

Fagfællebedømte artikler og ph.d.-præsentationer

Praising the Pagan Gods: N.F.S. Grundtvig's Civil Religious Poetization of the Pagan Past

Sophie Bønding

N.F.S. Grundtvig is widely regarded as a founding father of the modern day Church of Denmark and of the Danish nation. Yet, the structural isomorphism (or parallelism) of his reflections concerning community-formation and social cohesion in the Christo-religious and the national-secular spheres of his authorship has received little scholarly attention. Applying the scholarly concept of “civil religion” as a heuristic tool, this article argues that Grundtvig’s use of Old Norse mythology in the secular sphere of Danish communal life was significantly influenced by religious modes of thinking and by exegetical strategies acquired through his theological education and pastoral office. Focusing on the *Brage-Snak* lectures (1844), this article argues that Grundtvig treated Old Norse mythology as “civil religious” scripture by expounding and actualizing it in relation to current secular affairs through a typological strategy of exegesis. Thereby, he hoped to initiate a “civil religious” awakening through which Old Norse mythology would become part of Danish oral culture and be cultivated as the root of collective self-awareness. In these terms, Grundtvig attempted to channel from Old Norse mythology a world view and an ethos that were authentic to the people, and the *Brage-Snak* lectures as performances can be seen as attempts to make world view and ethos merge and spill over into every-day life.

The twin interests of church and nation in Grundtvig’s authorship are well known. His ambitions for religious and national revivals are widely

recognized and part of the general scholarly discourse on Grundtvig.¹ As a religious reformer, he denounced the text-centred focus of contemporary university theology and, in his visions for educational reform, he exhibited similar disdain for fixation on the written word. Instead, he wanted to build the Christian church community and the secular national community upon the “living word.” In the church- and nation-oriented spheres of his authorship, Grundtvig reflected on how to establish community and communal identity and how to foster social cohesion. Yet, despite points of convergence between his twin interests of church and nation, the structural isomorphism (or parallelism) of his reflections on community formation in the two spheres has not received much scholarly attention. Thus, the present article aims to shed light on an area of Grundtvig research that, although not entirely neglected (Baunvig 2013; 2014), deserves further scholarly attention.

In what follows, I focus on Grundtvig’s ideas about and initiatives towards introducing Old Norse mythology as the foundation of a Danish secular, national community. While it has been noticed that Grundtvig’s ideas about history and his treatment of historical material were significantly influenced by Christian frames of interpretation (Malone 1940; Vind 1999; Auken 2005), and while Old Norse mythology has been regarded as a crucial part of his historical construct (Holm 2001), the religious flavour of Grundtvig’s utilization of Old Norse mythology remains insufficiently studied (although touched upon by Baunvig 2014). In this article, I examine Grundtvig’s treatment of Old Norse mythology through the lens of the scholarly concept of civil religion – especially as defined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) and Robert N. Bellah (1967). This perspective can help identify and clarify religious assumptions and modes of thinking that underlie Grundtvig’s use of Old Norse mythology in the national sphere. Thereby, it can help clarify the structural isomorphism of Grundtvig’s use of Old Norse mythological material in the national sphere and his use of biblical material in the churchly² sphere. It is argued

¹ This is evident from a wide range of scholarly works, including Malone (1940), Lundgreen-Nielsen (1997), Baunvig (2013), Korsgaard (2018), and Holm (2019).

² The term “churchly” is a direct translation of the Danish “kirkelig” which means “pertaining to the church.” Grundtvig advocated a non-confessional State Church that allowed for different denominations, or confessional groupings, within the overarching churchly community (Lyby 1993; Holm 2012).

that Grundtvig's treatment of Old Norse mythology can adequately be described as an attempt at a civil religious awakening. It can also be argued that Grundtvig sought to introduce Old Norse mythology as "civil religious scripture," which could form the bedrock of the secular, national community insofar as it was actualized and, thereby, vitalized among the Danes as a living symbolic repertoire and a narrative story world.

