

Peaceful Alliances: The Collocative Policy of *frip-* in Old Germanic Poetry¹

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Abstract

This article examines the collocative behaviour of the Old English term *frip-* ‘peace’, ‘protection’, and its Old Saxon and Old Norse cognates across the poetic traditions preserved in these languages. Building on the methodological framework established by Maria Elena Ruggerini, the study identifies and analyses the co-occurring words (*collocates*) structured around FRITH-, mapping their alliterative, semantic, and phonological features across time and corpora. Particular attention is given to the role of homophony, paronomasia, and formal patterning in shaping inherited pairings and enabling context-specific innovations. The article also explores the thematic range of these collocations, which encompass notions of peace, protection, and divine favour, as well as their absence, and demonstrates how such terms were reconfigured within different cultural, theological, and poetic frameworks.

Through a comparative analysis of Old English, Old Saxon, and Old Norse material, the study offers insights into the combinatorial logic underlying Germanic versification and affirms the value of collocative inquiry as a means of tracing both continuity and transformation in the early Germanic poetic lexicon.

Key Words – collocation; Old English poetry; Old Saxon poetry; Skaldic poetry; Freyr

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1. Introductory remarks

In the world of language, words are not solitary wanderers but social beings, constantly mingling and forming *cliques*. Just as night naturally finds itself in the company of dark, thunder is never far from lightning, and law invariably pairs with order, so do words form alliances that shape meaning and enrich poetic expression. Words naturally seek each other's company, creating a synergy that is greater than the sum of their parts. This phenomenon, known as *collocation*, was first brought centre stage by the linguist J. R. Firth, who defined the essence of these lexical *friendships* as «meaning by collocation»². Interest in collocations has extended into different fields such as lexicography, language teaching, and translation studies, and, in more recent times, has also encompassed Old Germanic (OG) poetic languages. Concerning OG poetry, the study of collocations has required the adaptation of traditional linguistic definitions to accommodate the distinctive features of metrical texts that make use of alliteration, which links two half lines into the higher unit of the long line, and have their origins deeply embedded in oral tradition³.

In recent years, Maria Elena Ruggerini's research on this phenomenon has been very productive, as she has identified several collocative pairings and their functions in Old English (OE), Old Saxon (OS), and Old Norse (ON) verse⁴. By tracing and analysing the combinatorial behaviour of selected lexemes, usually embedded in the alliterative pattern of the long line, Ruggerini has also demonstrated the crucial role of phonological features such as homophony and near-homophony (paronomasia) in generating variants of traditional collocations and new pairings, not necessarily tied by semantic links⁵. This approach has shown that collocations are far more than stylistic embellishments: they constitute essential meaning-making devices that perform varied aesthetic functions while encoding cultural values. Ruggerini's ultimate aim is to map the collocates of specific lexical *nodes* into extended *strings* (or *chains*) to illuminate their internal dynamics and expose the poetic techniques, cultural, moral, and religious issues that governed their composition and reception.

The analysis presented in this article adopts Ruggerini's methodological framework applying it to the OE term *frip-* 'peace' and its cognates (OS *frith-* 'peace', 'protection', 'security', and ON *friðr* 'peace', 'love', 'protection'), which function as the lexical nodes from which to trace the network of collocates and their implications. The interplay

² Firth (1967: 196) and Firth (1968: 150).

³ Given the constraints of space, a detailed account of the development of scholarship on collocations in OG poetry, along with the associated bibliography, cannot be provided here. For comprehensive surveys of the topic, see Szöke (2023: 434n.) and Ruggerini (2016: 311-313; 2017: 142n.; 2018a: 67-69; 2018b: 635 and n.; 2018c: 190n.).

⁴ See Ruggerini (2017; 2018a; 2018b; 2019; 2021).

⁵ In Ruggerini 2021: 1332n., the scholar proposes a rigorous yet flexible definition of collocation «Collocation refers to the repeated co-occurrence of two or more lexemes united by alliteration in the metrical space of a long line (or, more rarely, in adjacent lines). Its members (the *collocates*) [author's emphasis] may occur in grammatically modified forms (e.g.: sg. vs. pl.; subject vs. complement; noun vs. adjective; present vs. past tense). Their ensemble, including possible paronomastic variants, forms a collocative series (or *string*, or *chain*) [author's emphasis], which can be modified or augmented through the insertion of (semi)homophonic words with respect to the base word: such flexibility allows its adaptation to a plurality of contexts» (Translation from Italian is mine).

between *frip-/frith-/frið-* (FRITH-)⁶ and their respective collocates points out different ways in which these terms were used and adapted during the transition from oral to literary traditions. Throughout this extended process, poetry has preserved traditional word pairings while also fostering the creation of new combinations, thus allowing new meanings to emerge in response to evolving cultural contexts.

2. Poetic corpora and lexical scope

The first part of the analysis will concern the OE term *frip(u)* and its compounds, along with the verb (*ge*)*fripian*, as they appear in the OE poetic corpus⁷. The noun *frip*, masculine or neuter, denotes ‘peace’, understood as a ‘state of friendly, peaceable relations’ or ‘the absence of hostilities and conflict’, but also carries the sense of ‘protection’. It occurs 45x in poetry (38x as a simplex and 7x in compounds). A feminine form, *fripu*, with the same range of meanings, is attested 40x (19x as a simplex and 21x as part of compounds)⁸. The weak verb (*ge*)*fripian*, meaning ‘to make peace’, ‘to come to terms’ (especially in a military context), ‘to protect’, or ‘to set free’, is used 20x. Taken together, these terms appear 105x in the corpus⁹.

The initial stage of this case study concerns the identification of the words that co-occur with the *frip*-node and of any recurring patterns. By analysing the lexical contexts in which the node and its collocates appear, it will become possible to determine the presence of potential innovations and distinctive authorial uses, which may then be contrasted with collocations that feature traditional characteristics.

The subsequent phase will involve an examination of the cognates of *frip*- in OS and ON poetry (*frith*- and *frið*-, respectively) to assess the extent to which they display convergent collocational patterns with OE, our primary area of investigation, while also bringing to light the distinctive features of each poetic tradition.

The OS poetic corpus comprises two significant works from the 9th century: *Heliand* ‘The Saviour’, a poem of approximately 6,000 long lines that narrates the life and preaching of Christ to an original audience of newly converted Saxons, and fragments of a lost poem conventionally referred to as *Vatican Genesis* (consisting of 335 long lines)¹⁰, which recounts a few episodes from the Book of Genesis.

⁶ For practical reasons, the capitalised form FRITH- will be used conventionally to refer collectively to the three cognates.

⁷ The OE lexical data have been gathered with the aid of the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (ed. diPaolo Healey et al.), <<http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/index.html>> (accessed 02/09/2023). The OE dictionaries used for our analysis are: *Dictionary of Old English: A to Le online* (ed. Cameron et al.) <<https://indiv.dictionary.doe.utoronto.ca/doe/>> (accessed 17/08/2024) and *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (ed. Bosworth and Toller [1898]). In Old English words, vowel length is not indicated.

⁸ The following list of *frip*-compounds is provided for reference: *fripgeard* ‘dwelling of peace’, ‘sanctuary’ (2x); *fripfeas*, *fripuleas* ‘without peace or security’, ‘hostile’ (2x); *fripstol* ‘place of refuge’, ‘sanctuary’ (4x); *fripstow* ‘refuge’ (1x); *fripubeacen* ‘sign of security’ (1x); *fripuburh* ‘stronghold’ (1x); *fripuscealc* ‘minister of peace’ (2x); *fripusibb* ‘pledge of peace’ (1x); *fripusped* ‘abundance of peace’ (2x); *friputacen* ‘sign of peace’ (2x); *fripubeaw* ‘safe conduct’ (1x); *fripuwang* ‘field affording refuge’ (1x); *fripuwær* ‘pact affording peace or protection’, ‘peace agreement’ (5x); *fripuweard* ‘guardian of peace’ (1x); *fripuwebbe* ‘(female) weaver of peace’ (2x).

⁹ Regarding line 174 in *Andreas*, Brooks proposed an emendation of *frip* in *ferhð* ‘life’, ‘mind’; see footnote 41 on the issue. In *Christ and Satan* (l. 309), *frip* is the result of a process of philological conjecture; see Section 3.3 and footnote 69.

¹⁰ The text was consulted in the edition by Doane (1991) and plays only a minor role in the present study, as it preserves a single occurrence of the node, in line 72, where *frithu* pairs with *firinum* ‘sins’, ‘crimes’.

The analysis of the ON corpus will first deal with Eddic poetry (roughly 7,200 long lines)¹¹, where *friðr* appears both in mythological and heroic poems. The presence of *frið*-collocations is then also checked against the much larger Skaldic corpus, drawing on the resources of the Skaldic Project¹², which includes approximately 40,000 lines¹³. Originating in courtly circles, this poetry primarily functioned as a medium for praising rulers and their achievements, often focusing on military exploits by land and sea¹⁴. Initially transmitted orally, such tradition flourished in Norway and was then transplanted to Iceland, where it was adapted to celebrate local figures and events. After the conversion to Christianity, biblical themes and characters were incorporated into the Skaldic repertoire, with members of the clergy also contributing as poets.

Characterised by alliteration, internal rhyme, and further metrical constraints, Skaldic verse is notable for its syntactic complexity and «fractured word order»¹⁵. An additional distinctive feature of this poetry is its extensive use of *heiti* ‘poetic synonyms’, and kennings ‘periphrastic metaphors’.

Owing to these formal features and the challenges posed by the scale of the corpus, collocative analysis of Skaldic poetry has thus far been limited to isolated examples of collocations shared with other Germanic languages, without a comprehensive study of the relevant occurrences across the full corpus¹⁶. The systematic investigation of the *frið*-node and its collocational network therefore represent an innovative contribution, aimed both at achieving a deeper understanding of the relationship between Skaldic diction and the OE and OS poetic languages and highlighting the individual creativity of the skalds.

3. OE *friþ*- and its collocative patterns

Regarding the OE corpus, the term *collocate* is applied to words that co-occur with *friþ*- at least three times. Nevertheless, instances of only two co-occurrences are also recorded and taken into account, in recognition of the fragmentary nature of the extant corpus and the possibility that further attestations may have existed or exist in other OG poetic contexts, which would allow such items to be granted full collocative status. As for the OS and ON Eddic corpora, each significantly smaller than the OE corpus (comprising approximately 21% and 24% of its size, respectively), a lower threshold for the identification of collocates is adopted, requiring a minimum of two co-occurrences. In these cases as well, words that occur only once with the node under investigation are nonetheless taken into consideration in light of parallels attested in the surveyed Germanic corpora.

The terms appear in the passage describing how Cain was granted ‘protection’ by the Lord during his wanderings on earth following the murder of his brother.

¹¹ Eddic poetry comprises a corpus of anonymous mythological and heroic poems composed in the *fornyrðislag* and *ljóðaháttir* metres. The principal manuscript source is the Codex Regius (GKS 2365 4to), dated to around 1270. While the poems were committed to writing in the thirteenth century, they derive from oral tradition, and their content is likely to be considerably older. The dating of individual poems, however, remains a matter of scholarly debate.

¹² <<https://skaldic.org/m.php?p=skaldic>> (accessed 11/08/2024).

¹³ <<https://skaldic.org/m.php?p=doc&i=279>> (accessed 11/07/2024). The data presented herewith are provisional given that the database is still subject to additions, revisions, and corrections.

¹⁴ For example, the term *erfidrápa* ‘memorial drápa’ designates a laudatory poem composed in commemoration of a deceased ruler.

¹⁵ See Clunies Ross (2012: xviii). Cf. also Section 5.2.

¹⁶ Ruggerini (2021: 1350n. and 1353n.) and Frank (2023: 175-183).

Based on the criteria outlined above, the following list of OE *frip*-collocates has been identified and arranged in descending order of frequency (List 1). The data confirm that alliteration is a defining characteristic of the *frip*-node. The sole exception is the pairing *frip*- + *drihten* 'Ruler', which consistently refers to divine protection and thus functions as a stable theological collocation, irrespective of alliterative demands. This list is followed by a second set of terms (List 2) that co-occur with *frip*- twice. The resulting repertoire is not particularly extensive and includes words that are bound to *frip*- by an alliterative link with a single exception (*gestabelian* 'to make firm'):

- 1) *fæst* 'firmly fixed', 'secure'/*fæsten* 'prison', 'stronghold' (13x); *folc* 'folk', 'people' (13x); *feond* 'enemy' (8x); *drihten* 'Ruler', 'ruler', 'lord' (7x); *feorh* 'life', 'spirit' (7x); *fæder* 'father' (5x); *fæger(e)* 'fair(ly)' (5x); *fæle* 'faithful' (5x); *faran* 'to travel'/*feran* 'to go', 'to set out'/*ferian* 'to lead'/*for* 'journey' (5x); *forht* 'frightened' (5x); *freond* 'friend'/*freond(scipe)* 'friendship' (5x); *folde* 'earth', 'ground' (4x); *forð* 'forwards', 'further' (4x); *facn* 'deceit'/*fæcne* 'treacherous' (3x); *fæðm* 'bosom', 'embrace' (3x); *gefæa* 'joy'/*fægen* 'joyful' (3x); *frea* 'Lord' (3x); *fremman* 'to bring about' (3x); *firen* 'sin', 'crime' (3x); *frecne* 'danger' (3x); *fultum* 'help', 'support' (3x); *fyr* 'fire' (3x).
- 2) *fæmne* '(young) woman' (2x); *fea* 'few'/*feasceaft* 'having few things' (2x); *feallan* 'to fall' (2x); *feoh* 'livestock', 'property' (2x); *ferhþ* 'mind', 'heart' (2x); *fleon* 'to flee' (2x); *frofor* 'consolation' (2x); *frymþ* 'beginning' (2x); *fugel* 'bird' (2x); *gestabelian* 'to make firm' (2x).

