*, meant to evoke situations of straits and suffering not only in terms of confinement and oppression, but also of obscurity. In the Saxon poem, the formula occurs in a section of lines that describes the fading away of darkness at the break of dawn: *Suart furður skred, / narouua naht an skion, nahida moragan* 'Darkness fled, confining/obscure? night into

[75] Frese follows Elliott's interpretation of the runes and translates *nihtes nearowe* as 'in the narrows of the night' (1975: 323). Gordon puts forward a different reading of these lines: 'Then shall the *Bold Warrior* (C) and the *Wretched One* (Y) crave help in the anguish of the night' (1970: 180). A reference to poetic composition is seen in these lines by Brooks, who interprets the *y*-rune as 'ink-horn', which would represent, together with the 'torch', a metonymic indication of composition. The *nid*-rune, further emphasized by the contiguous phrase *cyninges þeodom* 'the service of the king' (105a), may have a twofold interpretation and indicate both the service due to God, but also the universal constraint of death. Thus, Brooks's translation runs as follows: 'while torch and ink-horn employ their function with labour in the night, constraint, the service of the king, lies upon them' (1961: 126).

[76] Gordon translates the phrase as 'hard night-watch' (1970: 76), Hamer as 'grim night-watch' (1988: 187), and Bradley as 'hazardous night-watch' (2003: 332).

[77] In addition to the realistic features of the vividly described situation, navigation acquires a deep symbolic value, since it recalls the hardships that Christians have to face during their worldly life if they seek to reach the shelter of the heavenly home.

[78] In her recent edition of the poem, Cucina points out the possibility that, by using *nearu*, the poet may have meant not only to hint at the seafarer's psychological anxiety, but also at the physical "rigidità" connected with the nocturnal wake (2008: 48). The idea of physical constraint is endorsed by the following lines: *Calde geþrungen / wæron mine fet, forste gebunden, / caldum clommum* 'My feet were oppressed by cold, bound by the frost, with cold chains' (8b-10a).

the clouds; morning advanced' (285b-286; ed. Behaghel 1958[7]: 245). Yet this dawning is neither comforting nor positive, since it heralds the punishment that God is about to inflict on Sodom and Gomorrah because of their inhabitants' moral corruption and depravity. In his edition of the poem, Doane considers *narouua naht* as a variation of *suart* 'obscurity', but he claims that the adjective refers to the characterization of the night as 'anxious/confining' (1991: 345-346). He rejects the interpretation of *narouua* as 'dark', put forward by Kögel (1895: 12-13), Schlüter[79], and Sehrt[80], and traces this characterization of the night back to Lot's frame of mind, his feelings of anxiety under the threat of the Sodomites' attack on his house and guests. But this view neglects the fact that this phase of the narration is wholly suppressed by the Saxon poet.

Considering the evidence of the Modern Frisian expression *neare nacht* 'stickdonkere nacht' ('pitch-dark night'), and the Dutch adjective *naar* denoting the night or places as 'dark', Hofstra concludes that "in combination with denotations of dark objects, dark situations, […] *nearo* may […] simply mean 'dark'" (1994: 103). He shows that the meaning of 'obscurity' could also be applied to the Old English occurrences of the formula, though he does not analyse them in their context (1994: 100-103).

By considering the contexts in which the collocation *nearu + niht* is used, Hofstra's view can be substantiated. In the first place, it is worth noting that, in some cases, the Old English passages in which the collocation occurs are centred on the opposition of light versus darkness, with both physical and spiritual implications, as already pointed out. In *Elene*, for instance, in the biographical section in which the poet describes his verse-making as a nocturnal activity (*nihtes nearwe* 'in the confines/ anguish/darkness? of the night'), the image of darkness, both physical and moral, is congruous with the wider context of the passage, in which the image of the luminosity of grace that sweeps away the shadows of the night corresponds to the poet's spiritual change. Cynewulf, who describes himself as […] *weorcum fah*, / *synnum asæled* '[…] stained by deeds, bound fast by sins' (1242b-1243a), is granted grace *þurh leohtne had* 'in radiant manifestation' (1245b) by God, who bestows spiritual enlightenment on his mind (*torht ontynde*, 1248a).

---

[79] Schlüter follows Kögel's interpretation of the adjective *naru* as 'dark' (1895: 120).

[80] As well as 'narrow', Sehrt lists the meanings "bedrückend, kummervoll, finster", quoting the phrase *narouua naht* in this context (1966[2], s.v. *naru*).

The collocational use of *nearu* + *niht* in *The Rewards of Piety* is similar to the Cynewulfian usage; here the adjective *nearwe* qualifies the noun *geþancas*: *nearwe geþancas, þe on niht becumað* (53). The poem exploits a common homiletic topos to point out the importance of meditation on the transience of worldly pleasures, and stresses the importance of prayer and of acts of piety to gain divine favour and protection against the *nearwe geþancas* that assail man's conscience during the darkness of the night. Thus, the adjective *nearwe* – translated by Lumby as 'troublesome' (ed. 1964: 31) and by Zacher as 'narrow' (2003-2004: 103) – may also hint at the gloomy quality of the cares generated by sin.

The association of 'oppression' and 'darkness' might be detected in one of the *Vercelli Homilies* (*Homily II*), which is characterized by ample sections of alliterative and rhyming prose. The homilist's exhortation aims at saving man from eternal death and damnation, referred to as *se nearwa seaþ* 7 *se swearta deað* 'the narrow/dark? pit and the black death' (ed. Scragg 1992: 58). In the same context, the sermon attests a whole catalogue of acts and behaviours that man must avoid and in which *nearoþancas* 'narrow/dark? thoughts' combines with *niðas* 'enmities' (ed. Scragg 1992: 60)[81].

In the light of the previous occurrences of *nearu* in combination with *niht*, the use of the phrase *nihtes nearowe* in *Guthlac B* (1210a)[82] may also be reconsidered, since it is part of the opposition of light versus darkness developed in the lines recounting the speech of Guthlac's servant, in which the poet lingers on the transition from day to night, which is absent in the Latin *Vita*[83]: […] *heofones gim, / wyncondel wera, west onhylde, / sweglbeorht sunne setlgonges fus / on æfentid* […] / […] / *dægwoman bitweon ond þære deorcan niht* '[…] the gem of heaven, men's joyous candle, the heavenly bright sun eager to go down, has

[81] See also the occurrence in *Homily XXI* (ed. Scragg 1992: 361). The cluster *nearoþancas* + *niðas* is also attested in an Old English homily, first published by Willard, which deals with the topics of after-life and the body's and soul's destiny (*The Three Utterances of the Soul*). *Nearoþancas* and *niðas* occur in the section in which the author lists a catalogue of deeds and feelings that led to the damnation of the soul (ed. Willard 1935: 46).