At the outset, it should be emphasized that the concept of "civil religion" is an etic category, a heuristic scholarly tool. Therefore, I do not suggest that Grundtvig would have used this concept to designate his ideas about and ambitions for the Danish national community, had it been available to him.³ Nevertheless, it is a useful conceptual tool for analysing what Grundtvig did with Old Norse mythology. Thus, this article is a religio-historical contribution to what is known as the "mythological" branch of Grundtvig research, as especially represented by literary scholars Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen (1965; 1980; 1994; 2018) and Sune Auken (2005; forthcoming). In addition, this article aims to strengthen the connection between the "mythological" branch of study and branches focused on Grundtvig's ideas about the Danish people, nation, and state (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1980; 1992; 1994; Damsholt 1995; 2003; Vind 1999; Møller 2014; Baunvig 2013; 2014; Hall, Korsgaard & Pedersen, ed. 2015).⁴

Empirical focus and historical context

This article is focused on the mid-nineteenth century, beginning in 1832 with *Nordens Mythologi* which was Grundtvig's first prose publication to express ideas about the significance of Old Norse mythology for the founding of the Danish national community.⁵ The textual focus is on *Brage-Snak* from 1844 which presents the same view of mythology as

³ Grundtvig was familiar with Rousseau's *Du Contract Social* (1762) where the concept *religion civile* was coined. But the scholarly concept as developed in the modern Study of Religion was, obviously, unknown to him.

⁴ Other important contributors to the "mythological" branch of study are Helge Toldberg (1946; 1950), Kaj Thaning (1963), Andreas Haarder (1983), and Ægidius (1985).

⁵ I do not regard 1832 as a radical break in Grundtvig's practices of interpreting Old Norse mythology. As Auken notes, *Nordens Mythologi* (1832) is simply the

defined in *Nordens Mythologi* (1832), but which, due to its genre, offers especially interesting perspectives into how Grundtvig used Old Norse mythology. Whereas *Nordens Mythologi* (1832) outlines theoretical views of Old Norse mythology and presents interpretations of central myths and mythological figures, *Brage-Snak* (1844) is a collection of manuscripts from a series of public lectures. While *Brage-Snak* does explicate Grundtvig's theoretical views of mythology, it more tellingly puts his treatment of the material into practice and demonstrates how it can be actualized and vitalized in the present.⁶

Grundtvig believed that Old Norse mythology offered a solution to pertinent challenges facing Danish society in his day. In both spheres of his authorship (the churchly and the secular), he reacted to the individualization, differentiation, and secularization of the modern age;⁷ in fact, these processes seem to have determined and necessitated the very split of his authorship into two spheres. In other words, Grundtvig was a thinker of secularization. To use Max Weber's terms, Grundtvig accepted that in modern society, religion and secular affairs would come to constitute two different spheres of rationality (Weber 2002 [1919]). This occasioned him to reflect on the foundation of secular society now that it could no longer be founded on confessional Christianity. Thus, the present study is concerned with Grundtvig as a theorist of secular community formation (cf. Korsgaard 2004; Damsholt 1995; 2003; Baunvig 2014).⁸

point where Grundtvig brings his theoretical exposition of Old Norse mythology to align with his poetical practices since 1815 (Auken 2005, 299, 529-530).

⁶ For an introduction to *Brage-Snak*, including a discussion of its genre and the relation between the lectures as text and as events, see Bønding (2017). For the public lecture as a genre in Grundtvig's works, see Baunvig (2014).

⁷ The challenge of the modern age to the formation of national communities was, of course, a Europe-wide phenomenon, see below.

⁸ Thaning (1963) and others (cf. Nielsen 2002) have understood Grundtvig as a theologian of secularization. I agree that Grundtvig as a thinker of secularization was concerned with adapting Christianity to the modern age but want to stress that this seems (at least primarily) to be predicated on a level-headed acceptance of secularization as an unavoidable fact. Space does not allow me to pursue this any further, nor can I treat Thaning's disputed thesis about this secularizing motion in 1832 to constitute what Thaning has termed Grundtvig's existential break with himself. For an attempt to test Thaning's thesis through digital methods, see Baunvig & Nielbo (2017).