Considering the two lists together, it emerges that, out of 133 total occurrences, 47 collocates and words co-occurring twice with *frip*- can be traced to the basic phonological pattern /f + (vowel) + r/. This structure is variously realised through apophonic alternation (*faran* 'to travel', *feran* 'to go', 'to set out', *ferian* 'to lead', and *for* 'journey') and paronomastic variation (*firen* 'sin' and *fyr* 'fire'). The root form may also be expanded by the addition of a fricative (-ð-, as in *forð* 'forwards', 'further', -h-, as in *feorh* 'life', 'spirit', or -f-, as in *frofor* 'consolation'), and a sonant (-m-, as in *fremman* 'to bring about').

More complex formations include double expansions, where the pattern /f + (vowel) + r/ may be amplified as follows:

- a) /f + (vowel) + r/ [+ h + t] (*forht* 'frightened') 5x
- b) /f + (vowel) + r/ [+ n + d] (*freond* 'friend'/*freond(scipe)* 'friendship') 5x
- c) /f + (vowel) + r/ [+ k + n] (*frecne* 'danger') 3x
- d) /f + (vowel) + r/ [+ m + þ] (*frymþ* 'beginning') 2x.

These 47 lexical items, accounting for just over one-third (35.33%) of the total collocates, are listed below and grouped according to root structure similarity:

- feorh* 'life', 'spirit'/*ferhþ* 'mind', 'heart'/*forht* 'frightened', 'fearful' (14x)
firen 'sin'/*fyr* 'fire'/*frea* 'Lord' (9x)
faran 'to travel'/*feran* 'to go', 'to set out'/*ferian* 'to lead'/*for* 'journey' (5x)
FRIP- + *fremman* 'to bring about'/*frymþ* 'beginning' (5x)
freond 'friend'/*freond(scipe)* 'friendship' (5x)
forð 'forwards', 'further' (4x)
frecne 'danger' (3x)
frofor 'consolation' (2x).

Another significant phonological pattern occurring in combination with the *frip*-node is /f + (vowel) + l/, represented by 29 instances (21.80% of the total). Although slightly less common than the /f + (vowel) + r/ pattern, it constitutes a clearly defined group, which appears in both simple (*fæle* ‘faithful’, *feallan* ‘to fall’, and *fleon* ‘to flee’) and expanded forms with additional consonants, such as -k-, -d-, or -t- (*folc* ‘people’, *folde* ‘earth’, and *fultum* ‘help’, ‘support’, respectively):

folc ‘folk’, ‘people’ (13x)
fæle ‘faithful’/*fleon* ‘to flee’ (7x)
FRIP- + *folde* ‘earth’, ‘ground’ (4x)
fultum ‘help’, ‘support’ (3x)
feallan ‘to fall’ (2x).

These two patterns – /f + (vowel) + l/ and /f + (vowel) + r/ – together account for 76 occurrences (57.13% of all collocates + words combining twice with *frip*-) indicating that *frip*- operated as a nodal term within a recognisably patterned lexicon. Four additional recurrent sequences combining with *frip*- are also attested, though with lower individual frequency:

- a) /f + vowel + s [+ t]/ (*fæst* ‘firmly fixed’, ‘secure’/*fæsten* ‘prison’, ‘stronghold’) 13x
- b) /f + (vowel) + g/ (*fæger(e)* ‘fair(ly)’, *gefe* ‘joy’/*fægen* ‘joyful’, *fugel* ‘bird’) 10x
- c) /f + (vowel) + n + d/ (*freond* ‘friend’/*freond(scipe)* ‘friendship’ and *feond* ‘enemy’) 8x
- d) /f + (vowel) + d/ð [+ m]/ (*fæðm* ‘bosom’, ‘embrace’, and *fæder* ‘father’) 8x.

These six patterns (including 115 collocates) account for 86.46% of all *frip*-collocates (+ words combining twice with *frip*-) within the OE poetic corpus. As such, they offer a substantial foundation for further comparative research into cognate forms in Old Saxon and Old Norse.

3.1. OE *frip*- collocates in context

The *frip*-node and its collocates are employed in poetic discourse to deal with themes of peace, protection, and security, including their relevance to eschatological concerns and the consequences of their absence. They usually denote a condition of stability and the cessation of conflict, which are essential prerequisites for the well-being and prosperity of the people (*folc*). The necessity for peace was particularly acute during a period frequently characterised by conflicts of considerable violence (*frecne* ‘danger’; *forht* ‘frightened’), which could arise within a community or between hostile groups of people (*feond* ‘enemy’). In the context of earthly life, these conflicts were addressed by local lords (*drihten*), whose role was to ensure the survival and the prosperous development of the community (*feorh* ‘life’; *fæger(e)* ‘fair(ly)’)¹⁷.

¹⁷ This idea is expressed plastically in the opening of the sapiential poem *Maxims II* (l. 1a), where the ruling function of the king («*Cyning sceal rice healdan*» ‘A king must rule a kingdom’, ed. Bjork 2014: 174-175) is associated with the image of great defensive structures, of strongholds. The cities are defined by the evocative formula *enta geweorc* ‘works of giants’ (l. 2a), which are, however, ineluctably destined to fall into ruin. As Ruggerini has shown, these walls are contrasted in the poem *Guthlac A* (ll. 17-18) with those of the heavenly cities, ruled by the King of kings, which are destined never to decay: «*ealra cyninga cyning ceastrum wealdeð. / Ðæt sind þa getimbru þe no tydriað*» ‘[where the highest] king of all kings rules the cities. Those [the cities of heaven] are the buildings that will never decay’ (Ruggerini 2025: 865). The OE poems are quoted from the editions and translations published in the *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* series, unless otherwise indicated; see Anlezark 2011; Bjork 2013; Bjork 2014; Clayton 2013; Fulk 2010; Jones 2012; O’Neill 2016.

Given the primarily religious character of the OE poetic corpus, it is God who is ultimately credited with the protection of humankind on earth and with the promise of eternal peace in Heaven for the righteous. He is thus referred to by epithets such as *drihten* ‘Ruler’, *frea* ‘Lord’, and *fæder* ‘Father’. The frequent pairing *frip-* + *fæst(en)* ‘firmly fixed’ ‘refuge’ (13x) is consistent with this conceptual framework, which is prominent in the metrical Psalms (*The Paris Psalter*, 5x), where the supplicant invokes divine protection, often expressed through the image of God as a *fripstol* (‘place of refuge’, ‘sanctuary’, 3x).

The concept of *frip-* ‘protection’ is also consonant with the theme of travel, whether literal or metaphorical (*faran* ‘to travel’, *feran* ‘to go’, ‘to set out’, *ferian* ‘to lead’, and *for* ‘journey’), because travel often entails increased exposure to danger (*frece*) and deceit (*facn*), and therefore the necessity of support and assistance (*freond* ‘friend’/ *freo(n)d(scipe)* ‘friendship’; *fultum* ‘help’, ‘support’). The poet of *Genesis A* provides an exemplary illustration of this nexus in his poetic rendering of the Biblical dictate concerning the protection from enemies that God grants to Cain in anticipation of his wanderings on the earth as a punishment after the murder of his brother Abel. This act of mercy is expressed through the combination of three terms (*freoðobeacen* ‘peace-token’ + *Frea* ‘Lord’ + *feonda* ‘enemy’)¹⁸:

[...] *sette*, / *freoðobeacen* *Frea*, *þy læs hine feonda hwilc / mid guðþræce gretan dorste* (*Genesis A*, ll. 104ba-1046)
 ‘[Lord,] set [a sign] on him [Cain] a peace-token, lest any enemy [from near or far] dared to greet him with violence’ (ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 76-77)¹⁹.

The term *friðotacen*²⁰, which is synonymous with *freoðobeacen* (and both are *hapax legomena*), is used in *Genesis A* in relation to God’s covenant with Abraham, which requires him and his descendants to adhere to the alliance offered tangibly by having a sign of membership performed on their bodies (circumcision)²¹:

Abraham fremede swa him se eca bebead, / sette friðotacen be Frean hæse / on his selfes sunu (*Genesis A*, ll. 2370-2372a)
 ‘Abraham did as the eternal one commanded him, set the sign of peace on his own son, by the Lord’s decree’ (ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 164-165).

An example of the adaptability of collocations in order to suit different contexts can be observed in the poem *Andreas*, which recounts the apostle Andrew’s mission to the land of the anthropophagi Mermedonians. In contrast to Abraham, Moses, and their people, who entered into an alliance with God, these pagan people (*folc*) are characterised by a *freoðoleas tacen* ‘hostile mark’ (l. 29), which manifests itself in their practice of blinding foreigners who land on their island.

In addition to stressing the role of male figures in leadership, government, and maintenance of peace, historical and literary sources also indicate that an important function was reserved for noble women, who often served as a sort of “bridge” between

¹⁸ In the article, words are cited in the grammatical forms they take in the quoted passages. Their translations, however, are given in the nominative.

¹⁹ Quotations of OE, OS, and ON lines are set in italics with the nodes and collocates presented in regular type to enhance clarity.

²⁰ For a comprehensive analysis of *tacen* as a sign of benevolence and its collocative references, see Ruggerini (2021: 1334n., 1335, 1345n., 1346, 1348).

²¹ For the motif of circumcision as a sign of covenant, see Ruggerini (2021: 1340, 1346).

conflicting groups. Their high status allowed them to enter into marriages that were intended to promote peace in unstable environments. ‘Peace-weaver’ (*friþowebbe*) was the epithet applied to these female figures, often of high rank. Nevertheless, according to the sources, such efforts might prove only partially or temporarily successful. A notable example is the *friþowebbe* Ealhild, mentioned at the beginning of *Widsith*, who was married to King Eormanric. Despite the initial collocation projecting a positive image, the outcome of this political union ultimately proved tragic; Ealhild was eventually murdered by her husband²²:

He mid Ealhilde, fæhre freaþowebban, forman siþe / Hreðcyninges ham gesohte /
[...] *Earmarices, / wrapes wærlogan* (*Widsith*, ll. 5b-9a)

‘With Ealhild, the gracious peace-weaver, he [the scop Widsith] sought for the first time [from the east of Anglen] the home of the king of the Goths, of Eormanric, the cruel troth-breaker’ (ed. and trans. Bjork 2014: 44-45).

Beowulf offers further insights into these female figures, illustrating both exemplary models of peace-weavers and women who betrayed this important function. The poet depicts Hrothgar’s wife, Wealhtheow, as the ideal queen, embodying the virtues expected of a royal woman. Her actions in the hall (such as distributing drinks and gifts among the warriors and participating in dynastic politics through her advice) show her role in maintaining harmony and stability (*friðusibb* ‘pledge of peace’²³ + *folc* ‘people’)²⁴.

On a second occasion, the poet of *Beowulf* employs the term *freoðuwebbe* (l. 1942) with clear irony to characterise Queen Fremu’s conduct, which stands in marked contrast to her expected role as a peace-weaver. This is exemplified by her responsibility for the death of a man who had dared to gaze at her too boldly. Instead of responding with restraint and diplomacy, the queen ordered his execution, an act that prompts a bitter comment from the poet on her failure to fulfil her conciliatory role:

Ne bið swylc cwenlic þeaw / idese to efnanne, þeah ðe hio ænlicu sy, / þætte
freoðuwebbe feores onsæce / æfter ligetorne leofne mannan (*Beowulf*, ll. 1940b-1943)

‘Such is not a queenly virtue for a noblewoman to practice, even if she is peerless, that a peace-weaver should seek the life of a valued man after a feigned offence’ (ed. and trans. Fulk 2010: 218-219).

Another vivid example occurs in *Beowulf*’s account of the Finnsburg episode, which concerns the enmity between the Danes and the neighbouring Frisians. After suffering defeat at the hands of the Frisians, the Danes agreed to a *fæste friðowære* ‘firm peace treaty’ (l. 1096a)²⁵, which was sealed through the marriage of the Danish princess

²² Chance (1986: 4-5).

²³ The compound is a *hapax*.

²⁴ *Beowulf*, l. 2017a (ed. and trans. Fulk 2010: 218-219).