[82] Roberts considers *nearwe* as an adverb, and hence translates it as 'narrowly, closely' (ed. 1979: 210), whereas Gordon and Bradley read it as a noun. The former translates *nihtes nearwe* as 'in the anguish of the night' (1970: 276), while the latter as 'in the confine of the night' (2003: 279).

[83] The extent of the amplification is apparent when the passage is compared to the corresponding section of the *Vita Guthlaci*, in which only the expression *vespere et mane* 'evening and morning' occurs. The same temporal indication is given by Guthlac, in his answer (ed. Colgrave 1985: 156-157; translation by Colgrave).

declined westwards at eventide […], between nightfall and the dark night'
(1212b-1215a; 1218)[84].

2.3.1 *Three examples of the possible meaning* nearu *'darkness'*

The implication of darkness conveyed by *nearu* in certain contexts in
association with *niht* does not seem to be confined to such combinations.
Other occurrences of *nearu* in *Elene* show that Cynewulf plays on and
amplifies the association of confinement and anguish with obscurity, to
which he opposes the radiance of faith and the joyous luminosity of grace,
since he pre-eminently interprets conversion through this imagery (Bridges
1984: 260). The matching of *nearu* with the noun *nægl* 'nail' also points in
a similar direction. Objects such as the holy Cross and the nails used for
Christ's crucifixion emerge from underground, and become instrumental in
the process of conversion[85]: Elene's physical and spiritual quest is only
completed after the recovery of the nails, pursued with unfaltering
determination and representing "the revelation of the Spirit in the newly
converted Christian" (Fish 1975: 20). Therefore, it is not surprising that
this phase of her quest is highlighted by the insistent repetition of the noun
nægl in association with *nearu*, which occurs four times[86].

---

[84] The idea of darkness is present not only in the compound *nihtwaco* 'night-watch' used in *The Seafarer*, but probably also in the adjective *nearu*, which stresses that the seafarer's navigation takes place in the shadow of the night.

[85] The recovery of the nails is described in the Latin *Acta* as follows: *Magna autem coruscatio de loco inluxit ubi inventa est sca [sancta] crux clarior solis lumine et statim apparuerunt clavi illi qui in dnico [dominico] confixi fuerant corpore tamquam aurum fulgens in terra* 'A great brightness, more fulgid than the sun, glazed from the place where the holy Cross had been recovered. And immediately the nails, which had been fixed into the Lord's body, appeared, shining as gold in the earth' (ed. Holder 1889: 12).

[86] *Elene*, 1100b-1103; 1105b-1110a; 1112-1115a; 1156b-1158: *bæd him engla weard / geopenigean uncuðe wyrd, / niwan on nearwe, hwær he þara nægla swiðost / on þam wangstede wenan þorfte /; […] fyres bleo / up eðigean þær þa æðelestan / hæleða gerædum hydde wæron / þurh nearusearwe, næglas on eorðan. / Ða cwom semninga sunnan beorhtra / lacende lig /; ða ðær of heolstre, swylce heofonsteorran / oððe goldgimmas, grunde getenge, / næglas of nearwe neoðan scinende / leohte lixton /; georne secan / nearwe geneahhe, to hwam hio þa næglas selost / ond deorlicost gedon meahte* 'He [Cyriacus] prayed to the Guardian of the angels to reveal the unknown fact to him, in this recent confinement, where he had the strongest grounds, in that place, to hope for the nails; […] fire breathed up from where the most noble nails, through men's dispositions and out of secret treachery, had been hidden in the earth. Then, all at once, brighter than the sun, the flickering flame appeared; […] out of the darkness – such as heavenly stars or golden gems, near the bottom of the hole – the nails shone from below, out of obscurity, glittered with light. […] [the queen began] eagerly to seek, very pressingly, to what use she might best and most worthily put the nails'. The phrase *nearwe geneahhe* 'very pressingly' (1157a) lends a sense of positive urgency to this final phase of the quest. The importance of the mission is further stressed by the superlative endings which

The imagery of darkness versus light is introduced by the wondrous flame arising from the Earth which shows the very spot where the nails had been buried, and stands in opposition to the darkness of the underground confinement of these relics. The nails, which once "confined and oppressed" Christ on the Cross, were then "confined" to the darkness of the underground, from where they emerged shining, as if heavenly stars and golden gems, playing an important role in the process of conversion, which brings together darkness with luminosity (Bridges 1984: 244)[87]. Considering the importance of this antinomy in the lines concerning the nails, the choice of the noun *nearu* (*of nearwe*, 1114a) might well imply an additional lexical nuance and refer to their place of confinement as a place of obscurity. This reading seems to be confirmed by the fact that *of nearwe* functions as a variation of the preceding *of hleostre* 'out of darkness' (1112a), as pointed out by Grimm in his edition of the poem[88].

The evidence in *Andreas* is also interesting in this regard. The poet uses the alliterative compound hapax *nearoned* (102a) in the Lord's promise to free Matthew and the other prisoners from the captivity of the pagan Mermedonians: from the *leoðubendum* 'from the fetters of the limbs' (100b) and *nearonedum* 'from the oppressive constraint' (102a). *Nearoned* alliterates with *neorxnawang*[89] and forms a lexical combination that plays on the phonetic similarity between *near-* and *neor-*. Here this device has a contrastive role, since it is functional in establishing and developing the opposition of place that is central to the Lord's speech: it juxtaposes the shining freedom of Paradise to the obscurity of the Mermedonian prison[90]. Hence, the poet could well have meant to refer to Matthew's prison as a place of 'dark constraint' (*nearoned*).

---

involve the two adverbs (*selost / ond deorlicost* 'best and most worthily', 1157b-1158a), and this rhetorical device effectively contributes to building up the feeling of religious eagerness and zeal.

[87] Lines 1114b-1115a also relate to Constantine's vision, which took place at night when darkness disappeared at the appearance of the heavenly messenger (*nihthelm toglad*, 78b). In this context, the idea of luminosity was further heightened by the cross appearing as a shining tree, which dominated the whole sky (88b-96a).

[88] Ed. Grimm 1840: 162: "[in this context] steht of nearve parallel dem vorausgegangnen of hleostre (vgl. 1113), muss also bedeuten: e latebis, tenebris, angustiis".

[89] See also n. 44.

[90] This dichotomy is further elaborated by emphasizing the idea of luminosity through the use of homoeteleuton and isocolon: *þe is neorxnawang, / blæda beorhtost, boldwela fægrost, / hama hyhtlicost, halegum mihtum / torht ontyned* 'To you [Matthew] Paradise will be opened, by holy power, in its brightness, the most glorious of the rewards, the most splendid of the heavenly abodes, the most joyful of the homes, by divine powers' (102b-105a).