In more concrete terms, Grundtvig accepted the collapse of Christian monoculture as an inevitable fact. This collapse meant that neither the Danish monarchy nor the State Church could maintain its status as an incontestable societal institution. The monarchy was being challenged by ideas about democratic constitutions, and the State Church was losing authority as Christianity was no longer accepted as the obvious pre-condition for human existence. New common frames of reference were needed (Bønding 2018; forthcoming). In addition, the French Revolution (1789-1799) loomed large in Grundtvig's writings as an intimidating lesson that had to be remembered when preparing Danish society and the Danish Church for the new age. Revolutionary currents still running through Europe, especially visible in the revolutions of the 1830s (and again in 1848), served as reminders of the urgency of reform (Nevers 2011, 65-93).⁹ As the following sections demonstrate, Grundtvig responded to that urgency by seeking to introduce Old Norse mythology as the foundation of a Danish cultural community, and he attempted to vitalize it as a symbolic and narrative universe that could provide a new frame of reference and a source of social cohesion for the socially and geographically heterogeneous Danish population.¹⁰

Gods and myths as poetical creations

In *Nordens Mythologi* (1832), Grundtvig proposed that the Christian-religious and the human-secular dimensions of human life belong to distinct spheres. He singled out Old Norse mythology as an important material that, on the one hand, contained a key to understanding human life as

⁹ Grundtvig's scepticism about democracy is well-known (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1998; Nevers 2011; Korsgaard 2015). Around 1849, the public was generally sceptical about democracy which was associated with revolution and societal disintegration (Nevers 2011), only a small group of people (connected to the Hippodrome movement) saw democracy as a positive phenomenon (Nygaard 2011). Still, it was generally accepted that a constitutional government that would result from the constitutional debate would contain a democratic element (Møller 2014, 543).

¹⁰ Behind this formulation lies Ove Korsgaard's demonstration that Grundtvig's lifetime saw the transition from an age of estates to an age of "the people" (Korsgaard 2004; 2015).

a universal phenomenon and, on the other hand, was crucial for understanding the particular Nordic way of life (Thaning 1963).¹¹ This proposal re-evaluated the status of pre-Christian paganism, at least of its conceptual content, while rejecting its ritual dimension.

In the broader European (and Danish) perspective, Grundtvig was by no means alone in this positive re-evaluation of the pre-Christian past. From Germany to Estonia, Norway, and Britain, cultural “influencers” of the time (re)invented the pre-Christian pasts of their respective national communities in an attempt to create a sense of legitimacy and autonomy and/or to underpin emancipatory ambitions. Indeed, mythography largely constituted a form of nation building (Shippey 2005; Leerssen 2016). This cultural climate included a general discursive shift whereby traditional negative stereotypes of barbaric pagans were transformed to positive images of Europe’s indigenous populations, as their pre-Christian world views came to be interpreted as expressions of primeval national characters (cf. Halink 2017, 479; Zernack 2018). The search for national authenticity singled out the categories of vernacular mythology and language as the primary links to the peoples’ primordial pasts. Mythology and language were therefore labelled as individual peoples’ authentic mode of self-articulation and invoked as anchors for the new national communities under formation. This was a Romantic paradigm, profoundly influenced by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), not least by the idea of *das Volksgeist*, a people’s collective spirit (e.g. Herder 1792; Leerssen 2013, 2018; Liamin 2018). As regards the establishment of mythology as a national category, it was Grundtvig’s contemporary Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) who became the major European trendsetter with his *Deutsche Mythologie* in 1835 (published after Grundtvig’s *Nordens Mythologi* in 1832 but well before *Brage-Snak* in 1844; a second edition of *Deutsche Mythologie* followed in 1844). This work was widely disseminated and widely read – undergirded by Grimm’s encouragements to intelligentsia across Europe to establish their own national mythologies (Shippey 2005; Halink 2018).¹²

¹¹ By presenting this as a matter of consensus, I do not mean to disregard the many critics of Thaning’s thesis that point to continuity in Grundtvig’s thinking across the year 1832 (for a brief overview, see Auken 2005, 58-62).

¹² In retrospect, it is clear that Grimm attempted to establish a new Romantic paradigm in comparative mythology as a counterpart to the revolutionary New Philology, which by this time was well established, seminally influenced by

Grundtvig, along with like-minded contemporary Danes, fiercely opposed German appropriation of Old Norse mythology which the Danes themselves had appropriated as Danish and Nordic heritage. Grundtvig was, nevertheless, inspired by the same Romantic ideas, seeing Old Norse mythology as a vital mode of articulation of the spirit of the people.¹³ Thus, with the Romantic paradigm amounting to outright “mythomania” (Halink 2018) on a Europe-wide scale, the imagological battle over claim to “the North” as a transnational concept and over Old Norse or Germanic mythology as cultural heritage constitutes a tacit backdrop to this article (see Shippey 2005; Leerssen 2016; Grage & Mohinke 2017; Halink 2018). While Grundtvig’s concern for establishing a collective Danish identity cannot be separated from this international battle, the focus of this article is his concern for defining the in-group among the members themselves or, in other words, to create a sense of a “we” as a relevant and meaningful category.