²⁵ Ed. and trans. Fulk (2010: 158-159). The second use of the word in *Beowulf* (l. 220) refers to «a reconciliation between lord and servant» (see *Dictionary of Old English: A to Le online*, s.v. *friþuwær* b.). The OS cognate of the compound *friðuuāra* ‘pact of peace’ appears in the words spoken by Simeon after he has held the Saviour in his arms («Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace, quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum, quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum, lumen ad revelationem gentium et gloriam plebis tuae Israel» [Luke 2.29-32]). In his plea to the Lord, Simeon asks to be allowed to set out in peace on the very last journey of his earthly life and obtain the divine protection he seeks (*Heliand*, l. 483a): «*an thinan friðu uuron faran*» ‘to travel in your peaceful protection’. *Heliand* is quoted from Sievers’ edition (1875), and its translation is by Murphy (1992). In this research, the OS dictionaries of Sehart (1966) and Tiefenbach (2010) have been used.

Hildeburg to Finn, king of the Frisians. This marriage was intended to resolve hostilities and secure a lasting alliance between the two tribes. However, the attempt proved futile. After a brief period of relative peace, conflict broke out once more and culminated in the deaths of Hildeburgh's brother, Hnæf, and of her son by Finn. The profound grief experienced by Hildeburgh underscores the tragic persistence of violence that such dynastic marriages were meant to prevent but could not always forestall.

In the Alfredian period, Danish incursions posed a continual threat to public order in Anglo-Saxon England. To preserve stability, the payment of tribute, purchasing a temporary peace, was adopted on several occasions as a pragmatic, if uneasy, solution. The poem *The Battle of Maldon*²⁶ evokes the historical reality of this context in line 39, where three key terms are combined: *feoh* 'money' (tribute asked by the Vikings), *freode* 'friendship' (that which would be obtained following the payment), and *frip* 'peace' (the offered truce). The same notion recurs shortly thereafter, expressed through a two-member collocation in which the prospect of peace secured by financial compensation is associated with the Vikings withdrawing to their ships after the payment: *feran* 'to return' + *fripes* 'peace' (*The Battle of Maldon*, l. 41)²⁷.

In religious poetry, the epithet *friðowebbe* 'peace-weaver' forms a formulaic collocation through its consistent pairing with the adjective *fæle* 'faithful' (4x). In each instance, the reference is to angels acting as heavenly mediators. The poet of *Genesis A* uses *fæle freoðoscealc(as)* 'faithful servant(s) of peace' twice: once for the angel announcing the birth of Ishmael (l. 2303a)²⁸, and again for those who bring news of Sodom's impending destruction to Lot (l. 2499a)²⁹. Cynewulf³⁰ similarly refers to the angel who appears to Constantine on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge as a *fæle friðowebba* 'faithful peace-weaver' (*Elene*, l. 88a)³¹. Finally, in *Guthlac A*, the phrase *fæle freoðuweard* 'faithful guardian of peace' (l. 173a) is applied to the angel who shields Guthlac during the repeated demonic assaults he endures³².

In contrast to the sparse attestations found in the limited body of surviving heroic poetry, religious verse yields a far richer array of *frip*-collocations, where traditional social dynamics are recontextualised within narratives drawn from the Old and New Testaments. At the core of this transformed discourse lies Christian faith, conceptualised primarily as a covenant between God and His chosen people, and subsequently, with all of humankind through the Incarnation of Christ. In its earliest expression, this covenant takes the form of a political alliance that guarantees the protection and endurance of the Hebrew people in the face of external threats, on the condition of their continued obedience to God and the Law. This relationship serves as the foundation for the establishment of the Promised Land as a secure, permanent dwelling. One illustrative example appears in *Exodus*, where the

²⁶ This poem is quoted from Dobbie's edition (1942: 8).

²⁷ Despite the emphasis on peace and negotiation, the attempt at securing a truce through tribute fails. The payment is rejected by the English commander Byrhtnoth, who refuses to purchase peace on such terms, leading instead to open conflict.

²⁸ Ed. and trans. Anlezark (2011: 160-161).

²⁹ Ed. and trans. Anlezark (2011: 160-161).

³⁰ See Section 3.2.

³¹ Ed. and trans. Bjork (2013: 148-149).

³² Ed. and trans. Clayton (2013: 100-101). There are several other *frip*-collocations used in the poem in passages concerning Guthlac's attitude towards the devils and his faith in the Lord's support. See *Guthlac A*, l. 243a (*«he min feorg freoþað»* 'he [God] will preserve my life', ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 106-107) and l. 257 (*«fleoð on feorweg. Ic me frið wille»* 'flee [devils] to distant parts! I [Guthlac] intend to [ask God eagerly] for protection', ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 106-107).

compound *freoðowære* ‘peace agreement’ is used in relation to the Israelites’ passage through the Red Sea. The determination and courage they demonstrate during this crossing are attributed to their steadfast faith in the covenant with God: «fæstum fæðmum freoðowære heold» ‘[the Hebrews] kept the covenant firm in their hearts’ (*Exodus*, l. 306)³³.

In addition to the meaning of ‘peace’, *frip-* also indicates the ‘protection’, both the safeguarding sought by believers amid the trials and adversities of earthly life and the stable condition of eternal bliss and protection that awaits the righteous in heaven. In the New Testament tradition, the covenant between God and humanity is represented by the sacrament of baptism. This association is made explicit in *Andreas*, where the poet refers to the sacrament through the compound *fulwiht*, which is part of the binomial *fulwihte ond freoðuware* ‘baptism and a covenant’ (l. 1630)³⁴ in the passage describing the apostle’s successful conversion of the Mermedonians.

The Old Testament poem *Genesis A* contains a substantial number of *frip*-collocations (approximately 20% of the total), which are used to depict both positive and negative exempla. In the former group, *frip-* and its compounds denote the blessings of protection, and covenantal stability granted to righteous figures such as Enoch, Noah, and Abraham:

- a. *freoðosped* ‘peace and prosperity’ + *folces* ‘people’
[Enoch defined as] *folces wisa* ‘the guide of the people’ who brings *freoðosped* ‘peace and prosperity’ (*Genesis A*, l. 1198a, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 86-87)
- b. *fæsthydigne* ‘resolute’ + *freoðo* ‘protection’
[Noah called] *fæsthydigne* [...] *freoðo wyrðe* ‘resolute [...], worthy of protection’ (*Genesis A*, l. 1347, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 96-97)
- c. *gefean* ‘(with) cheerful’ + *fryðo* ‘peace’
[used of the re-establishment of the divine covenant with humanity after the Flood and, specifically, of the command to repopulate the Earth] *mid gefean fryðo* ‘with cheerful peace’ (*Genesis A*, l. 1513a, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 108-109)³⁵
- d. *folcbearn* ‘son of the nation’ + *freoðo* ‘peace’ + *freondscipe* ‘friendship’
[used to refer to Abraham when the Lord commands him to leave his homeland, promising him protection and extending peace and friendship to those who will welcome him]: *folcbearn freoðo, and freondscipe* ‘[Through you all [...] sons of the nations shall receive] peace and friendship’ (*Genesis A*, l. 1760, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 124-125)³⁶.

³³ Ed. and trans. Anlezark (2011: 226-227). See also *The Paris Psalter* 118.158, where the collocation refers to those who have not observed the covenant made with God and towards whom the supplicant feels anger («[*men þa þe noldan*] *heora friðowære fæste healdan*» ‘[many people who refused] to honor strictly their peace pledge’). The collocation is also attested in *Beowulf* (l. 1096a): «*fæste frioduwære*» ‘a firm peace treaty’.

³⁴ Ed. and trans. Clayton (2013: 292-293).

³⁵ In the same episode in *Genesis A* (l. 1487), another collocation *fæger* ‘fair’ + *frip-* is attested: the earth is described as a secure place after the Deluge. Therefore, God issues a command to Noah, instructing him to depart from the ark confidently («*fæger on foldan. Gewit on freðo gangan*» ‘fair upon the earth. Go walking safely [out of the ark]’, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 106-107).

³⁶ In *Genesis A*, in the episode concerning the journey and dangerous stay of the Patriarch and his wife Sarah with the Pharaoh, several collocations are attested: in order to save his life, Abraham requests his wife to feign the role of his sister during their stay in Egypt (*feore* ‘life’ + *freoðo* ‘peace’, l. 1838, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 128-129). Pharaoh, experiencing divine retribution due to his desire for Sarah, sends the couple away from his lands to regain peace (*folcsceare* ‘territory’ + *friðe* ‘peace’, l. 1872, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 132-133).

By contrast, negative exempla illustrate the forfeiture of peace and protection, and the ensuing consequences brought about by disobedience or transgression. Such is the case with the rebellion of the angels, the Fall of Adam and Eve, and the apostasy of Seth's descendants:

e. *feond* 'enemy' + *friðo* 'peace' + *gefean* 'joy'
[God turned the rebellious Lucifer into a *feond* 'enemy' and deprived him of] *friðo* and *gefean ealle* 'security and all delight' (*Genesis A*, l. 57, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 6-7)

f. *firena* 'sin' + *fremman* 'to bring about' + *friðe* 'peace'
[Before their transgression, our progenitors thrived without knowing] *firena fremman* 'the doing of evil deeds, but [rather] *hie on friðe lifdon* 'they lived in peace' (*Genesis A*, l. 19, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 96-97)

g. *folcdriht* 'nation of men' + *friðe* 'peace'
[referring to the descendants of Seth, who lost their peaceful state by intermarrying with the line of Cain] *folcdriht wera, þa ær on friðe wæron* 'the nation of men who were previously in peace' (*Genesis A*, l. 1262, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 90-91).

In Christian doctrine, believers are conceived as integral participants in the divine plan, safeguarded by a supreme paternal authority. This spiritual relationship may be expressed through the collocation *friþ-* 'peace', 'protection' + *fæder* 'Father' that is used in relation to God and his creatures (5x). One such occurrence appears in Cynewulf's signed poem *Christ B* (l. 773), where the collocation forms part of an exhortation to seek *freopa* 'refuge' in the *fæder* 'Father' as a defense against the temptations of sin in one's earthly life³⁷. In two additional instances, drawn from *Judith* and *The Phoenix*, the collocation also includes a third element, that is *frymþ* 'origin'. In *Judith* (l. 5), the eponymous biblical heroine prepares to carry out the divinely sanctioned killing of the Assyrian general Holofernes, a deed for which she will not be held accountable, as it is performed in purity of heart and faith, for the liberation of her people: «gefriðode, frymða waldend. Hyre ðæs fæder on roderum» '[God] would exempt her [from the retribution], the crafter of origins, [...] the father in heaven'³⁸. Similarly, in *The Phoenix* (l. 630), the same collocation appears in a line evoking the joyful prayers of the blessed and the angels in the heavenly city: «Gefreopa usic, frymþa scyppend! Þu eart fæder ælmihtig» 'Grant us your protection, O shaper of beginnings! You are the almighty Father'³⁹.

In the New Testament, Christ promises protection to those who will follow His teachings and spread His message («ic eow freoðo healde» 'I shall protect you', *Andreas*, l. 336b)⁴⁰. A pertinent collocation also occurs in Christ's discourse to the apostle Andrew, whom He sends to evangelise the pagan Mermedonians: «Ðu scealt feran ond frið lædan» 'You must go and accomplish your mission' (*Andreas*, l. 174)⁴¹. This divine promise of

³⁷ Ed. and trans. (Bjork 2013: 24-25). A similar exhortation is also conveyed in *Resignation* (l. 62), where the verb *gefriþian* 'to protect' collocates with *fæder* and is joined in a binomial with the verb *gefeormian* 'to receive': «gefroþa hyre ond gefeorma hy, fæder moncynnes» 'protect and receive it [my soul], O Father of humankind' (ed. and trans. Jones 2012: 96-97). For this collocation in *Beowulf*, see Section 3.3.

³⁸ Ed. and trans. Fulk (2010: 298-299).

³⁹ Ed. and trans. Jones (2012: 58-59).

⁴⁰ Ed. and trans. Clayton (2013: 206-207). The collocation *folc* + *fremman* + *friþ* appears in the apostles' words to give an account of Christ's missionary activity (*Andreas*, l. 622, ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 224-225): [*Drihten gumen*] *folcræd fremede, swa he to friðe hogode* '[the Lord of men], who was resolved upon peace, secretly promoted public good'.

⁴¹ North and Bintley (2016: 127, 227) dispute the emendation of the term in *ferhð* 'mind', 'life' proposed by Brooks (1961: 69) and consider that *friþ*, which they translate as 'mission', fits in well with the concept

fatherly protection extended to the apostles is inverted by the Mermedonians, who disregard kinship bonds and the duty to safeguard their offspring, proving instead willing to sacrifice them in times of famine: «freoðe æt þam folce, þe him feores wolde» '[the Mermedonian young man could not obtain mercy], protection from [his] people, anyone who would grant him life' (*Andreas*, l. 1130)⁴².