The conceptual cluster of confinement – oppression – obscurity also seems to be evoked in *Riddle 3*, in which the wind is described as furiously faring across the Earth, and then as being secluded underground (*fæste genearwað*, 1b)[91], where its bridled energy develops into submarine earthquakes. The description of the wind's confinement is closely associated to the notion of darkness, through the isocolon *on þystrum* 'in the darkness' (4a)[92], varied by *on enge* 'into confinement'[93] (5a).

A further example taken from prose emphasizes the close connection between, on the one hand, physical and metaphorical narrowness, and on the other, darkness. In the homily *Dominica in quinquagesima*, while contrasting this world with the heavens that the just will enjoy, Ælfric recurs to the imagery of light associated with the heavenly abode, as opposed to not just a plain image of obscurity, but to that of a prison: *Ðeos woruld, þeah ðe heo myrige hwiltidum geþuht sy: nis heo hwæðre þe gelicre þære ecan worulde: þe is sum cweartern leohtum dæge* 'This world, though it may sometimes appear mirthful, is, however, no more similar to the eternal world than some prison might be to the light of day' (ed. Clemoes 1997: 259)[94].

---

[91] The formula *fæste genearwað* is used to indicate the action of binding or tightening: in *Riddle 71*, 4b, which describes the production of a 'sword', and in *Riddle 25*, 10b, whose solution is an 'onion'. In a figurative way, the verb refers to the effect of drunkenness, which affects Lot's mental faculties, putting them 'under constraint' and thereby preventing him from realising that he was being involved in incestuous intercourse by and with his daughters (*Genesis A*, 2604b). *Nearwian* is also used in an analogous episode of the poem, which deals with the story of the drunken Noah (*sefa nearwode* 'his understanding became narrow', 1570b).

[92] Hell is evoked in very similar terms in the Blickling homily *Saule þearf* 'Soul's Need', which describes the release of the prophets and of the patriarchs from their confinement through the expression *of þæm nearwan þeostrum* 'from the confined obscurity' (ed. Morris 1967: 103), a phrase that brings together the two concepts of narrowness and obscurity. The same wording also occurs in the Homily entitled *Ueber das jüngste Gericht*, published in the miscellaneous collection of homilies edited by Assmann, to evoke the sacrifice through which Christ freed man from *ðam nearwan þystrum* (1889: 166).

[93] The noun *engu* is skilfully used in *Genesis A*, in the description of Noah and his relatives confined to the Ark. Just as the Ark encloses those saved from the waters, *of nearwe* and *of enge* enclose the passage describing the desire to leave this protective, but still oppressive, confinement behind: *hwonne hie of nearwe ofer nægledbord / ofer streamstaðe stæppan mosten / and of enge ut æhta lædan* 'When they [Noah and his relatives] could step out of the confinement, from the nail-fastened vessel onto the shore, and could lead their goods out of the seclusion' (1433-1435).

[94] This image was brought to my attention by Professor Maria Elena Ruggerini, to whom my gratitude goes for having read with insight and commented upon earlier drafts of this article. The present survey of *nearu* is part of a joint research-project on collocations in Old Germanic verse. For her part, Professor Ruggerini is at present investigating the alliterative collocations in Eddic verse.

3. *The Norse connection:* Nótt, Nǫrvi, Nari/Narfi

Evidence from Old Norse contexts can be put forward to support the suggestion of a close relationship between the concepts of narrowness and darkness. The sources, albeit scanty, are meaningful, and pre-eminently mythological, centred on the elusive figure of Nǫrvi.

As in most traditions, the organization of time and its divine personifications play an important role in Norse mythology: Eddic sources briefly mention Nótt 'Night', mother of Dagr 'Day', as well as her father, the giant *Nǫrr (whose name only appears in the inflected dative form Nǫrvi). Apart from pointing out the priority of night over day, this genealogical chain is interesting since the reconstructed nominative form of the name Nǫrvi, according to de Vries, is related to the adjective *nǫrr 'narrow, tight', probably attested in the place-name *Nǫrvasund/Nørvasund* 'narrow strait' (the Old Norse name of the Straits of Gibraltar)[95].

The two mythical characters are briefly mentioned in two Eddic poems: […] *Nótt var Nǫrvi borin* '[…] Night was born of Nǫrr' (*Vafðrúðnismál*, 25, 3; eds. Neckel–Kuhn 1983[5]: 49)[96], and *hvé sú nótt heitir, in Nǫrvi kenda* 'what Night is called, born to Nǫrr' (*Alvíssmál* 29, 4-5; *ibid.*, 128). According to Snorri Sturluson, *Nǫtt* 'was swarthy and dark as her kinsmen' (*Hon var svǫrt ok døkk sem hon átti ætt til*) and her father, called Nǫrfi or Narfi, lived in Jǫtunheimr (*Gylfaginning* 10; ed. Faulkes 2005[2]: 13)[97]. This mythological relationship is meaningful since "der riese Nörvi wird im allgemeinen die idee der finsternis ausdrücken, da seine tochter Nótt vermöge ihrer abstammung von natur dunkel ist, und ist demnach wol irgend ein chthonischen wesen" (Müller 1844: 172)[98].

The complementarity of narrowness and darkness, associated with a chtonian being, appears to be confirmed by another piece of onomastic

---

[95] De Vries 1977[3], s.v. *Nǫrr*. On this interpretation and on the connection between *Nǫrr* and Old English *nearu* and Old Saxon *naru*, see also Bugge 1896: 96-98. According to Pokorny, the adjective probably goes back to the IE root *(S)NER- 'bond' (1959: 976).

[96] Though claiming that the name Nǫrvi/Narfi is used as "an embellishment" in the Eddic lay, Simek notes that there may be an interesting connection with *narouua*, which he, however, considers "as an [Old English] name for night" (2007: 235), and thus he follows a mistake made by de Vries (1977[3], s.v. *Nǫrr*).

[97] In *Gylfaginning* 10, Snorri gives some details about Nótt, more specifically about her three marriages, from the third of which Dagr 'Day' was born (ed. Faulkes 2005[2]: 13).

[98] On this mythological connection, see also Kögel (1895: 12-13).

evidence, which concerns the name of one of Loki's sons, known as Nari or Narfi. These proper names appear to be related to *Nǫrr, and they are therefore taken to mean 'the narrow one' (de Vries 1977[3], ss.vv. *Narfi* and *Nǫrr*). This interpretation agrees with the character of Nari/Narfi, only involved in one mythic episode, namely Loki's punishment after his involvement in Baldr's death[99]. According to *Gylfaginning*, the Æsir turned Váli, one of Loki's sons, into a wolf, who tore his brother Nari/Narfi apart. Nari's guts were then employed as fetters to bind Loki, since they turned into iron shackles as soon as they were put on (*Gylfaginning* 50; ed. Faulkes 2005[2]: 49)[100]. Hence Nari appears as a character whose only function is that of being the instrument of his father's binding[101]. In de Vries's view, Nari is a death-demon, closely connected with the dark underworld (1933: 198). This nexus seems to be supported by the use of the root *nǫrr in a kenning, whose referent is Hel: in Egill Skallagrímsson's *Sonatorrek*, the phrase *njǫrva nipt* 'close female relative/sister' is part of the preceding kenning, *Tveggja bága* 'the enemy of Tveggi [= Odin]', that is, the wolf Fenrir (ed. Lühr 2000: 237-238)[102]. The queen of the underworld is thus referred to as the 'close relative/sister of the wolf'.