The *Brage-Snak* lectures, given in 1843-1844 and published in 1844, constitute a privileged entry-point for an exploration of Grundtvig’s attempt to create a Danish cultural community. In these lectures, Grundtvig argued against a number of his proclaimed enemies but his main adversaries were advocates of a scholarly, rationalist approach to mytholo-

Grimm’s own *Deutsche Grammatik* (Shippey 2005; Halink 2018). This New Philology is not to be confused with the much more recent so-called “new” or “material” philology that has formed part of contemporary philology since the 1990s (Nichols 1990; see also Driscoll 2010).

¹³ Even Rasmus Rask (1787-1832), who did not share his contemporaries’ Romantic sentiments, took their side in the Danish-German battle, sharing the view of Old Norse mythology as Scandinavian heritage (Blom 2013; forthcoming). Lundgreen-Nielsen (1983) has explored the influence of Romanticism on Grundtvig’s view of Old Norse mythology (also Auken 2005, 15-45). Lundgreen-Nielsen understands the Romantic influence on Grundtvig as a row of isolated points of contact with specific Romantic thinkers (Herder, Fichte, Schilling, among others) scattered throughout Grundtvig’s mythological works. He concludes that Grundtvig was inspired by Romanticism as a literary and philosophical trend in his youth but later distanced himself from it. However, he briefly indicates a post-1832 acceptance of central Romantic ideas as part of a general cultural current (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1983, 41). It is this broader cultural current, also inspired by Herder, that I wish to draw attention to. On the distinction between a narrow and a broad Romanticism, see Baunvig (2013, 29-36).

gy.¹⁴ The first lecture included a number of introductory remarks where Grundtvig laid out his approach to mythology, making it clear that he did not believe in the gods:

of course I believe as little in the gods and goddesses of Greeks and Northmen as in those of the Egyptians and the Chinese; but I can see that all the gods and goddesses that people have created, have their living basis in the people and in the mouth of the skald that created them; they therefore hover vividly [Danish *levende*: ‘alive’] before my eyes, ... so, to me, the myths of the peoples are the most vivid expressions of their highest thoughts, their deepest feelings, and their clearest sight, their base-poetry or the prophecy-song, which was sung by their cradle.¹⁵

Grundtvig understood pagan gods and myths about them as products of human imagination – poetic creations specific to each individual people whose collective thoughts, feelings, and visions they expressed. The myths of a people were their “base-poetry” [Grund-Poesi], their authentic self-articulation. He imagined the people as a collective entity and saw their mythology as rooted in their collective past (“sung by their cradle”).¹⁶ Moreover, he emphasized the rootedness of myths in an oral mode of communication (stemming from the “mouth of the skald” and “sung” to the people). We shall return to this below.

¹⁴ Grundtvig’s adversaries often remain unnamed, but a major representative of this view was Finnur Magnússon (1781-1847) (Bønding; forthcoming).

¹⁵ jeg troer naturligviis ligesaalidt paa Grækens og Nordboers som paa Ægypters og Chinesers Guder og Gudinder; men jeg kan see, at alle de Guder og Gudinder, som Folk har skabt, de havde deres levende Grund i det Folk og den Skjalde-Mund, der skabde dem, derfor svæve de mig levende for Øine, ... saa Folkenes Myther er mig de livligste Udtryk for deres høieste Tanker, dybeste Følelser og klareste Blik, deres Grund-Poesi eller Spaadoms-Visen, der blev sunget for deres Vugge (1844, 9).

¹⁶ Scholars have thoroughly described Grundtvig’s views of phylo- and ontogenetic development of individual peoples and connected those views to his understanding of universal history (Vind 1999; Baunvig 2013, 65-67). These views of Grundtvig’s largely match general understandings of *Völker* reaching back to Herder (e.g. 1792, cf. above).

Grundtvig further presented his understanding of Old Norse mythology as a figurative, poetic language, having two functions: it could work as an artistic language and, far more importantly, it could serve as a key to self-awareness.