Among the numerous *frip*-collocations preserved in *Genesis A*, one occurs 3x in a form unique to this poem⁴³ and hinges on the association between *frip* 'peace' and *Frea* 'Lord'. The first instance appears in the account of the angelic rebellion led by Satan, where the two terms are combined with the adjective *fæger* 'fair' to characterise the *freopopeawas* 'customs of peace' that existed before the fall, when «Frea eallum leof» 'the Lord [was] dear to all' (*Genesis A*, l. 79)⁴⁴. The second example depicts the Lord marking Cain with a *freoðobeacen* 'sign of peace' before his exile, a gesture of divine mercy against encounters with hostile people (*freoðobeacen* 'sign of peace' + *Frea* 'Lord' + *feonda* 'enemy', *Genesis A*, l. 1045)⁴⁵. The final occurrence arises in connection with the rite of circumcision conceived by God as the tangible sign of the covenant (*friðotacen* 'sign of peace' [= circumcision] + *Frean* 'Lord', *Genesis A*, 2371)⁴⁶.

The *frip*-node is also prominently featured in references to the eschatological climax of salvation history, the Last Judgement, when the Lord's kingdom will offer permanent refuge to the blessed, who will have access to the eternal abode («frefreð he fægre and him friþ beodeð» 'he [God] will gently comfort them [the blessed] and proclaim peace to them', *Christ C*, l. 474)⁴⁷, which is poetically defined in *Christ A* (l. 399b) as the *friðgeard* 'dwellings of peace'⁴⁸. In sharp contrast, those tainted by sin will find neither protection nor mercy before the Judge: «Þonan ænig ne mæg, / firendædum fah, frið gewinnan» 'No one stained with evil deeds will be able to find refuge' (*Christ C*, ll. 133b-134)⁴⁹.

3.2. *Frip*-collocations in the signed poems of Cynewulf and in the Cynewulfian canon

The study of recurring word combinations offers valuable insights into the distinctive stylistic features and variations of established patterns, which may be attributable to individual poets or specific poetic schools.

In OE literature, the poet Cynewulf stands out as a very influential figure. Four extant poems – *Juliana*, *Christ B* (also known as *The Ascension*), *Elene*, and *The Fates of the Apostles* – contain runic acrostics by which he signed his name. In addition to these securely attributed works, scholars have discussed the possible inclusion of further poems within a broader Cynewulfian canon⁵⁰, and this group is generally understood to comprise

expressed in the passage. The translation is consistent with the concept of the Lord's peace and the theme of the apostles' mission, as developed in this and other passages (see also *Andreas*, ll. 915, 973-976, ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 244-245, 248-249).

⁴² See also the pagan young man's characterisation as *freonda feascraft*, *friðes wilnian* 'friendless, begging for protection' (*Andreas*, l. 1128, ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 258-259).

⁴³ On this collocation in Eddic poetry, see Section 5.1.

⁴⁴ Ed. and trans. Anlezark (2011: 8-9).

⁴⁵ Ed. and trans. Anlezark (2011: 76-77). See above.

⁴⁶ Ed. and trans. Anlezark (2011: 164-165). See above.

⁴⁷ According to *Christ C* (l. 792a, ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 86-87), in Heaven there will be «frið freondum bitweon» 'peace among friends', without envy.

⁴⁸ Ed. and trans. Clayton (2013: 28-29).

⁴⁹ Ed. and trans. Clayton (2013: 42-43).

⁵⁰ More recent discussions of this issue are provided by Fulk (1996) and Orchard (2003; 2009: 302-305, 316-318).

*Andreas*⁵¹, *Guthlac A*, *Guthlac B*⁵², *Christ C*, *The Phoenix*, as well as the so-called *Physiologus*-poems (*The Panther*, *The Whale*, and *The Partridge*).

Cynewulf's poems and those belonging to the Cynewulfian canon show a distinctive use of *frip*-collocations. A notable example is the pairing *frip* 'protection' + *forht* 'frightened' (5x). This combination is attested exclusively in *Juliana*, *Guthlac A*, and *Andreas* and represents a paronomastic variation of the collocation *frip* + *ferhþ* 'mind', 'heart' (7x). The former collocation, centred on the emotion of fear, is used to depict characters whose fear stems from a lack of faith or exclusion from divine grace, most notably, devils or spiritually unprepared humans. A representative instance appears in *Andreas* (l. 448), in the episode describing the apostles' fearful reaction to a storm during their voyage across the Sea of Galilee. Their fear reflects a still-fragile faith in Christ and is expressed through the plea: «Forhte on mode; friðes wilnedon» '[The apostles] frightened in their minds; [they] implored [the Glorious one] for safekeeping'⁵³.

The second situation is attested in *Juliana* (l. 320), where the pairing of *frip* 'protection' + *forht* 'frightened' is used in the passage recounting how the saintly virgin, repeatedly described as *unforht* 'unafraid'⁵⁴, reduces the devil to a state of fear and compels him to confess both his crimes and the identity of the instigator behind his mission. The episode, extending over eight lines and dwelling on the devil's state of mind, opens with the collocation *frip* + *forht* («forht, friþes orwena» '[the devil] gripped by fear, despairing of peace', *Juliana*, l. 320) and concludes with another one that skillfully exploits the possibilities offered by paronomastic variation: *forhte* + *ferðþe* («forhte on ferðþe» '[the devils sent to tempt and corrupt men are] afraid at heart', l. 328a). Positioned between these two collocations is the noun *fæder* (*Juliana*, l. 321), used to describe God's protective stance towards the faithful. The designation is contrastively echoed at the end of the passage by the term *frea* (*Juliana*, l. 328b), this time ironically applied to Satan, the 'lord' of demons, an abusive *frea* who punishes his followers when they fail to carry out his will⁵⁵.

The recurrence of the same collocation (*frip*- 'protection' + *forht* 'afraid') in *Guthlac A* (l. 310) – here expanded by the inclusion of the homophonous terms *fæge* 'doomed' and *fægen* 'rejoicing' – establishes a striking contrast between the mental states of devils and pagans on the one hand, and the firm belief of the faithful, on the other, that allows them to overcome fear and partake in the final, eternal joy. Like *Juliana*, the saintly hermit *Guthlac* manages to remain untouched by fear in the face of demonic assaults by placing his full trust in divine protection: «forht ne fæge, ac me friðe healdeð» '[The mind in my breast is neither] afraid nor doomed but [he who indeed controls every power] protects me' (*Guthlac A*, l. 310)⁵⁶.

A reversal of fear into joy occurs in *Andreas*, where the pagan women imprisoned by the Mermedonians are freed and converted. In this context, the verbal root *freoþ-*, meaning 'to set free', is paired with *fægen* 'rejoicing': the women's initial terror is

⁵¹ Powell (2002: 283-299) systematically identified parallels between *Andreas* and the signed Cynewulfian poems, which once supported attribution to Cynewulf. Although this view is no longer accepted, the parallels nonetheless demonstrate the strong influence of Cynewulfian verse and the deliberate borrowing of the *Andreas* poet (see also Krapp 1906: xxxiii-xxxvi; Fulk 1996: 7-8; Orchard 2003: 287-291, 293; 2020a: 328-329, 333-334, 343, 345-346).

⁵² The case of *Guthlac B* is particularly compelling: initially ascribed to the Cynewulfian school, it is now widely regarded as a work by Cynewulf himself, despite the absence of his runic signature; see Fulk (1996: 5) and Orchard (2003: 294-296, 304; 2006: 76-77, 81, 101-102; 2020a: 391-395).

⁵³ Ed. and trans. Clayton (2013: 214-215).

⁵⁴ See *Juliana* (ll.147a, 209b, and 601a, ed. and trans. Bjork 2013: 88-89, 92-93, 118-119).

⁵⁵ Ed. and trans. Bjork (2013: 98-101).

⁵⁶ Ed. and trans. Clayton (2013: 110-111).

dispelled, giving way to joy («forhte gefreoðode. Fægen wæron siðes / lungre leordan» ‘[Matthew] set free [forty-nine] frightened [women there]. Rejoicing in their departure, they [the women] left at once’, ll. 1041-1042a)⁵⁷.

Another distinctive feature of the poems signed by Cynewulf is the frequent use of *frip-* within paronomastic binomials, which serves to reinforce and intensify the semantic field of peace and protection. In his examination of binomials and their distribution in OE poetry, Orchard notes that an interesting characteristic of Cynewulfian usage is the employment of binomials composed of past participles joined by a conjunction, a rare structural type, with only 19 examples attested in the entire corpus of OE verse⁵⁸. Orchard provides examples from several poems to illustrate this stylistic preference⁵⁹, to which the *frip*-related pairings may also be added. In *Juliana* (l. 565), for instance, the virgin, described as *facnes clæne* ‘pure of crime’, is *gefreode ond gefreoðade* ‘freed and defended’ by an angelic hand from the flames (*fyr*, l. 564b) that had been kindled in an attempt to compel her to marry a pagan⁶⁰. This same paronomastic pair reappears in *Christ B* (l. 588), where it refers to the redemptive work of Christ, whose Incarnation brings about the deliverance of humankind: «*gefreode ond gefreoðade folc under wolcnum*» ‘freed and defended people below the clouds [i.e. on earth]’⁶¹.

Collocations involving the verb *gefripian* (‘to make peace’, ‘to come to terms’, ‘to protect’, ‘to set free’), though not always conforming to a fixed binomial structure, are a recurring feature in the Cynewulfian poem *Guthlac A*. In one notable instance, the collocation forms a *figura etymologica*⁶²: «*ond þæt frið wið hy gefreoþað wære*» ‘[he = God permitted [...] that his [Guthlac’s] soul’s] safety would be protected’ (*Guthlac A*, l. 411)⁶³.

Another interesting binomial, this time comprising two nouns, *friðes ond fultomes* ‘for peace and of support’, occurs in the concluding section of *The Fates of the Apostles* (l. 91a), where Cynewulf appeals to those who have appreciated his poem, defined as *freonda* ‘friends’ (l. 91b), to pray for him as he is old and in need ‘of peace and of protection’ for the ultimate journey he is about to undertake⁶⁴.

The pairing *frip-* + *fultom* is not unique to Cynewulf, but it echoes a word combination that is attested in *The Paris Psalter*, where this collocation refers to the Lord as a source of refuge and protection for the supplicant. These resonances were likely present in Cynewulf’s mind as he composed his own supplicatory address for prayer⁶⁵.

⁵⁷ Ed. and trans. Clayton (2013: 252-253).

⁵⁸ Of these occurrences, four are quoted from two signed poems (*Elene* and *Christ B*) and three from poems of the Cynewulfian group (*The Partridge*, *The Phoenix*, and *Andreas*).

⁵⁹ Orchard (2022: 266-267 and footnotes).

⁶⁰ Ed. and trans. Bjork (2013: 116-117).

⁶¹ Ed. and trans. Bjork (2013: 12-13).

⁶² See, for instance, *Guthlac A* (ll. 152-153a, ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 100-101): «*fægre gefreoþode, sibþan feond oferwon / Cristes cempa*» ‘[he, i.e., Guthlac, might] defend that land well for God after Christ’s champion had overcome the fiend’. For further collocations, see also *Guthlac A*, l. 243a (*feorg* ‘life’ + *freoþað* ‘to protect’, ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 106-107), l. 396 (*freoðade* ‘to protect’ + *foldan* ‘earth’ + *feora* ‘living creature’, ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 116-117), and l. 442 (*feore* ‘life’ + *freoðade* ‘to protect’ + *feond* ‘enemy’, ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 120-121).

⁶³ Ed. and trans. Clayton (2013: 116-117).

⁶⁴ Ed. and trans. Bjork (2013: 136-137).

⁶⁵ See *The Paris Psalter*, 70.3 («*Freoða fultumiend. Alys me feondum nu*» ‘a guarantor of security. Free me now from enemies’, ed. and trans. O’Neill 2016: 260-261) and 143.2 («*frið and fultum, fæst andfengea*» ‘security, and help, the loyal defender’, ed. and trans. O’Neill 2016: 580-581).

3.3. Rhetorical strategies involving *frip-* in *Beowulf*, *Daniel*, and *Christ and Satan*

The study of the combinatory behaviour of *frip-* and its collocates reveals a high degree of poetic sophistication in *Beowulf*, a poem which, as other studies have demonstrated⁶⁶, makes both traditional and innovative use of this device. In one instance, we find an ingenious contrast between the doom awaiting unrepentant pagans and the peace promised to faithful Christians, employing *frip-* and its collocates with particular rhetorical force⁶⁷:

Wa bið þæm ðe sceal / þurh sliðne nið sawle bescufan / in fyres fæþm, frofre ne wenan, / wihte gewendan; wel bið þæm þe mot / efter deaðdæge Drihten secean / ond to fæder fæþmum freoðo wilnian (*Beowulf*, ll. 183b-189)

‘Woe to the one who must thrust his soul through dire affliction into the fire’s embrace, expecting no comfort, no deliverance at all; well to the one who may, after death, seek the Ruler and sue for peace in the father’s embrace’ (ed. and trans. Fulk 2010: 98-99).