One further challenging piece of evidence is offered by the heiti *draumnjǫrun* 'dream-goddess', which occurs in *Alvíssmál* 30, 6 to denote 'night' (eds. Neckel–Kuhn 1983[5]: 128)[103]. The second member of the compound, the name *Njǫrun*, occurs in a *þula* conveying 27 *heiti* for

[99] In *Lokasenna*, Loki's punishment is traced back to the insults he utters toward the gods taking part in a banquet organized by the giant Ægir (eds. Neckel–Kuhn 1983[5]: 109).

[100] In *Gylfaginning* 33, Snorri only mentions the names Nari/Narfi (ed. Faulkes 2005[2]: 27). The final prose section of *Lokasenna* copes with the two versions of the name by interpreting them as referring to two distinct characters. Narfi is the son who undergoes transformation becoming a wolf, while Nari is the son whose guts are used to bind Loki (*ibid.*, 109).

[101] In a list of Loki's names handed down by *Skáldskaparmál*, Loki is referred to as the father of Hel and Nari (*ibid.*, 20).

[102] A similar kenning is used in *Hǫfuðlausn*, 10, by the skald Óttarr svarti, where Hel is defined as *nipt Nara* 'close female relative/sister of Nari' (Lühr 2000: 71, 77). The genealogical connection is also mentioned in *Ynglingatal*, 7, where the kenning *jódís Ulfs ok Narfa* 'the sister of the Wolf and of Narfi' again indicates Hel (ed. Finnur Jónsson, 1973: B1, 8). In *Helgakviða Hundingsbana I*, 4,5, a norn is referred to through the kenning *nipt Nera* 'close relative/sister of Neri' (eds. Neckel–Kuhn 1983[5]: 130). Bugge (1896: 96) and de Vries (1977[3], s.v. *Nǫrr*) maintain that the name Neri is related to *Nǫrr, the father of Nótt, and von See observes that if one accepts this etymological link and its implications, "nipt Nera bezeichnete Norne sei somit eine 'Verwandte der Nacht'" (von See et al. 2004: 182).

[103] See also ed. Faulkes (1998: 99).

'goddess' (ed. Finnur Jónsson 1973: B1, 661)[104], but its referent is unknown[105]. In previous studies, *Njǫrun* has been identified with Nerthus, and several works have related her to *Njǫrðr* (Hopkins 2012: 39-40). However, even if the two names seem to be closely related, there is no certainty on the base word lying behind them (de Vries 1977[3], ss.vv. *Njǫrðr* and *Njǫrun*). The studies on *Njǫrun* have neglected a second possibility of interpretation, hinted at by the connection between *draumnjǫrun* and 'night', even though Kögel pointed out that "Denn da neben *Nǫrr*, *Nǫrvi* auch *Njǫrvi* vorkommt […], so muss njǫrun als ganz nahe verwandt betrachtet werden" (1895: 12-13). The attestation in *Alvíssmál* and the one in the *þula* could be read as clues, which are certainly elliptical and unprovable but also extremely intriguing, suggesting the existence of a primordial pair made up of a feminine entity called *Njǫrun* and Nǫtt's father, the giant **Nǫrr*.

4. *Concluding remarks: frequency and patterns of the* nearu-*collocations*

On the basis of the examined data, the two words most frequently associated with *nearu* are *niþ* 'hostility' and *nid* 'need', which are semantically close and near-homophonous. In fact, almost half of *nearu*'s alliterative matches involve one of the two words or both (26 occurrences out of 56)[106]. In terms of adaptability, the relevance of the cluster *nearu* + *niþ/nid*, often including a third *n*-word in the same long line, is confirmed by its occurrence in a great variety of contexts, such as *Beowulf*, the poems by Cynewulf, those of the so called "Cynewulfian group", and also poems of the "miscellaneous group", as the list below shows[107]:

---

[104] *Ibid.*, 114.
[105] Von See et al. (2000: 365). The noun is also listed in a *þula* as a base-word for 'woman' (ed. Finnur Jónsson 1973: B1, 678). The name also occurs in a kenning for 'woman' as *Njǫrun steina* 'Njǫrun 'goddess' of stones' (*ibid.*, 600).
[106] Beside the nominal forms of *nearu* (54x), this figure also includes two instances in which the verb *nearwian* occurs and is metrically relevant (see nos 2 and 50). Apart from these two occurrences, *nearwian* is employed seven times in the corpus.
[107] When *nearu* and the words with which it combines occur in a long line, the symbol '+' is used; it is omitted when two associated words are part of a phrase. When one or more members of a cluster of associated words belong to a different metrical unit, the forward slash (/) is used to mark the beginning of a new long line. *Nearu* and its derivatives are indicated in italics and the discussed collocates are in small capital. Other *n*-words, usually occurring in the same long line, are printed in Roman.

nearu + niþ (+ n-)
1. nihtes + *nearoþearfe* / + NIÐ, *Beowulf*, 422-423a
2. *genearwod* / + NIÐA genæged, *Beowulf*, 1438b-1439a
3. *nearofages* NIÐ + nean, *Beowulf*, 2317
4. *nearo* + neðende + NIÐA, *Beowulf*, 2350
5. NIÐA *nearolicra* + Nazareð, *Elene*, 912
6. NIÐPLEGAN + *nearu*, *Andreas*, 414
7. NYÐGISTA + *nearwum*, *Guthlac A*, 540
8. nædran NIÞ + *nearwe*, *The Phoenix*, 413
9. NIÞUM + *nearowrencum* + nu, *Vainglory*, 44
10. no + *nearwe* + NIÐLOC*, The Descent into Hell*, 64
11. *nearwe* NIÐ + no, *Christ and Satan*, 632
12. genam /+ *nearwum* + NIÐHADES, *Waldere II*, 7b-8
13. NIÐSCEAÞA + *nearwe*, *Riddle 15*, 24;

nearu + nid (+ n-)
14. NYDGRIPE[108] + *nearwe*, *Beowulf*, 976
15. *nearwe* + NYDCLEOFAN,[109] *Elene*, 711
16. ᚾ [NID-RUNE] + *nearusorge*, *Elene*, 1260
17. NEDCLEOFAN + *nearwe*, *Elene*, 1275
18. nihtes *nearowe* + ᚾ [NID-RUNE], *The Fates of the Apostles*, 104
19. *NEARONEDUM* + neorxnawang, *Andreas*, 102
20. *nearwum* genæged + NYDCOSTINGUM, *Guthlac B*, 1153
21. *nearo* + NYDEÞ, *Riddle 62*, 8
22. NEDE + *nearwe*, *Meter 25*, 64
23. *nearwe* GENYDDON + norðwegas, *Exodus*, 68
24. ᚾ [NID-RUNE] + *nearu* + NIÞA, *The Rune Poem*, 27;

nearu + niþ + nid
25. NIÞUM GENEDDE + *nearoþearfe*, *Christ I*, 69
26. *nearwan* NIÐ + NIEDE, *Genesis B*, 697.