Not only will their natural image-language in the present age¹⁷ be an artistic language which they can use, just as vivid and merry as the German and the scholastic languages are dead and boring, but they [the people] will also be able to mirror themselves in it with all their natural dispositions and desires, virtues and vices, and learn from it what all peoples are now lacking yet cannot live without, knowledge about themselves, about their distinctive human life, which in order to flourish, must first and foremost be continued.¹⁸

The Nordic people had its own unique life. This life had a telos and in order to reach this telos, the people had to orient themselves towards their mythology, which, as a poetic image-language, bore a potential for self-identification. It contained information about who they truly were, what their dispositions and desires, virtues, and vices were. Through it, the people could attain knowledge about themselves. Thus, Old Norse mythology was a guide for the people's collective self-development in tune with its inherent nature. The life of the people had a destined trajectory that was currently broken and had to be mended in order for the people's life to unfold and flourish (Bønding 2018; forthcoming).¹⁹ This is why, Old Norse

¹⁷ *Vidskabs-Tiden* (*Vidskab* meaning philosophy) is one of the terms Grundtvig used for the time in which he lived, cf. his understanding of universal history (Vind 1999).

¹⁸ ikke blot vil deres *naturlige Billed-Sprog* være dem i Vidskabs-Tiden et *Konst-Sprog*, ligesaa livligt og lysteligt, som det *Tydske* og *Skolastiske* er dødt og kiedsommeligt, men de vil kunne speile sig deri med alle deres naturlige Anlæg og Attraaer, Dyder og Lyder, og deraf lære, hvad nu alle Folk fattes og kan dog igrunnen ikke undvære, Forstand paa sig selv, paa sit eiendommelige Menneske-Liv, der, for at klare sig og kronas, maa fremfor Alt virkelig *fortsættes* (1844, 9).

¹⁹ Grundtvig shared this understanding of the present as deficient with nation builders all over Europe at the time (cf. Smith 1997; Leerssen 2016). His understanding of mythology as a source to the essence of the people is clearly influenced by Romantic ideas reaching back to Herder.

mythology needed to be propagated among the entire Danish population – through folk-enlightenment.

This understanding of mythology is consistent with Grundtvig's theoretical exposition in *Nordens Mythologi* (1832), where he separated Old Norse mythology from the sphere of religion. Mythology did not contain any religious truth but was a poetic expression of an authentic Nordic outlook on life; the myths and the mythological agents in them were attestations of how Nordic peoples once understood their world and their place in it. As poetic articulations of a collectively held world view, Old Norse mythology could be viewed as an anthropological rather than a theological matter, and as such it did not clash with Christianity (Auken 2005, 489-491).²⁰

Old Norse mythology as civil religious scripture

The Danish historian Michael Böss notes that scholarly examinations of Grundtvig's ideas concerning the Danish people are rarely explicitly founded in theory (Böss 2013, 57). This article aims, therefore, to bring theoretical depth to our understanding of Grundtvig's use of Old Norse mythology as a means to establish a cultural community among the Danish population. The concept of civil religion is a useful heuristic tool that can help us grasp the religious flavour of Grundtvig's utilization of Old Norse mythology. It is an analytical category connected to concerns of national cohesion and the legitimacy of the state. The concept of civil religion first entered modern political thought in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Du contrat sociale* [The Social Contract] from 1762. Addressing the relation between religion and state in a modern religiously pluralistic society, Rousseau argued that religion was fundamental to securing the order of

²⁰ Grundtvig was not unique in this separation of mythology from religion; this distinction had been the prevalent (although not uncontradicted) understanding among European intelligentsia since P.H. Mallet's *Historie de Dannemarc* (1763 2nd ed.) where, in vein of the enlightenment, pre-Christian Nordic myth was classified as poetry and treated separately from expositions of pre-Christian Nordic religion (Zernack 2018, 260). Nevertheless, in his early mythological writings (until 1810), Grundtvig did attribute a confessional dimension to Old Norse mythology as the remains of Nordic paganism.

the state. As traditional organized religion (Christianity), in his opinion, only led to strife and oppression, he advocated a *religion civile* separate from organized religion and consisting of a set of sentiments, convictions, and commitments formulated in dogma that calls for “the existence of the powerful, intelligent, beneficent, prescient, and provident Divinity, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and the laws” (Rousseau 1997 [1762], 150-151).²¹ The purpose of this civil religion was to secure social cohesion – the loyalty of subjects towards the state and towards each other. Alongside this civil religion, Rousseau left room for individual religious sentiments as a private matter, as long as they did not interfere with the unifying sentiments of the entire society. He found inspiration in the unity of pagan religion and government in ancient societies (notably in ancient Greece), although he understood paganism itself to be founded on error (Rousseau 1997, 147).