In line 189, *freoðo* collocates with *fæder* ‘Father’ and *fæþmum* ‘embrace’ to express the conception of Heaven as a place of divine protection and eternal communion. This ideal is made more striking by the sharp contrast established with the earlier phrase, «*in fyres fæþm*» ‘in the fire’s embrace’ (l. 185a), which vividly evokes the image of hell, a place where fire envelops everything and eternal torments await the damned, those devoid of *frofre* ‘comfort’ and hope of redemption («*frofre ne wenan*», l. 185b). The lines further underscore the stark choice facing humanity by employing anaphoric parallelism and using formulaic variation to introduce the two conditions: «*Wa bið þæm ðe sceal [...]*» ‘Woe to the one who must [...]’ (l. 183b) and «*wel bið þæm þe mot [...]*» ‘well to the one who may’ (l. 186b), thus reinforcing the dichotomy between eternal suffering and blessed peace.

The noun *fyr* also collocates with *frip-* in the Old Testament poem *Daniel* (3x), where the biblical story of the three youths in the furnace, unharmed by the flames because of their faith, is retold. By means of the *frip-* + *fyr* pairing, the poet effectively opposes the hostile force of fire to the protection and stability provided by the Lord: «*frecnan fyres, ac him frið Drihtnes*» ‘[the grim hatred of the flames,] the fire’s hostility, [did not harm them at all, God’s preachers,] but the surety of the Lord [shielded their lives against the awful terror]’ (*Daniel*, l. 465)⁶⁸.

The study of collocations may also afford valuable tools for evaluating problematic textual passages. An example is provided by a homiletic section of *Christ and Satan*, exhorting the faithful to strive for salvation. The reward of the righteous is the kingdom of God, defined as the city of refuge (*sceldbyrig*, l. 308a), which will welcome them. In the description of this reception, the incomplete line «*befæðmeð, Fæder mancynnes*» (l. 309) was emended by Grein (followed by Krapp) with the conjecture *friðe* («*friðe*

⁶⁶ See the examples analysed in Ruggerini (2017: 141-164; 2018: 93-94, 114-115). On the subject, see also Orchard (2020b: 19-36).

⁶⁷ It is impossible to determine at what stage such theological reflection was introduced into the heroic poem. The extent and nature of the Christian influence in *Beowulf* remains a much-discussed issue in scholarship, with views ranging from an early integration of Christian elements into a primarily oral tradition to later interpolations by monastic scribes.

⁶⁸ Ed. and trans. Anlezark (2011: 278-279). See also *Daniel*, l. 214 («*frecne fyres wylm, nymðe hie friðes wolde*» ‘the terrible surge of fire, unless they [the three children] would [pray to that most terrible thing] for protection’, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 262-263) and l. 437 («*ne feax fyre beswæled, ac hie on friðe Drihtnes*» ‘nor hair scorched by fire, but they [(the three children) gladly stepped out of that grim terror] in the Lord’s surety’, ed. and trans. Anlezark 2011: 276-277).

befæðmeð Fæder *mancynnes*» ‘the Father of mankind will embrace them with protection’). Holthausen, whose reading was later widely accepted, instead moved the pronoun *heo* from line 308b to line 309a: «*heo* befæðmeð, Fæder *mancynnes*»⁶⁹. The examination of the occurrences and collocative behaviour of *friþ-* seems to support the emendation proposed by Grein, which would bring about a three-member collocation (*friðe* + *befæðmeð* + *Fæder*), which is semantically and stylistically consistent with the attested triadic structure in *Beowulf* (*freoðo* + *fæder* + *fæþm*).

4. Old Saxon *frith-* and its collocates

To deepen our understanding of the collocative patterns associated with *friþ-*, the next phase of this research focuses on analysing the behaviour of its OS cognate *frith-* within the context of Saxon poetry. The aim is to assess whether, and to what extent, the patterns observed in OE are mirrored, and to identify any distinctive and meaningful associations that may emerge.

In *Heliand*, the noun *frith-* ‘peace’, ‘protection’, ‘security’ occurs 39x both as a simplex and in compound forms, while the weak verb *frithon* ‘to give protection’ appears only 2x. The list of co-occurring terms includes all those combining with *frith-* at least twice, along with three additional forms that occur only once but are included as they represent variations of the same root. The entries are listed below in descending order of frequency:

folk ‘people’ (13x); *faran* ‘to go’, ‘to travel’ (7x); *fiond* ‘enemy’ (6x); *flôd* ‘stream’, ‘water’ (4x); *frô* ‘Lord’, ‘lord’ (4x); (*gi*)*frummian* ‘to bring about’, ‘to accomplish’ (4x); *fagar* ‘fair’, ‘beautiful’/ *faganon* ‘to rejoice’ (3x); *ferh* ‘life’, ‘soul’ (3x); *fîndan* ‘to find’ (2x); *fîrihos* ‘people’, ‘men’ (2x); *forhton* ‘to fear’ (2x); *gifrāgi* ‘famed’ (1x), *frāgon* ‘to ask’ (1x), *gifregnan* ‘to hear about’ (1x).

As in the OE examples, the OS set of *frith*-collocates (53x) demonstrates that the most productive phonological pattern is the sequence /f + (vowel) + r/, involving 25 collocates (representing 47,16% of the total). This pattern includes apophonic variations (*faran* ‘to go’, ‘to travel’, *frô* ‘Lord’, ‘lord’) and also expansions:

- a) /f + (vowel) + r [+ g (+ n)]/ (*gifrāgi* ‘famed’, *frāgon* ‘to ask’, *gifregnan* ‘to hear about’) 3x
- b) /f + (vowel) + r [+ h]/ (*ferh* ‘life’, ‘soul’) 3x
- c) /f + (vowel) + r [+ m]/ (*[gi]frummian* ‘to bring about’) 4x
- d) /f + (vowel) + r [+ h + t]/ (*forhton* ‘to fear’) 2x.

The relevant collocates may be grouped as follows:

faran ‘to go’, ‘to travel’/ *frô* ‘Lord’, ‘lord’ (11x)
FRITH- + *ferh* ‘life’, ‘soul’/ *fîrihos* ‘people’, ‘men’ (4x)
(gi)frummian ‘to bring about’ (4x)
gifrāgi ‘famed’/ *frāgon* ‘to ask’/ *gifregnan* ‘to hear about’ (3x)
forhton ‘to fear’ (2x).

Parallel to OE usage, the second most frequent phonological pattern is /f + (vowel) + l [+ k/+ d]/ (17x, or 32.07% compared to 21.80% in Old English), realised through two lexemes:

⁶⁹ In his edition of the poem, Finnegan also follows Holthausen’s emendation (1977: 78, 104). The most recent edition of the poem adopts Grein and Krapp’s choice (ed. and trans. Clayton 2013: 322).

folk ‘people’ (13x) and *flôd* ‘stream’ (4x). Together, the two phonological patterns – /f + (vowel) + r/ and /f + (vowel) + l [+k]/[+d]/ – constitute 79.23% of the total. Two additional patterns also emerge in Old Saxon accounting for the remaining 20.75% of *frith*-collocates:

- a) /f + (vowel) + n + d/ (*fiond* ‘enemy’ and *findan* ‘to find’) 8x
- b) /f + (vowel) + g [+n]/ (*fagar* ‘fair’, ‘beautiful’/ ‘to rejoice’) 3x.

These four phonological patterns cover all *frith*-collocates attested in the OS poetry, and they are shared by the OE poetic corpus, indicating a substantial degree of combinatorial continuity across the two traditions.

4.1. The contextual use of *frith* in *The Heliand*

A statistical comparison between the occurrences of OE *frip*-collocates and OS *frith*-collocates, taking into account the different size of these two corpora, reveals that *frith*- is employed almost twice as frequently in Old Saxon than *frip*- is in Old English. Such prominence points to a pronounced thematic emphasis on peace, protection, and security in the New Testament poem. It appears reasonable to suggest a correlation between this emphasis and the aims of the Christian missionaries, who sought to promote and consolidate a new sociopolitical and religious order in contrast to the pre-existing structures, which were often characterised by pervasive violence and instability.

Despite formal conversion, many Saxons remained deeply attached to the older system of values. Against this background, the need for cultural and spiritual pacification became increasingly pressing. This interpretative framework is further supported by the particularly prominent role ascribed to Christ in *Heliand* as the bringer of peace: fully half of the instances of *frith*- refer to Him, identified by the unique OS compounds *frithubarn* ‘child of peace’ (20x) and *frithugomo* ‘man of peace’ (1x). In the first part of *Heliand*, the words of John the Baptist describe Christ’s baptism in the Jordan and His earthly mission in the following terms:

*godes egan barn, gumono bezta, / friðu uuið fiondun. Uuala that iu thes mag
frâhmuod hugi / uuesan an thesaro uueroldi, thes iu the uuillo gistuod / that gi so
libbeandi thena landes uuard / selbon gisahun (Heliand, ll. 1010-1014a)⁷⁰*
‘[Christ is] God’s own Child, the Best of men, security against the enemy. Well, it
should make you [the people] be in a joyful mood in this world, that it was granted
to you in your life to see the country’s Guardian himself’.

The collocation *frith*- + *fiund* is also found in the account of one of the many miracles performed by Christ, the healing of a man possessed by evil spirits. In this context, the poet uses a variation to emphasise that the Saviour healed the man by restoring him to a state of spiritual integrity and peace, both of which had been taken from him by the Enemy:

*endi im is geuuit fargaf; / liet ina than helan uuidar hettindeon / gaf im uuith thia
fiond friðo (Heliand, ll. 2280b-2282a)*
‘[Christ] gave him back his wits. He made the man whole again, against the hate-
filled ones, gave him peace again against the enemy’.

⁷⁰ The collocation *frith*- + *fiund* is also employed in reference to John the Baptist after his death when he ultimately enjoyed «[...] friðe uuiðer fiundun» ‘protection against the enemies’ (*Heliand*, l. 2810a) and following which he gained considerable renown («*Tho so gifragi uuarð*», *Heliand*, l. 2810b).

The emphasis on security and peace is further reinforced by the poetic elaboration of the Beatitudes, particularly in the passage concerning the peacemakers. Unlike the succinct biblical formulation («Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur»), *Heliand*'s rendering amplifies the significance of peacemaking and highlights its importance not only as a virtue but, above all, as a fundamental aspect of human interaction:

‘[saliga uuarin] thia hier [the frithusama] under theson [folca libbeat] endi ni uuelleat eniga fehta geuuirkean, / saca mid iro selbaro gidadeon: thia motun uuesan suni drohtines genemnida, / huuand hie im uuili genathig uuerthan; [thes] muotun sia niotan lango / selbon thes sinas rikeas (*Heliand*, ll. 1316b-1320a)
 ‘[those too are fortunate] who live peacefully among the people and do not want to start any fights or court cases by their own actions, they will be called the Chieftain’s sons for He will be gracious to them, they will long enjoy His kingdom’.

5. ON *friðr* and its collocates

5.1. The *friðr*-node in the Eddic corpus

The final section of this analysis is concerned with the ON cognate of OE *frip-* and OS *frith-*, namely *friðr* ‘peace’, ‘love’, ‘protection’. The investigation begins with an assessment of its collocational behaviour in Eddic poetry and is then expanded to include the larger corpus of Skaldic verse. This extension is essential since Skaldic poetry, first cultivated by court poets and later also by clerical authors, provides a rich source for exploring the varied rhetorical and aesthetic functions *friðr* fulfils across a wide range of contexts.

Friðr is not a frequently attested term in Eddic poetry, occurring only 10x. Of these, 7x⁷¹ appear in mythological poems, while the remaining 3x are found in two heroic lays from the Helgi cycle. With the exception of a single instance (*Hávamál* ‘The Sayings of the High One’, st. 16)⁷², all words combining with *friðr* (10x) are involved in the alliterative pattern of the line. These include: *fjándi* ‘enemy’ 3x (*Hávamál*, st. 127; *Helgakviða Hundingsbana ǫnnor* ‘The Second Poem of Helgi Hundingsbani’, st. 13; *Helgakviða Hjorvarðssonar* ‘The Poem of Helgi Hjorvarðsson’, st. 34); *Fróði* 2x (*Grottasǫngr* ‘The Song of Grotti’, st. 1; *Helgakviða Hundingsbana in fyrri* ‘The First Poem of Helgi Hundingsbani’, st. 13); *Freyr* 1x (*Skírnismál* ‘Skírnir’s Poem’, st. 19); *flár* ‘treacherous’ 1x (*Hávamál*, st. 90); *fimm* ‘five’ 1x (*Hávamál*, st. 51); *fara* ‘to travel’ (*Helgakviða Hundingsbana ǫnnor*, st. 19), and *fyr* ‘before’ (*Hárbarðsljóð* ‘Hárbarð’s Lay’, st. 29). For the sake of clarity, the list of words co-occurring with *friðr* can be presented as follows:

fjándi ‘enemy’ (3x); *Fróði* (2x); *Freyr* (1x); *flár* ‘treacherous’ (1x); *fimm* ‘five’ (1x); *fara* ‘to travel’ (1x), and *fyr* ‘before’ (1x); *elli* ‘old age’ (1x).