Beside being semantically related to *nearu*, *niþ* and *nid* – both referring to conditions of need or affliction due to physical or moral straits – show a strong phonetic similarity which goes beyond the requirements of

---

[108] See n. 54.
[109] This cluster also includes *enge*, which does not alliterate with *nearu* but is closely connected with it (see § 4: 68-69).

alliteration. This phonetic closeness appears to be a driving force in enhancing collocational clusters, as several occurrences characterized by paronomasia or looser assonance show. In *The Rune Poem* (no. 24), *nearu* combines with *nid* and *niþa* (genitive plural of the noun *niþþas* 'men'). The verb *neðan*, which occurs four times in combination with *nearu*, is also associated once with *niþ* (no. 4). An ingenious instance of the association of near-homophones is also shown in *The Phoenix*, where the phrase *nædran niþ* combines with *nearu* (no. 8). This example, which brings together both the evil nature of the serpent-Satan and the result of the Fall, also points out that play on sound and meaning – etymologically or pseudo-etymologically grounded – is part of the artistry of Old English poetry. The adverb *neoþan* – which occurs three times in combination with *nearu* – can also be added to the just mentioned near-homophones of *niþ/nid*. The following list consists of all the near-homophones of *niþ* and *nid* that combine with *nearu*, divided into two groups: the first is made up of the occurrences not included in the previous three groups (1-13; 14-24 and 25-26), while the second group, in brackets, consists of examples already listed:

nearu + neðan / nædre / neoþan / niþþas (+ n-)
27. neahtes + NEÐEÐ + *nearocræfte*, *Solomon and Saturn II*, 386
28. genamnan + *nearowe* + NEÞAN, *Riddle 53*, 13
29. NEÞDE + *nearobregdum* + Neron, *Juliana*, 302
30. neb + *nearwe* + NEOÞAN, *Riddle 10*, 1
31. NIOÞAN + *nearo*, *Riddle 61*, 6
32. næglas + *nearwe* + NEOÐAN, *Elene*, 1114

[4. *nearo* + NEÐENDE + niða, *Beowulf*, 2350
 8. NÆDRAN niþ + *nearwe*, *The Phoenix*, 413
24. ᛝ (*nid*-rune) + *nearu* + NIÞA, *The Rune Poem*, 27].

Paronomasia and looser phonetic similarity play a relevant role in another less numerous group of words that co-occur with *nearu*: ner-/neor-/nor- (+ n-). In *Juliana*, Cynewulf combines the compound *nearobregd* with the name of the emperor *Nero* to create an onomastic collocation which can be compared to the one attested in *Waldere II* (*nearu + Niðhad*). The paronomastic combination *nearu + Nero* is also attested in *The Fates of the Apostles*. The poet of *Andreas* associates the compound

nearoned with the noun *neorxnawang*. In *Guthlac A*, the adjective *nearu* (used in the formulaic phrase *nearone clom*) combines with the adjective *nergend*. Lastly, the cluster is attested in *Genesis A* (*nearu + neorxnawang*) and in *Exodus* (*near- + norþweg*):

nearu + Nero / neorxnawang / nergend / norþweg (+ n-)
33. NERONES + *nearwe*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, 13
34. NEORXNAWANGE + *neorore*, *Genesis A*, 944
35. *nearone* + NERGENDE, *Guthlac A*, 598

[19. *nearonedum* + NEORXNAWANG, *Andreas*, 102
23. *nearwe* genyddon + NORÐWEGAS, *Exodus*, 68
29. neþde + *nearobregdum* + NERON, *Juliana*, 302].

The combination of *nearu* with the noun *niht* also appears relevant in terms of frequency (7x) and contexts of use, even though it is only characterized by alliteration, without any further extensive phonetic similarity. In this case, the nexus between the two words is probably the result of a tight semantic connection:

36. NIHTES *nearwe* + nysse, *Elene*, 1239
37. NIHTES *nearwe* + næfre, *Guthlac B*, 1210
38. *nearo* NIHTWACO + nacan, *The Seafarer*, 7
39. *nearwe* + NIHT, *The Rewards of Piety*, 53

[1. NIHTES + *nearoþearfe* / + nið, *Beowulf*, 422-423a
18. NIHTES *nearowe* + �because (*nid*-rune), *The Fates of the Apostles*, 104
27. NEAHTES + neðeð + *nearocræfte*, *Solomon and Saturn II*, 386[110]].

If phonetic similarity plays an important role in the formation of collocations, as the cluster *nearu + niþ/nid/neðan/nædre/neoþan/niþþas (+ n-*) suggests, on the same ground, it may be reasonable to include the adverbs and adjectives *geneahhe/neah*[111]/*nehstan* in the cluster *nearu + niht*:

40. *nearwe* + GENEAHHE + næglas, *Elene*, 1157
41. GENEAHHE / + *nearonessa* + naman, *Paris Psalter, Psalm 118*, 143, 1b-2

---

[110] This occurrence of *nearu-* is the result of an emendation (see n. 26).

42. ÆT NEHSTAN + *nearwe, Homiletic Fragment I*, 27
43. ÆT NIEHSTAN + *nearwe, Solomon and Saturn I*, 133
44. NEAH /+ niwe + næsse + *nearocræftum, Beowulf*, 2242b-2243.

Beside the collocational clusters so far examined, which are attested in different poetic contexts, *nearu* also shows a tendency to combine with words made up of the phonetic sequence *-næg-*, mainly in specific poems, such as *Guthlac B* (in which the phrase *nearwe genæged* is attested twice) and in *Elene* (where *nægl* associates with *nearu* four times):

45. *nearwe* GENÆGED + næfre, *Guthlac B*, 1013
46. *nearwe* + NÆGLEDBORD, *Genesis A*, 1433
47. niwan + *nearwe* + NÆGLA, *Elene*, 1102
48. *nearusearwe* + NÆGLAS, *Elene*, 1108

[2. *genearwod* / + niða GENÆGED, *Beowulf*, 1438b-1439a
20. *nearwum* GENÆGED + nydcostingum, *Guthlac B*, 1153
32. NÆGLAS + *nearwe* + neoðan, *Elene*, 1114
40. *nearwe* + geneahhe + NÆGLAS, *Elene*, 1157].