While Rousseau coined the phrase *religion civile*, Robert N. Bellah introduced the concept of civil religion as a heuristic tool in his seminal article “Civil Religion in America” (Bellah 2006 [1967]). He transformed Rousseau’s concept, emphasizing a Durkhemian understanding of religion by defining civil religion – like any other religion – as “a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity” (Bellah 2006, 233).²² In other words, civil religion, according to this definition, consists of beliefs, symbols, rituals, and things understood as sacred (i.e. set apart and forbidden)²³ which a community holds in common, as well as an institution in which the community is anchored. Bellah analyzes a number of central political speeches and describes how a civil religious consciousness – a “form of religious self-understanding” (Bellah 2006, 225) – has developed in the United

²¹ Along with these positive dogmas, Rousseau also formulated one negative dogma: “intolerance” because it was “a feature of the cult we have rejected.” (1997, 151). He emphasized that civil and theological intolerance were inseparable, because “[i]t is impossible to live in peace with people one believes to be damned; to love them would be to hate God who punishes them” (1997, 151).

²² Bellah’s definition of religion is based on that of Durkheim (1995 [1912], 44).

²³ According to Durkheim, “sacred things” are simply “things set apart and forbidden” (Durkheim 1995, 44), that is, separate from other (profane or ordinary) things because they are ascribed special significance (Durkheim 1995, 33-44).

States since the Colonial Period. This religious self-understanding is, according to Bellah, first visible in a clear tendency to interpret the history of the American people on the basis of biblical archetypes, perceiving the Colonial Period in terms of an Old Testament by construing America as a new Israel and interpreting the Civil War in light of the New Testament, for example, by regarding Abraham Lincoln as a saviour (Bellah 2006). Secondly, Bellah argues that this civil religion (serving “as a genuine vehicle of national religious self-understanding” (Bellah 2006, 233)) expresses the idea that the nation has a manifest destiny. And thirdly, he emphasizes that God figures as an important symbol in the political speeches, serving to secure support in specific political situations. However, this is not the god of any specific confessional religion (Christian or Judaic) but simply one who “is actively involved in history, with a special concern for America” (Bellah 2006, 232).²⁴ Bellah concludes that

behind civil religion at every point lie biblical archetypes: Exodus, Chosen People, Promised Land, New Jerusalem, and Sacrificial Death and Rebirth. But it is still genuinely American and genuinely new. It has its own prophets and its own martyrs, its own sacred events and sacred places, its own solemn rituals and symbols. (Bellah 2006, 245)

On the basis of a reading of Grundtvig’s *Mands Minde* [Within Living Memory] lectures, given in 1838 (and published in 1877), and with reference to Rousseau and Bellah, Katrine Baunvig has suggested that Grundtvig’s ambitions for creating a Danish community rooted in the history of the motherland can be understood as an attempt at a civil religious awakening (Baunvig 2014, 80-81, 87-88). She argues that in *Mands Minde*, Grundtvig clearly perceives Danish history as divided into two periods, structurally matching the division identified by Bellah in American civil religious thought. The first is an “Old Testament period,” a mythical period conceived of as a Nordic Old Testament period, as known from Old Norse mythology, while the second is a historical “New Testament

²⁴ Bellah comments that the “God of the civil religion is not only rather ‘unitarian,’ he is also on the austere side, much more related to order, law, and right than to salvation and love. Even though he is somewhat deist in cast, he is by no means simply a watchmaker God. He is actively interested and involved in history, with a special concern for America” (Bellah 2006, 232).

period,” starting with the abolition of the Adscription in 1788.²⁵ Thus, Baunvig argues that in *Mands Minde*, Grundtvig treated the history of the Danish people as a civil religious gospel and that his folk-enlightenment project had the purpose of awakening the people to an interest in these two historical periods (Baunvig 2014, 87-88). In addition, Baunvig also highlights Grundtvig’s tendency to speak about his folk-enlightenment project in religious terms as “the joyous news” (i.e. gospel) [den glædelige Nyhed] (Grundtvig 1877, 338; Baunvig 2014, 81).