According to the methodological criteria established earlier⁷³, only *fjándi* ‘enemy’ (3x) and the personal name *Fróði* (2x) may be regarded as collocates of *friðr*, as each occurs in combination with it at least twice. While *fjándi* is a collocate shared with Old English

⁷¹ One of the eleven occurrences is a proper name, namely *Friðleifr* (*Grottasǫngr*, st. 1). The Eddic poems are quoted from the edition by Neckel and Kuhn (1983⁵ [1914]). The translation of the lines quoted from Eddic poems is by Larrington (2014) [1996]. The ON dictionary used for our research has been *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* by Cleasby and Vigfusson (1969) [1874].

⁷² *Friðr* appears in combination with *elli* ‘old age’ in *Hávamál*, st. 16.

⁷³ See Section 1.

and Old Saxon, the proper name *Fróði*, derived from the adjective *fróðr* ‘wise’, has no counterpart among the collocates in either of the two languages but constitutes a realization of the privileged /f + (vowel) + r/ phonological sequence. Although the verb *fara* ‘to go’, the preposition *fyr* ‘before’, and the theonym *Freyr* are attested only once each in the ON corpus, their conformity to the identified structural pattern, exploiting apophony and paronomasia, justifies their consideration as potential *friðr*-collocates. These five occurrences (*Fróði*, 2x; *fara* ‘to go’, 1x; *Freyr*, 1x; *fyr* ‘before’, 1x) represent half of *friðr*-collocates attested in the corpus. The cognates of the verb *fara* correspond to well-attested collocates in both Old English (5x) and Old Saxon (7x), while the preposition *fyr* ‘before’ stands in paronomastic relationship with the OE *fyr* ‘fire’ (3x) and *firen* ‘sin’ (3x). According to a well-supported hypothesis, the name *Freyr* is etymologically connected to OE and OS *frea* (3x) and *frô* (4x)⁷⁴, both meaning ‘lord/Lord’ or ‘ruler’, and both attested as collocates of *friþ-* and *frith-* in their respective poetic corpora. Finally, another cross-linguistic pattern, /f + (vowel) + n + d/ (*ffándi* ‘enemy’ 3x), closes the list of collocates detected in Eddic verse.

5.1.1. *Fróði’s Peace and Freyr’s Passion: The collocative reimagining of friðr in myth and poetry*

As regards the collocation *friðr* + *Fróði*, it must be pointed out that among the five early legendary Danish kings bearing this name in pseudo-historical sources, two are associated with periods of exceptional peace⁷⁵. This image of *Fróði*’s reign as a golden age of peace, ultimately shattered by the eruption of hostilities, is evoked in the Eddic poem *Helgakviða Hundingsbana in fyrri* (st. 13), where the name appears within a three-member alliterative collocation marking the outbreak of hostilities between the hero Helgi and the sons of Hunding: «*sleit Fróða frið fiánda á milli*» ‘the peace of Frodi was torn between the enemies’.

Outside the *Poetic Edda*, in *Skáldskaparmál* ‘The Language of Poetry’, Snorri Sturluson recounts that during *Fróða friðr* ‘*Fróði*’s peace’ crime did not exist and prosperity prevailed⁷⁶. He also refers to *Fróða friðr* in the *Ynglinga saga* ‘Saga of the

⁷⁴ The name derives from Proto-Germanic **froujaz* ‘lord’, which, in turn, originates from the Indo-European root **PRO-* ‘forward’, ‘uppermost’, ‘before’ or ‘lord’, ‘ruler’. For this etymological reconstruction, as well as for alternative hypotheses concerning the origin of the name *Freyr* (from Proto-Germanic **frouja(n)-* ‘one who possesses vital power’ or **frouwa-* ‘seed’), see Sundqvist (2020, 3: 1197-1198, 1244).

⁷⁵ See note to Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, *Ynglingatal* ‘Enumeration of the Ynglingar’, st. 1, <<https://skaldic.org/m.php?p=verse&i=4367&x=0&v=t>> (accessed 10/08/2024). A less favourable account is provided in the poem *Grottasöngur*, which describes the misdeeds of King *Fróði*, son of *Friðleifr*. It depicts how this king exploits his female slaves, two giantesses, who are held captive («*þær ro at Fróða, Friðleifs sonar*» ‘they [the two women] were with Frodi, / Friðleif’s son’) and forced to grind with the magical millstone Grotti. Their mistreatment results in a rebellion and the destruction of the previously prosperous kingdom.

⁷⁶ Snorri Sturluson, *Skáldskaparmál*, 43, ed. Faulkes (2007 [1998], 1: 51-52): «*En fyrir því at Fróði var allra konunga ríkastr á Norðrlöndum þá var honum kendr friðrinn um alla Danska tungu, ok kalla Nordmenn þat Fróða frið*» ‘But because Frodi was the greatest of all the kings in northern countries, the peace was attributed to him throughout all Scandinavia, and Scandinavians called it Frodi’s peace’ (trans. Faulkes [1987: 107]). The lexical association *Fróði* + *friðr* also occurs in Snorri’s *Háttatal* ‘Enumeration of Verse-forms’, st. 43, in a gold-kenning, where the precious metal is defined as *Fróða friðbygg* ‘the peace-barley of *Fróði*’ (see *SkP* 3: 1152). The collocation *friðr* + *Fróði* is also used to denote a period of peace in the Skaldic *Vellekla* ‘Lack of Gold’ (10th cent.), a praise poem written by the skald Einarr skálaglamm Helgason for Hákon jarl Sigurðarson, one of the most powerful rulers of tenth-century Norway; see *Vellekla*, st. 17, in *SkP* 1: 305. Citations from the Skaldic corpus are from *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages (SkP)*, vol 1, ed. Whaley 2013; vol. 2, ed. Gade 2009; vol. 3, ed. Gade and Marold 2017; vol. 5, ed. Clunies Ross et al. 2023; vol. 7, ed. Clunies Ross 2008; vol. 8 ed. Clunies Ross

Ynglingar’, which opens *Heimskringla* ‘The Circle of the World’, asserting that during this age crops flourished in all regions and the Svíar attributed this prosperity to Freyr, seen here as a human king and to whom sacrifices were offered:

Á hans dögum hófst Fróðafriður. Þá var og ár um öll lönd. Kenndu Svíar það Frey. Var hann því meir dýrkaður en önnur goðin sem á hans dögum varð landsfólkið auðgara en fyrr af friðinum og ári. Gerður Gymisdóttir hét kona hans. Sonur þeirra hét Fjölfnir. Freyr hét Yngvi öðru nafni. Yngva nafn var lengi síðan haft í hans ætt fyrir tignarnafn og Ynglingar voru síðan kallaðir hans ættmenn⁷⁷.

‘The peace of Fróði began in his [Freyr’s] time. There was prosperity throughout all lands. The Svíar attributed that to Freyr. As a result of peace and good harvests, he was the more honoured than other gods the more prosperous the people of the land became in his time than before. His wife was called Gerður Gymisdóttir⁷⁸. Their son was Fjölfnir. Another name for Freyr was Yngvi. The name Yngvi was used in his family long after as an honorific title, and his descendants were called Ynglingar’⁷⁹.

This testimony establishes a link between the period known as *Fróðafriður* ‘Fróði’s peace’ and *Freyr*, who, according to our sources, was usually associated with the sphere of fertility. But one should not overlook the evidence suggesting that:

[...] Freyr was ‘more than a fertility god’, and it may be argued that he carried features of a warrior lord and appeared as a peace-creator. He was also closely related to political power and religious ruler ideology, at least in some areas of Scandinavia⁸⁰.

This role is supported by some of the epithets applied to Freyr in Eddic poetry, such as *iaðarr ása* ‘protector of the gods’ (*Lokasenna* ‘Loki’s Quarrel’, st. 35) and *fólkvaldi goða* ‘commander of the gods’ (*Skírnismál*, st. 3)⁸¹. In the Skaldic poem *Húsdrápa* ‘House-drápa’ (10th cent.), Úlfr Uggason describes the funeral of the god Baldr and states that the first to arrive on his boar was *böðfróðr Freyr* ‘the battle-skilled Freyr’, who *stýrir fólku* ‘leads the troops’⁸². In several other Skaldic compositions, Freyr’s name appears as the base-word in battle-kennings (*leikr Freys* ‘the sport of Freyr’)⁸³ and in warrior-kennings (*«Freyr byrjar Heðins»* ‘The Freyr of the wind of Heðinn [= legendary hero]’)⁸⁴.

This dual character of the god, both as a bringer of fertility and as a military leader, is also reflected in the cultic practices dedicated to him, as attested in medieval prose sources

2017. References to individual compositions include (in this order): the identification of the poet (if available), stanza, *SkP* volume and page number.

⁷⁷ *Ynglinga saga* ‘Saga of the Ynglingar’, ch. 10, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (1941: 50).

⁷⁸ On this union, see *Skírnismál*.

⁷⁹ *Ynglinga saga*, ch. 10, trans. Finlay and Faulkes (2011: 25).

⁸⁰ Sundqvist (2020, 3: 1196).

⁸¹ On this function of Freyr, see also Turville-Petre (1964: 175).

⁸² Úlfr Uggason, *Húsdrápa*, st. 7, in *SkP* 3: 417.

⁸³ Þorbjörn hornklofi, *Haraldskvæði*, st. 6, in *SkP* 1: 99. The kenning is also attested in Björn Ragnarsson, *Lausavísur*, st. 4, in *SkP* 8: 682.

⁸⁴ Einarr skálaglamm Helgason, *Vellekla*, st. 21, in *SkP* 1: 280. See also *Freyr fjornis* ‘Freyr <god> of the helmet’ (Kormákr Ögmundarson, *Lausavísur*, st. 30, in *SkP* 5: 1084) and *Freyr randa* ‘Freyr <god> of the shields’ (Hólmǫngu-Bersi Véleifsson, *Lausavísur*, st. 2, in *SkP* 5: 1072).

and corroborated by archaeological evidence⁸⁵. The formula *til árs ok friðar* ‘for a good year/prosperity and peace’⁸⁶, associated with Freyr in Snorri’s *Gylfaginning* ‘The Beguiling of Gylfi’ (24)⁸⁷, underscores his role as a divine guarantor of well-being and social stability:

Hann ræðr fyrir regni ok skini sólar ok þar með ávexti jarðar, ok á hann er gott at heita til árs ok friðar

‘He [Freyr] is ruler of rain and sunshine and thus of the produce of the earth, and it is good to pray to him for prosperity and peace’⁸⁸.

Considering the semantic range of the word in Old English and Old Norse (*friþ-* and *frið-* respectively), a noteworthy feature of the Norse usage is that *friðr*, in addition to its more widespread meanings of ‘peace’ and ‘protection’, also in its probably older sense of ‘love’, which is attested in both *Hávamál* and *Skírnismál*.

The latter poem centres on the mission of Skírnir, dispatched by his lord, the god *Freyr*, who had developed an overwhelming passion for Gerðr, a giantess belonging to the race traditionally seen as the gods’ sworn enemies. Acting as an intermediary, Skírnir seeks to intercede with Gerðr on Freyr’s behalf, hoping to persuade her to return the god’s love. His initial efforts through diplomacy fail, leading him to attempt bribery by offering her precious gifts to «*frið at kaup*» ‘purchase her love’:

Epli ellifo hér hefði ek, algullin, / þau mun ek þér, Gerðr, gefa, / frið at kaup, at þú þér Frey qveðir / óleiðastan lifa (Skírnismál, st. 19)

“Eleven apples here I have all of gold, / those I will give you, Gerd, / to buy your favour, that you may say that to you / Freyr’s the least loathsome man alive”.

As Mitchell has pointed out, the compound *friðkaup* ‘purchase (or negotiation) of peace’ is used in saga literature to denote the settlement of conflict or establishment of a truce, often through compensation or tribute⁸⁹. In *Skírnismál*, the legal and political meaning that surfaces in the phrase *frið at kaup* is recontextualised within a mythological and erotic framework. Indeed, Skírnir’s appeal is not primarily intended to broker peace in the conventional sense, but to secure Gerðr’s erotic favour for Freyr and thereby forestall the conflict he threatens should she reject the offer. The golden apples offered by the

⁸⁵ The Stentoften runic inscription describes a ruler performing a sacrifice of nine bucks and nine stallions, hinting at a ritual for good crops and at a probable connection with Freyr. On this interpretation, see Sundqvist (2020, 3: 1239-1240).

⁸⁶ The origin of the formula *til árs ok friðar* has been the subject of considerable scholarly debate. Jens Peter Schjødt provides an exhaustive account of its usage and contextual background, presenting the arguments of those who interpret the expression as a pre-Christian ritual formula associated with the cult of Freyr, as well as those who attribute to it a Christian provenance. While the precise origins of the formula remain elusive, there is substantial evidence to suggest that it constitutes an archaic, formulaic expression, that is a vestige of pre-Christian religious and ritual traditions later adapted and integrated into Christian usage (see Schjødt 2020a, 2: 543; Schjødt 2020b, 2: 620; Schjødt 2020c, 2: 804, 811; Sundqvist 2020, 3: 1238-1241).