Apart from the alliterative combinations of *nearu*, there are also two cases in which *nearu* associates with non-alliterating words – *enge/engu* 'narrow/narrowness' (4x) and *searu* 'contrivance, deceit' (3x) – which fit into its semantic field. The former does not occur in the same long line in which *nearu* is used, whereas the latter always shares the same metrical unit as *nearu*:

49. *nearwe* / + ENGE, *Beowulf*, 1409b-1410a

[15. *nearwe* + nydcleofan / + ENGAN, *Elene*, 711-712a
16. � (*nid*-rune) + *nearusorge* / + ENGE, *Elene*, 1260-1261a
46. *nearwe* + nægledbord / … / + ENGE, *Genesis A*, 1433; 1435a];

50. SEARWADE + *nearwade, The Riming Poem*, 37
[33. Nerones + *nearwe* + SEARWE, *The Fates of the Apostles*, 13
48. *NEARUSEARWE* + næglas, *Elene*, 1108].

---

[111] The occurrence in *Beowulf* is also very similar (*nearofages nið + nean,* 2317); see § 2.1: 59-60.

The majority of the occurrences of *nearu* considered so far can be grouped within one large collocational cluster and three smaller ones, whose development is effectively a result of phonetic similarity:

– *nearu + niþ / nid / neðan / nædre / neoþan / niþþas [+ n-]*
– *nearu + Nero / neorxnawang / nergend / norþweg- [+ n-]*
– *nearu + niht / geneahhe / neah / nehstan [+ n-]*
– *nearu + nægan / nægl [+ n-].*

Other lexical combinations of *nearu* outside these groups are limited to few instances and involve words that are metrically less relevant and, for the most part, semantically, less poignant (*no/nysse* 'no'/'does not know', 3x; *niwe* 'newly', 3x; *neol* 'deep', 3x; *genamna* 'comrade', 2x; *niman* 'to take', 2x; *nænig* 'none', 2x; *næfre* 'never', 2x, and *nu* 'now', 2x) or, on the contrary, too specific to be adapted to several contexts *(nicor* 'water-monster'; *Nazareð* 'Nazareth'; *neb* 'beak'; *naca* 'boat'; *næss* 'headland', and *genip* 'darkness'). In fact, as the list below shows, most of these are the third members of collocations in which *nearu* combines with one of its main collocates:

51. NIWAN + *nearo*, *Beowulf*, 2594
52. NEOL + *nearograp* + NÆNIG, *Riddle 84*, 6
53. NEOWLE GENIP + *nearwe*, *Christ and Satan*, 444
54. GENAMNAN + *nearwum, Riddle 52*, 3
55. NU + *nearwe*, *Meter 21,5*
56. *nearowan* + NÆNIGE, *Meter 10*, 16

[1. NICERAS + nihtes + *nearoþearfe* / + nið, *Beowulf*, 422-423a
 5. niða *nearolicra* + NAZAREÐ, *Elene*, 912
 9. niþum + *nearowrencum* + NU, *Vainglory*, 44
10. NO + *nearwe* + niðloc, *The Descent into Hell*, 64
11. *nearwe* nið + NO, *Christ and Satan*, 632
12. GENAM / + *nearwum* + Niðhades, *Waldere II*, 7b-8
28. GENAMNAN + *nearowe* + neþan, *Riddle 53*, 13
30. NEB + *nearwe* + neoþan, *Riddle 10, 1*
36. nihtes *nearwe* + NYSSE, *Elene*, 1239
37. nihtes *nearwe* + NÆFRE, *Guthlac B*, 1210
38. *nearo* nihtwaco + NACAN, *The Seafarer*, 7

41. geneahhe / + *nearonessa* + NAMAN, *Paris Psalter, Psalm 118*, 143, 1b-2
44. neah / + NIWE + NÆSSE + *nearocræftum*, *Beowulf*, 2242b-2243
45. *nearwe* genæged + NÆFRE, *Guthlac B*, 1013
47. NIWAN + *nearwe* + nægla, *Elene*, 1102
49. *nearwe* / […] / + NEOWLE, *Beowulf*, 1409b; 1411a].

The methodological choice of analysing associating words in context allows a closer understanding of the language of poetry and yields a new insight into the compositional process of Old English verse. In fact, leaving aside the metrical requirements of alliteration, the analysis has highlighted, in several instances, the stylistic skill and the sensibility with which the semantic potentialities of *nearu* are exploited, especially in *Beowulf*, in the poems signed by Cynewulf, and in those belonging to the Cynewulfian school.

This kind of lexical investigation is likely to bring about a fuller understanding of the semantics of words. *Nearu* is part of the cluster of terms which describes man's sinfulness, and the dejection and suffering to which this awareness may lead; poetry often opposes this condition with the blissful life that awaits those who repent and change their ways. This juxtaposition sometimes characterizes the sources and analogues to which Old English poets may have resorted. The imagery of darkness and confinement is, however, often further emphasized in several Old English poems, in which it acquires the status of topos with reference to the harshness of man's life on earth. By contrast, eternal light and splendour become the goal which Christian faith assigns to the Righteous (Bridges 1984: 259): for whosoever puts their trust in God, *nearu* 'oppressive-dark' life on earth will be followed by life in a world that *solo amore e luce ha per confine* 'hath only love and light for confines' (Dante, *Paradise*, XXVIII, 54)[112].

Veronka Szőke
Università degli Studi di Cagliari
Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere
via San Giorgio, 12
09124 Cagliari
vszoke@unica.it

Bibliography

Reference tools and dictionaries

BT, 1898 = Bosworth, Joseph / Toller, Northcote T., *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Based on the Manuscript Collection of Joseph Bosworth*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

DOE, 2008 = *Dictionary of Old English*: *A to G on CD-ROM*, Cameron, Angus / Grandell, Amos / diPaolo Healey, Antonette et al. (eds.), Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies for the Dictionary of Old English Project.

DOEC, 2000 = *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, diPaolo Healey, Antonette / Holland, Joan / McDougall, Ian / Mielke, Peter (eds.), Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies for the Dictionary of Old English Project (http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/index.html).

Pokorny, Julius, 1959, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I vol., Bern - München, Francke Verlag.

Sehrt, Edward H., 1966[2], *Vollständiges Wörterbuch zum Heliand und zur altsächsischen Genesis*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (first published in 1925).

Simek, Rudolf, 2007 (repr.), *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, trans. by Angela Hall, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer (first published in 1984 as *Lexikon der germanischen Mythologie*, Stuttgart, Alfred Kröner Verlag).

Vries, Jan de, 1977[3], *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Leiden, Brill (first published in 1957-1960).

Editions, translations, commentaries

ASPR (I-VI), 1931-1953 = Krapp, George Philip, Dobbie, Elliott van Kirk (eds.), *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, 6 vols, New York, Columbia University Press.

Assmann, Bruno (ed.), 1889, *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, Kassel, Georg H. Wigand.

Behaghel, Otto (ed.), 1958[7], *Heliand und Genesis*, Tübingen, Niemeyer Verlag (7. Auflage bearbeitet von Walther Mitzka); first published in 1903.

Bettetini, Maria (ed.), 2010, *Severino Boezio. La consolazione di Filosofia*, Torino, Einaudi.

Bradley, S.A.J. (tr.), 2003 (repr.), *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, London - Vermont, J. M. Dent - Charles E. Tuttle (first published in 1982).

Brooks, Kenneth R. (ed.), 1961, *Andreas* and *The Fates of the Apostles*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Clemoes, Peter (ed.), 1997, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series. Text*, Early English Text Society s.s. 17, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Clubb, Merrel Dare (ed.), 1972 (repr.), Christ and Satan: *An Old English Poem*, Hamden (CT), Archon Books (1925, Dissertation, Yale University).

Colgrave, Bertram (ed.), 1985, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, Cambridge - London - New York, Cambridge University Press (first published in 1956).

Cucina, Carla (ed. - tr.), 2008, *Il Seafarer. La* navigatio *cristiana di un poeta anglosassone*, Roma, Edizioni Kappa.

Doane, Alger Nicolaus (ed.), 1991, *The Saxon Genesis. An Edition of the West Saxon* Genesis B *and the Old Saxon Vatican* Genesis, Madison (WI), The University of Wisconsin Press.

Faulkes, Anthony (ed.), 1998, *Snorri Sturluson. Edda: Skáldskaparmál 1. Introduction, Text and Notes*, London, Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London.

Faulkes, Anthony (ed.), 2005[2], *Snorri Sturluson. Edda:* Prologue and *Gylfaginning*, London, Viking Society for Northern Research - University College London (first published in 1982, Oxford University Press).

Finnegan, Robert Emmett (ed.), 1977, *Christ and Satan: A Critical Edition*, Waterloo, Ontario, Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Finnur, Jónsson (ed.), 1973 (repr.), *Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning*, 4 vols (A I, II; B I, II), København: Rosenkilde og Bagger (first published in 1912-1915, Copenhagen, Villadsen & Christensen).

Gordon, R.K. (tr.), 1970 (repr.), *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, London - New York, Dent - Dutton (first published in 1926).

Gradon, Pamela O. E., 1992 (repr.), *Cynewulf's 'Elene'*, Exeter, University of Exeter Press (first published in 1958, in Methuen's Old English Library; revised edition published in 1977).

Grimm, Jacob (ed.), 1840, *Andreas und Elene*, Cassel, Theodor Fischer.

Hamer, Richard (tr.), 1988 (repr.), *A Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse*, London, Faber and Faber (first published in 1970).

Holder, Alfred (ed.), 1889, *Inventio sanctae crucis*, Lipsiae, Teubner.

Klaeber, Frederick (ed.), 2008[4], *Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg*. Edited, with a forward by Helen Damico, by Robert D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, Toronto - Buffalo - London, University of Toronto Press.

Lumby, Rawson Joseph (ed.), 1964 (repr.), *Be Domes Dæge. De Die Iudicii: An Old English Version of the Latin Poem Ascribed to Bede*, Early English Text Society o.s. 65, Oxford, Oxford University Press (first published in 1876).

Lühr, Rosemarie (ed.), 2000, *Die Gedichte des Skalden Egill*, Dettelbach, Röll.

Mackie, William Souter (ed. - tr.), 1934, *The Exeter Book. Part II: Poems IX-XXXII*, Early English Text Society o.s. 194, London, Oxford University Press.

Macrae-Gibson, Duncan O. (ed. - tr.), 1983, *The Old English Riming Poem*, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer.

Menner, Robert J. (ed.), 1973 (repr.), *The Poetical Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, Millwood (NY), Kraus Reprint (first published in 1941, New York - London, The Modern Language Association of America - Oxford University Press).

Morris, Richard (ed.), 1967 (repr.), *The Blickling Homilies*, Early English Text Society, Oxford, Oxford University Press (originally published in 1874-1880 in the 3 vols, Early English Text Society 58, 63, 73).

Neckel, Gustav / Kuhn, Hans (eds.), 1983[5], *Edda. Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern. I Text*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter (first published in 1914).

Roberts, Jane (ed.), 1979, *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Scragg, Donald G. (ed.), 1992, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, Early English Text Society o.s. 300, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

See, Klaus von / La Farge, Beatrice / Picard, Eva / Schulz, Katja, 2000, *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda. Bd. 3 Götterlieder (Vǫlundarkviða, Alvíssmál, Baldrs draumar, Rígsþula, Hyndlolióð, Grottasǫngr)*, unter Mitarbeit von Debora Dusse, Ilona Priebe, Betty Wahl, Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag C. Winter.

See, Klaus von / La Farge, Beatrice / Gerhold, Wolfgang / Dusse, Debora / Picard, Eva / Schulz, Katja, 2004, *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda. Bd. 4 Heldenlieder (Helgakviða Hundingsbana I, Helgakviða Hiǫrvarðsonar, Helgakviða Hundingsbana II)*, Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag C. Winter.

Skeat, Walter (ed.), 1966 (repr), *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, II vol., Oxford, Oxford University Press (first published in 1890-1900, Early English Text Society oo.ss. 76, 82, 94, 114, London, N. Trübner & Co.).

Thomson, H.J. (ed. - tr.), 1962 (repr.), *Prudentius. In Two Volumes*, I vol., London - Cambridge (MA), William Heinemann - Harvard University Press (first published in 1949).

Willard, Rudolph (ed.), 1935, *Two Apocrypha in Old English Homilies*, Beiträge zur englischen Philologie 30, Leipzig, Bernhard Tauchnitz.

Secondary literature

Anderson, Earl R., 1983, *Cynewulf: Structure, Style, and Theme in His Poetry*, Rutherford (NJ) - London - Toronto, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press - Associated University Presses.

Bjork, Robert E., 1985, *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives.* A Study in Direct Discourse and the Iconography of Style, Toronto - Buffalo - London, University of Toronto Press.

Bridges, Margaret Enid, 1984, *Generic Contrast in Old English Hagiographical Poetry*, Copenhagen, Rosenkilde and Bagger.

Bugge, Sophus, 1896, *Helge-digtene i den ældre Edda. Deres hjem og forbindelser*, Kjøbenhavn, G.E.C. Gad.

Calder, Daniel G., 1972, "Strife, Revelation, and Conversion: The Thematic Structure of *Elene*". *English Studies* 53/3: 201-210.

Campbell, Jackson J., 1996 (repr.), "Cynewulf's Multiple Revelations". In: Bjork, Robert E. (ed.), *Cynewulf. Basic Readings*, New York - London, Garland: 229-250 (first published in 1972, in *Medievalia and Humanistica* 3: 257-277).