⁸⁷ Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning*, 24, ed. Faulkes (2005 [1982]: 24). The formula is also used in a Skaldic composition, a *drápa* ‘poem’ about the lament of the Virgin Mary (*Drápa af Máriugrát*), dated to the late 14th or early 15th century, which deals with events that took place before, during, and after the Crucifixion of Christ: «*sie ár og friðr skapara várum*» ‘may there be prosperity and peace for our Creator’ (*Drápa af Máriugrát*, st. 32, in *SkP* 7: 781-782), and in *Glælognskviða* ‘Sea-Calm *kviða*’ (11th cent.) by the skald Þórarinn loftunga (st. 9). The latter is the first poem to mention King Óláfr Haraldsson as a saint. In its final part, it is stated that Óláfr received *ár ok friðr* ‘good harvest and peace’ from God and that prayers should be directed towards him (see *SkP* 1: 875).

⁸⁸ Trans. by Faulkes (1987: 24).

⁸⁹ Mitchell (1983: 108-122).

servant serve as material compensation akin to legal tribute, yet the “truce” he seeks is affective and erotic rather than political or military.

This ingenious use of *friðr* probably reflects also the poet’s deliberate repurposing of a traditional collocative pattern within a mythological narrative. Freyr, a god associated with fertility and peace, is here depicted as dependent on an intermediary and unable to secure Gerðr’s love through his divine agency. *Skírnismál* thus marks a significant shift in the representation of Freyr, portraying a version of the god shaped, at least in part, by later poetic sensibilities. Its creative reconfiguration of the *friðr*-collocation lends further support, alongside other internal aspects, to the view that the poem belongs to a relatively late phase within the Eddic corpus⁹⁰.

5.2. The *friðr*-node in the Skaldic corpus

The final stage of this lexical investigation focuses on the *frið*-collocates within the extensive Skaldic corpus, which, as previously noted, differs not only from OE and OS poetry, but also from Eddic verse, both metrically and stylistically. The noun *friðr* appears approximately 140x in Skaldic verse, including three instances of the verb form *friða* ‘to pacify’. Among the nominal forms, simplex occurrences are predominant (93x), while compounds account for 44x. Two of these compounds are proper names: *Friðþjófr* ‘Peace-thief’ (6x) and *Friðgeirr* ‘Peace-spear’ (2x).

In light of the distinctive features of Skaldic diction, it is necessary, as a preliminary step, to adjust the criteria previously employed for identifying collocates. Given that the Skaldic corpus is roughly comparable in size to the OE corpus, the threshold for identifying collocates has been retained at a minimum of three co-occurrences with *frið*- (List 1). However, unlike in OE and OS verse, where the metrical unit was limited to the long line, the Skaldic analysis extends the search window to encompass the line preceding and the line following that in which *frið*- appears. As with Old English, a supplementary list of lexical items that co-occur with *frið*- twice (List 2) has also been compiled. The two lists yield a total of 89 collocates:

- 1) *fara* ‘to go’, ‘to travel’/*færa* ‘to bring’, ‘to present’ (12x); *fylkir* ‘king’/*fylking* ‘troop’ (9x); *fullr* ‘full’/*fylling* ‘fulfilment’ (8x); *fastr* ‘fast’, ‘firm’/*fasti* ‘tight spot’/*fasta* ‘to fast’ (7x); *fyrð* ‘troop’/*fyrðr* ‘man’, ‘warrior’ (7x); *frægr* ‘famous’/*frægð* ‘fame’ (6x); *fyr/fyrst* ‘before’, ‘first’ (6x); *fjöl(ð)* ‘many’, ‘multitude’ (4x); *fljótt* ‘quickly’ (4x); *Frakkar* ‘Franks’/*frækn* ‘valiant’ (4x); *faðir* ‘father’/*foeðisk* ‘to feed’ (3x); *falla* ‘to fall’ (3x); *fjándi* ‘enemy’ (3x); *friðr* ‘fair, beautiful’ (3x)
- 2) *fjqr* ‘life’ (2x); *fljóð* ‘woman’ (2x); *fold* ‘the earth’ (2x); *frændi* ‘kinsmen’ (2x); *flærð* ‘deceit’ (2x).

In accordance with the evidence drawn from the OE, OS, and ON Eddic corpora, it can be observed that half of the *frið*-collocates (42 out of 89, or 47.19%) conform to the basic sequence /f + (vowel) + r/, which accommodates both apophonic and paronomastic variants (*fara* ‘to go’, ‘to travel’, *færa* ‘to bring’, ‘to present’, and *fyr* ‘before’, respectively), as well as expanded forms, including:

- a) /f + (vowel) + r/ (*fara* ‘to go’, ‘to travel’/*færa* ‘to bring’, ‘to present’; *fyr/fyrst* ‘before’, ‘first’/*fjqr* ‘life’) 20x
- b) /f + (vowel) + r [+ð]/ (*fyrð* ‘troop’, *fyrðr* ‘man’, ‘warrior’, and *friðr* ‘fair’, ‘beautiful’) 10x

⁹⁰ On the poem’s dating, see von See et al. (1997: 64-65).

- c) /f + (vowel) + r [+ g (+ ð)]/ (*frægr* ‘famous’ and *frægð* ‘fame’) 6x
- d) /f + (vowel) + r [+ k (+ n)]/ (*Frakkar* ‘Franks’ and *frækn* ‘valiant’) 4x
- e) /f + (vowel) + r [+ n + d]/ (*frændi* ‘kinsmen’) 2x.

The second major collocative sequence attested in Old English and Old Saxon, /f + (vowel) + l/, is also productively employed in Skaldic verse as seen in examples such as *falla* ‘to fall’ (3x), *fullr* ‘full’ and *fylling* ‘fulfilment’ (8x). This pattern, too, allows for various expansions, which enrich its morphological realisations within the FRITH-collocate set:

- a) /f + (vowel) + l [+ k]/ (*fylkir* ‘king’ and *fylking* ‘troop’) 9x
- b) /f + (vowel) + l [+ j + t/ð]/ (*fljótt* ‘quickly’ and *fljóð* ‘woman’) 6x
- c) /f + (vowel) + l [(+ r) + ð/d]/ (*fföl(ð)* ‘many’, ‘multitude’, *flærð* ‘deceit’ and *fold* ‘earth’) 8x.

The Skaldic *frið*-collocates belonging to this pattern (34x) may be grouped as follows:

fylkir ‘king’/*fylking* ‘troop’ (9x)
fullr ‘full’/*fylling* ‘fulfilment’ (8x)
fljótt ‘quickly’/*fljóð* ‘woman’ (6x)
 FRIDR + *fföl(ð)* ‘many’, ‘multitude’ (4x)
falla ‘to fall’ (3x)
flærð ‘deceit’ (2x)
fold ‘the earth’ (2x).

These words amount to 38.20% of *frið*-collocates, and together with those formed on the /f + (vowel) + r/ sequence, make up 85.39% of the total attested in the skaldic corpus. The remaining phonological patterns, though more limited in scope, include /f + (vowel) + n + d/ (*ffándi* ‘enemy’, 3x), /f + (vowel) + ð/ (*faðir* ‘father’/*foeðisk* ‘to feed’, 3x), and /f + (vowel) + s + t/ (*fastr* ‘fast’, ‘firm’/*fasti* ‘tight spot’/*fasta* ‘to fast’, 7x), which together contribute a further 14.63% of the total. Of these, the latter two sequences are otherwise only attested in Old English.

5.3. From wordplay to worship: The functions of *frið*-collocations in Skaldic poetry

Some of the most common *frið*-collocations are found in poems celebrating the military exploits of prominent lords or war leaders. A representative example is *Sexstefja* ‘Six-Refrains’ (11th cent.), a 32-stanza poem composed by the skald Þjóðólfr Arnórsson in honour of Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson. In this context, the adjective *friðvandr* ‘peace-concerned’ refers to Haraldr and appears alongside *fastr* ‘firm’ and *fylking* ‘troop’ (st. 14). The latter collocate may be grouped with the near-homophonous collocate *fylkir* ‘ruler’⁹¹, the two forms echoing each other both phonetically and semantically. The pairing *friðr* + *fylkir* is attested in *Háttatal*, st. 17 by Snorri Sturluson, where it is combined with another *frið*-collocate, namely *fljótt* ‘quickly’, in a stanza celebrating the military prowess of the young Norwegian King Hákon Hákonarson⁹²: «Fljótt válkæt skilr fylkir friðlæ» ‘The angry leader quickly understands pondered peace-destruction [= battle]’⁹³.

⁹¹ Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, *Sexstefja*, st. 14, in *SkP* 2: 126-127.

⁹² For another example of the *friðr* + *fljótt* collocation used in a secular context, see Þormóður Kolbrúnarskáld’s *Þorgeirsdrápa*, st. 11, in *SkP* 5: 506.

⁹³ Snorri Sturluson, *Háttatal*, st. 17, in *SkP* 3: 1121.

The nexus between peace, stability, and prosperity is further developed by Gunnlaugr Leifsson in *Merlínusspá I* ‘The Prophecies of Merlin I’ (c. 1200), through the association of *friðr* ‘peace’ + *fylkis* ‘ruler’ + *fastr* ‘firm’ (st. 75), complemented by the noun *ár* ‘prosperity’ in the following line: «*Friðr es of fylkis fastr lífdaga; / brestr eigi þá ár í landi*» ‘Peace is fixed throughout the king’s lifetime; prosperity does not fail then in the land’⁹⁴.

The Skaldic repertoire also features instances of wordplay involving *friðr* and the proper name *Friðþjófr*, ‘peace-thief’, which may function as a kenning for ‘warrior’. In *Víkarsbálkr* ‘Vikarr’s Section’, the skald Starkaðr gamli Stórvirksson uses this interplay with ironic effect to depict the plight of King *Friðþjófr*. Despite bearing a name suggestive of aggression, *Friðþjófr* is compelled to sue for peace with his adversary *Vikarr*, owing to the weakened state of his military forces: «*réd Friðþjófr friðar at biðja, / þvíat Vikarr vægði ekki*» ‘*Friðþjófr* had to sue for peace because *Vikarr* did not yield’⁹⁵.

Hugsvinnsmál ‘The Sayings of the Wise-minded One’ (13th cent.), a verse translation of the *Disticha Catonis*, exemplifies the use of the paronomastic collocation *friðr* + *fyrðr* ‘man’ in two stanzas that reflect on the value of a peaceful and prudent disposition for those who seek honour and esteem: «*friðsamr við annan skyldi fyrða hvern; / sá er vill hæstan tír hafa*» ‘every man who wants to have the highest renown must [be] peaceful with another’⁹⁶.

Frið- and its collocates are frequently used in Skaldic poems on religious subjects, in which *friðr* may also mean ‘salvation’⁹⁷. A feature of continuity with OS poetry is the frequent use of kennings centred on the figure of Christ and His role as peacemaker, as well as that of the Father. In several poems, Christ is designated as *friðar veitir* ‘the Giver of peace’ (4x)⁹⁸ and *stæri friðar* ‘the Augmenter of peace’ (1x)⁹⁹, whose Incarnation in history led to the establishment of *fastan frið* ‘firm peace’ between God and humankind, as stated in the *drápa* called *Leiðarvísan* ‘Way-Guidance’ (12th cent.). This poem, rich in *frið*-collocations, offers a poetic rendering of the so-called Sunday Letter – also known as the Epistle from Heaven – attributed to Christ Himself, in which He urges believers to uphold the sanctity of Sunday and observe the Church’s feasts¹⁰⁰.

In the opening section of the poem (st. 11), the bestowal of *friðr* ‘peace’ is linked to the institution of Sunday, designated by God, the *fárskerðir* ‘diminisher of misfortune’¹⁰¹, as *friðkunnan dag* ‘the day of peace’ for *fyrðum* ‘men’. Those who honour its sanctity are promised peace by the Lord¹⁰². These themes recur later in the poem, particularly in the enumeration of key biblical events said to have taken place on a Sunday. In stanza 15,

⁹⁴ Gunnlaugr Leifsson, *Merlínusspá I*, st. 75, in *SkP* 8: 111.

⁹⁵ Starkaðr gamli Stórvirksson, *Víkarsbálkr*, st. 24, in *SkP* 8: 275.

⁹⁶ Anonymous Poems, *Hugsvinnsmál*, sts. 52 and 66, in *SkP* 7: 392-393, 401. In Gamli kanóki’s *Harmsól* ‘Sun of Sorrow’ (12th cent.), the compound *friðsamr* ‘peaceful’ is also used to characterise Christ who rose from the grave: «*á frægjum, / degi þriðja*» ‘on the famous third day’ (see st. 28, in *SkP* 7: 97).

⁹⁷ This meaning appears to emerge from a *lausavísa* preserved in the *Fourth Grammatical Treatise*, where God is referred to as «*heilags deilis friðar*» ‘the holy distributor of salvation’, to whom the whole world bows (Stanzas from the *Fourth Grammatical Treatise*, st. 5, in *SkP* 3: 578).

⁹⁸ *Plácitusdrápa* ‘*Drápa* about Plácitus’, st. 31, in *SkP* 7: 200-201; Gamli kanóki, *Harmsól*, st. 24, in *SkP* 7: 93-94; *Leiðarvísan*, st. 39, in *SkP* 7: 173-174; Kolbeinn Tumason, *Jónsvísur*, st. 1, in *SkP* 7: 224. See also the God-kenning *tínir friðar* ‘gatherer of peace’, Gamli kanóki, *Harmsól*, st. 55, in *SkP* 7: 122.

⁹⁹ *Máriudrápa*, st. 2, in *SkP* 7: 480.

¹⁰⁰ *Leiðarvísan*, in *SkP* 7: 137-138.

¹⁰¹ A comparable epithet, *fárskerðandi* ‘misfortune-diminisher’, which is used in the poem *Geisli* ‘Light Beam’ (dated 1153) in reference to Saint Óláfr, is associated with the collocation *fyrðar* ‘men’ and *friðarsýn* ‘vision of peace’ (Einarr Skúlason, *Geisli*, st. 63, in *SkP* 7: 58-59). The passage refers to the ultimate glory and peace that awaits the righteous in the heavenly Jerusalem. The poem consists of a long celebration of the holy King Óláfr, who brought Christianity to Norway.

¹⁰² *Leiðarvísan*, st. 11, in *SkP* 7: 150.

probably alluding to Lucifer's fall (Isaiah 14.12-20), the poet uses the collocation *fastr* + *friðr* to describe the firm peace that 'nimble Christ' established between earth and heaven: «*fimr Krístr setti frið fastan meðal láðs ok himna*»¹⁰³. A comparable attestation is found in stanza 37, which substitutes the frequent collocate *fastr* 'firm', 'secure' with the less deployed, almost homophonic noun *fasti* 'fire', 'blaze'¹⁰⁴, here used in its metaphorical meaning of 'strength':

Siðminningr fær sannan / seima Þróttr af dróttni / (Krístr gefr fyrðum) fasta / (friðar vón, þeims ann hónum)
 'The faithful Þróttr = Óðinn of riches [= MAN] receives true strength from the Lord; Christ gives to men who love him the hope of peace' (*Leiðarvísan*, st. 37, in *SkP* 7: 172).

Another variant of *fastr*, which gives rise to an interesting instance of wordplay, occurs in a *lausavísa* composed of four couplets that recount key episodes in the earthly life of Christ: His birth from the Virgin Mary, His circumcision, His baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist, and His threefold temptation by Satan in the wilderness. In the final couplet, the kenning *kiennari friðar* 'Teacher of peace' refers to Christ and is paired with the present participle *fastandi* 'fasting' from the verb *fasta*, which echoes the common *fastr* 'firm' or the noun *fasti*¹⁰⁵. Thus, the collocation points out how Christ, through fasting, endured and overcame temptation for the sake of humankind: «*fastandi bar freistni / friðar kiennari þrenna*» 'the Teacher of peace (= Christ) fasting bore a threefold temptation'¹⁰⁶.

According to the poet of *Leiðarvísan*, man must implore God for *friðr* 'peace' and strive to «*flærð at forðask*» 'avoid deception', so that, following the Last Judgement, he may *fljótt* 'quickly' gain access to His *friðr* 'fair' glory (st. 39)¹⁰⁷. The prospect of *farim heim* 'returning home' into *frið fullan* 'secure peace' after the Judgement is also evoked a few stanzas later (st. 41)¹⁰⁸. Beyond st. 39, the association of *friðr* and its homophonous counterpart *friðr* is further developed in the depiction of one of Christ's miracles, namely the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. This episode is described using a four-member collocation – *fljótt* 'quickly'¹⁰⁹ + *friðkennandi* 'Bringer of peace' + *ffjöldi* 'multitude' + *friðum* 'fair', which portrays the miracle as one that imparts peace and joy to the assembled crowd (st. 27)¹¹⁰.

¹⁰³ *Leiðarvísan*, st. 15, in *SkP* 7: 154. The same idea is reiterated in *Leiðarvísan*, st. 42, where the collocation *friðr* + *fastr* is expanded with the indication of the beneficiaries of this gift, namely *fyrðum* 'men' (*SkP* 7: 175-176: «*Krístr gefr fyrðum fastan / frið*» 'Christ gives people secure peace').

¹⁰⁴ Another significant variation of *fastr* 'firm' is offered by Eilífr Goðrúnarson's *Þórdrápa* (10th cent.), a poem on Þórr's adventurous journey into the realm of the giants to meet the giantess Geirröðr. In st. 14, one of the conflicts with the eternal adversaries is referred to through a collocation comprising three members: *færðr í fasta* 'brought into a tight spot' / + *friðsein* 'prevention of peace'. *Fasti*, which is only here attested in the meaning 'tight spot', is a nominal derivation from the adjective *fastr* 'solid', 'firm'; see *SkP* 3: 105.

¹⁰⁵ See above.

¹⁰⁶ Stanzas from the *Fourth Grammatical Treatise*, st. 34, in *SkP* 3: 611.

¹⁰⁷ *Leiðarvísan*, st. 39, in *SkP* 7: 173-174.

¹⁰⁸ *Leiðarvísan*, st. 41, in *SkP* 7: 175. Similarly, the idea of salvation is also expressed in the *Máriudrápa*, st. 8 (*SkP* 7: 485) using the collocation *fljótt* 'quickly' + *fullan* 'full' + *frið* 'peace' («*í frið fullan*» 'into secure peace').

¹⁰⁹ The collocate *ffjöl-* 'many' also occurs in Snorri's *Háttatal*, st. 43, where it is used in a hand-kenning to describe a generous man who bestows gold with magnanimity (*Fróða* 'Fróði' + *friðbygg* 'the peace-barley of Fróði' + *ffjölvinjat alinveldi* 'the many-meadowed elbow-realm'; see *SkP* 3: 1152 and n. 71).

¹¹⁰ *Leiðarvísan*, st. 27, in *SkP* 7: 165-166. See also *friðbeiðir* 'peace-promoter' [= God] + *friðan* 'glorious', *Plácitusdrápa*, st. 39, in *SkP* 7: 205. A more restricted version of this collocation is attested in Einar

The restoration of peace between God and humankind, accomplished through Christ's Passion and death on the Cross, is referred to in *Liknarbraut* 'The Way of Grace' (13th cent.)¹¹¹ as *friðarmerki heims* 'peace-sign of the world', a designation for the Cross and its redemptive function. Later in the poem, the Crucifixion is evoked through the elaborate metaphor of the scales (*skálum friðar* '[in] scales of peace')¹¹², in which Christ, described as the *verð heims* 'Price of the world', is weighed. Through these scales, declared the most *frægr* 'famous' of their kind, peace is secured and atonement achieved.

The collocate *frægð* 'renown' occurs in *Máriudrápa*, a poem dedicated to the Virgin Mary, where she is described as «*holl guðs, frægðar fylling, / friðar gnótt og likn ótta*» 'temple of God, fulfilment of renown, abundance of peace, and comfort of fear' (st. 38)¹¹³. In this stanza, the pairing *friðr* + *frægð* is expanded with a third member, namely *fylling* 'fulfilment', a variant of the collocate *fullr*. *Friðr* and *fullr* occur once in the compound *friðarfullr*, attested in *Máriuvisur II* 'Visur about Mary II', st. 17, where it characterises the Virgin Mary. In this context, the adjective gives rise to a paronomastic play through the association with *fljóð* 'woman' in the phrase «*friðarfull hjálpin fljóða*» 'peaceful help of women'¹¹⁴, where *fljóð* evokes both the adverb *fljótt* 'quickly' and the noun *fföld* 'multitude', two other *frið*-collocates.

Worthy of particular attention is a sophisticated three-member collocation addressing a core concept of the new religion, the Trinity, in the *Heilags anda drápa* 'Drápa about the Holy Spirit'. In this context, the Holy Spirit is qualified with the epithet *friðskýrðr* 'peace-glorified', an adjective that is collocatively associated with *föður* God 'the Father', and together with the *sonr* 'Son' contributes to the depiction of the divine unity, which is collectively characterised as «*saðri fylking dýrðar*» 'the true host of glory'¹¹⁵.

The investigation of the *frið*-node within the Skaldic corpus reveals a productive interplay between lexical complexity and poetic craftsmanship. Despite the technical and stylistic distinctions that set Skaldic poetry apart from Old English, Old Saxon, and even, to some extent, Old Norse Eddic verse, *frið*-collocations remain prominently represented in this tradition. The skalds, poets of exceptional formal discipline, wielded paronomasia with great mastery, layering phonetic and semantic echoes to probe themes of peace, strife, and reconciliation with considerable rhetorical power. Their ability to embed *frið*-related motifs within poetic narratives ranging from royal encomia to theological reflection attests to a capacity for innovation operating within the framework of inherited tradition.

5. Conclusion

The comparative study of the collocative behaviour of FRITH- confirms that collocations serve as expressions of a shared stylistic and cultural heritage. They encode evolving conceptions of peace, protection, and divine favour across a range of historical and

Skúlason's *Geisli*: in stanza 67, the ruler is characterised as *friðgegn* 'peace-loving' and responsible for *ffölða* 'a multitude' of miracles (*SkP* 7: 61-62).

¹¹¹ *Liknarbraut*, st. 32, in *SkP* 7: 262-264.

¹¹² *Liknarbraut*, st. 36, in *SkP* 7: 270-271.

¹¹³ *Máriudrápa*, st. 38, in *SkP* 7: 509-510.

¹¹⁴ *Máriuvisur II*, st. 17, in *SkP* 7: 713. The collocation returns in *Máriuvisur I* 'Visur about Mary I' (st. 25), referring to a woman who, thanks to the Virgin's miracle, successfully passed an ordalic test (*fara í friði* 'go in peace' / + *fljóð* 'woman'); see *SkP* 7: 696-697.

¹¹⁵ *Heilags anda drápa*, st. 16, in *SkP* 7: 465-466. Another possible interpretation of the phrase might be a reference to the angelic hosts of heaven.

religious contexts. The analysis has highlighted the central role of homophony and semi-homophony in shaping preferential lexical pairings, thus enabling poets to exploit phonetic affinities in crafting verses enriched with semantic and stylistic complexity. These sound-based associations, often extending beyond immediate semantic correspondence, reveal a poetic continuum across the Germanic world, that balances inherited formulaic traditions with creative innovation. This dynamic is especially apparent in the abundant attestations from the Old English and Skaldic poetry, both of which attest to the adaptability of collocative practices in response to changing themes and characters.

The main phonological patterns associated with FRITH may be summarised as follows:

Phonological patterns	OE	OS	ON Eddic poetry	ON Skaldic poetry	Averages
/f + (v) + r/	35.33%	47.16%	50.00%	47.19%	44.92%
/f + (v) + l/	21.80%	32.07%	10.00%	38.20%	25.51%
/f + (v) + n + d/	6.01%	15.09%	30.00%	3.37%	13.61%
/f + (v) + g/	7.51%	5.66%	0.00%	0.00%	3.29%
/f + (v) + s + t/	9.77%	0.00%	0.00%	7.86%	4.40%
/f + (v) + d/ð [+ m]/	6.01%	0.00%	0.00%	3.37%	2.34%

The /f + (v) + r/ sequence emerges as the dominant pattern across all corpora, demonstrating remarkable formal consistency. With a high average of 44.92%, it represents a core phonological structure in the lexicon of FRITH-collocates. The second most prominent sequence, /f + (v) + l/, averaging 25.51%, is especially productive in Old Saxon (32.07%) and Skaldic poetry (38.20%), where it benefits from several morphophonological expansions. The distribution of these two major sequences underscores a poetic preference for sonant-rich lexical structures in FRITH-related expressions.

Beyond these main groupings, several secondary patterns also warrant attention. The third cross-linguistic sequence, /f + (v) + n + d/, is most prominent in the smaller Old Saxon (15.09%) and Eddic (30.00%) corpora, and less so in Old English (6.01%) and Skaldic poetry (3.37%). A fourth sequence, /f + (v) + g/, is modestly represented in Old English (7.51%) and Old Saxon (5.66%). Finally, the patterns /f + (v) + s + t/ and /f + (v) + d/ð [+ m]/ are attested exclusively in the two larger corpora (Old English and Skaldic poetry).

Future research into other collocative nodes and their diachronic trajectories holds the promise of further clarifying the lexical architecture of medieval Germanic poetics. By tracing the interaction of tradition and innovation, and by uncovering the generative role of sound in shaping meaning, such inquiry may enhance our appreciation of the principles that governed the composition of verse, principles where formal patterning, phonological affinity, and semantic echoing converge to produce the poetic forms characteristic of the Germanic tradition.

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