Elliott, Ralph W. V., 1996a, "Cynewulf's Runes in *Christ II* and *Elene*". In: Bjork, Robert E. (ed.), *Cynewulf. Basic Readings*, New York - London, Garland: 281-291 (first published in 1953, in *English Studies* 34: 49-57).

Elliott, Ralph W.V., 1996b, "Cynewulf's Runes in *Juliana* and *The Fates of the Apostles*". In: Bjork, Robert E. (ed.), *Cynewulf. Basic Readings*, New York - London, Garland: 293-307 (first published in 1953, in *English Studies* 34: 193-205).

Fish, Varda, 1975, "Theme and Pattern in Cynewulf's *Elene*". *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 76: 1-25.

Frank, Roberta, 1972, "Some Uses of Paronomasia in Old English Scriptural Verse". *Speculum* 47/2: 207-226.

Frese, Dolores Warwick, 1975, "The Art of Cynewulf's Runic Signatures". In: Nicholson, Lewis E. / Frese, Dolores Warwick (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation for John C. McGalliard*, Notre Dame (IN) - London, University of Notre Dame Press: 312-334.

Fulk, Robert D., 2007, "Some Emendations and Non-Emendations in 'Beowulf' (Verses 600a, 976a, 1585b, 1663b, 1740a, 2525b, 2771a, and 3060a)". *Studies in Philology* 104/2: 159-174.

Ginsberg, Warren, 1977, "Cynewulf and his Sources: *The Fates of the Apostles*". *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 78/ 2: 108-114.

Gledhill, Christopher, 2000, *Collocations in Science Writing*, Tübingen, Gunter Narr.

Gonda, Jan, 1957, "The Vedic Concept of *Amhas*". *Indo-Iranian Journal* 1/1: 33-60.

Greenfield, Stanley B, 1965, *A Critical History of Old English Literature*, New York, New York University Press.

Hilpert, Martin, 2008, *Germanic Future Constructions: A usage-based approach to language change*, Amsterdam - Philadelphia (PA), John Benjamins.

Hofstra, Tette, 1994, "A Note on the 'Darkness of the Night' Motif in Alliterative Poetry, and the Search for the Poet of the Old Saxon *Heliand*". In: Houwen, L.A.J.R. / MacDonald, A.A. (eds.), *Loyal Letters. Studies on Mediaeval Alliterative Poetry & Prose*, Groningen, Egbert Forsten: 93-104.

Hopkins, Joseph S., 2012, "Goddesses Unknown I: Njǫrun and the Sister-Wife of Njǫrðr". *RMN Newsletter* 5: 39-44.

Kintgen, Eugene R., 1977, "*Lif*, *lof*, *leof*, *lufu*, and *geleafa* in Old English Poetry". *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 78: 309-316.

Kögel, Rudolf, 1895, *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur bis zum Ausgange des Mittelalters: Ergänzungsheft zu Band I, Die altsächsische Genesis*, Strassburg, Karl J. Trübner.

Lampugnani, Monica, 1993, "Giochi paronomastici nell'*Elena* di Cynewulf: Proposta di analisi tipologica". *Il confronto letterario* X/20: 301-317.

Lynch, Eileen Dorothy, 1972, *A Statistical Study of the Collocations in* Beowulf, University of Massachusetts, Ph.D. Dissertation.

Mackie, William Souter, 1922. "The Old English 'Rhymed Poem'". *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 21/3: 507-519.

Müller, Wilhelm, 1844, *Geschichte und system der altdeutschen religion*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.

Orchard, Andy, 2003, "Both Style and Substance: The Case for Cynewulf". In: Karkov, Cathrine E. / Brown, George H. (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, Binghamton (NY), State University of New York Press: 271-305.

Orchard, Andy, 2009, "The Word Made Flesh: Christianity and Oral Culture in Anglo-Saxon Verse". *Oral Tradition* 24/2: 293-318.

Quirk, Randolph, 1968, "Poetic language and Old English Metre". In: Brown, Arthur / Foote, Peter (eds.), *Essays on the English Language Medieval and Modern*, London, Longmans: 1-19 (originally published in 1963, in *Early English and Norse Studies*, London, Methuen: 150-171).

Reinhard, Mariann, 1976, *On the Semantic Relevance of the Allitterative Collocations in* "Beowulf", Bern, Francke Verlag.

Rendall, Thomas, 1974, "Bondage and Freeing from Bondage in Old English Religious Poetry". *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 73: 497-512.

Robinson, Fred C., 1993a, "The Significance of Names in Old English Literature". In: *The Tomb of Beowulf and other essays on Old English*, Oxford - Cambridge (MA), Blackwell: 185-218 (reprinted from *Anglia* 86, 1968: 14-58).

Robinson, Fred C., 1993b, "Some Uses of Name-Meanings in Old English Poetry". In: *The Tomb of Beowulf and other essays on Old English*: 228-235 (reprinted from *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 69, 1968: 161-171).

Robinson, Fred C., 1993c, "Personal Names in Medieval Narrative and the Name of Unferth in *Beowulf*". In: *The Tomb of Beowulf and other essays on Old English*: 219-223 (reprinted from *Essays in Honor of Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams*, ed. Howard Creed, 1970, Birmingham [AL], Southern College: 43-48).

Robinson, Fred C., 1993d, "Anglo-Saxon Onomastics in the Old English *Andreas*". In: *The Tomb of Beowulf and other essays on Old English*: 224-227 (reprinted from *Names* 21, 1972: 133-136).

Schlüter, Wolfgang, 1895, "Zu den altsächsischen Bibelbruchstücken". *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung* 20: 106-121.

Stepsis, Robert / Rand, Richard, 1969, "Contrast and Conversion in Cynewulf's *Elene*". *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 70: 273-282.

Tyler, Elizabeth M., 2006, *Old English Poetics. The Aesthetics of the Familiar in Anglo-Saxon England*, York, York Medieval Press, University of York.

Vries, Jan de, 1933, *The Problem of Loki*, Helsinki, Societas Scientiarum Fennica.

Wine, Joseph D., 1993, *Figurative Language in Cynewulf. Defining Aspects of a Poetic Style*, New York - San Francisco - Bern, Peter Lang.

Zacher, Samantha, 2002, "Cynewulf at the Interface of Literacy and Orality: The Evidence of the Puns in *Elene*". *Oral Tradition* 17/2: 346-387.

Zacher, Samantha, 2003-2004, "The Rewards of Poetry: 'Homiletic' Verse in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201". *Selim: Journal of the Spanish Society for Mediaeval English Language and Literature* 12: 83-108.

Web sites

Center for Studies in Oral Tradition:
http://oraltradition.org/bibliography/
DOEC: http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/index.html