Baunvig’s arguments are convincing. The religious flavour and connotations of Grundtvig’s treatment of Danish history are conspicuous. However, as *Mands Minde* is primarily concerned with contemporary history (i.e. the period 1788-1838), Grundtvig does not pay focus to Old Norse mythology in this text. Therefore, Baunvig bases her claim that Grundtvig understood Old Norse mythology as an Old Testament of the North on a reference to Auken (2005, 332-335, 563-619). Baunvig’s conclusion is valid, but there is more to be said, especially about Grundtvig’s treatment of Old Norse mythology as civil religious scripture and his attempt to actualize and vitalize it as a means to foster social cohesion.

Again, the *Brage-Snak* lectures (1844) constitute a fruitful vantage point for deeper understanding of the role Grundtvig carved out for Old Norse mythology. In *Brage-Snak*, Grundtvig unmistakably treated Old Norse myths as a form of scripture: he treated them as parables that he could expound in the present just as a pastor expounds Christian scripture in a sermon – a practice that Grundtvig qua his pastoral office was well-versed in. In the lectures, Grundtvig acted as a civil religious pastor before his audience in the lecture hall, just as a pastor would before his congregation in a church. The entire setting of the *Brage-Snak* lectures – if viewed as performances – emulates the ritual setting of the church sermon. Moreover, his exegeses of myth represents a mixture of two subgenres of homilies – the congregational homily and the revival homily. These points of similarity closely match Baunvig’s observations about how Grundtvig used modern history in *Mands Minde* (Baunvig 2014, 86-88). Thus, Grundtvig treated

²⁵ The abolition of adscription by decree of 20 June 1788 was the hallmark of a number of agrarian reforms issued by The Great Agricultural Commission (1786-1816) between 1788 and 1800. It ended the prohibition imposed on young men in 1733 which forbade them to move away from the estate where they were born. Adscription was effectually phased out and ended by 1800 (Holmgaard 1999).

Old Norse mythology as civil religious scripture, and he expounded it in relation to secular affairs, just as he would expound biblical material in relation to Christian affairs.

In his treatment of Old Norse mythology as civil religious scripture, Grundtvig was clearly influenced by traditional practices of biblical exegesis. In his 2001 study of Grundtvig's reverberation poems [efterklingsdigte] in *Dannevirke* (1816-1819), Anders Holm argues that Grundtvig's view of history is significantly influenced by typological or figural biblical exegesis which treats events, persons, or statements in the Old Testament as prefigurations or foreshadowings of events, persons, or statements in the New Testament. The typological mind-set reflected in this mode of interpretation is not focused on historical events as connected by causality but as mirroring each other in new forms. It is a prophetic view of history governed by providence (Holm 2001, 23-32). Holm argues that Grundtvig transferred this hermeneutical practice to his interpretation of history, understanding events in the history of Denmark (sometimes mythological events) as hermeneutic points of reference that could illuminate or explain events and matters of the present, while these, in turn, were understood as renewals and explanations of these past events (2001, 131).²⁶ Holm refers to this practice as Grundtvig's "biblically founded, typological view of history" [bibelfunderede typologiske historiesyn] (Holm 2001, 136).

To Holm's point it should be added that Grundtvig drew inspiration for a typological approach in the medieval text corpus – the sources through which he studied Old Norse mythology. The typological mode of thinking figures prominently in many of these texts, as their medieval Scandinavian authors attempted to reconcile the pre-Christian paganism of their ancestors with their own Christian worldviews and to link "the pre-Christian history of the North to its Christian sequel" (W. Weber 2001, 149; see also Clunies Ross 2005, 121-124).²⁷ Grundtvig likely found in-

²⁶ Holm draws on Erich Aurbach's seminal essay "Figura" (1959 [1944]) which explores the emergence of the figural mode of interpretation in the writings of the church fathers (especially Tertullian and Augustin) and its development throughout the Middle Ages.

²⁷ Typological thinking gained prevalence throughout the eleventh century but was likely older. It was fundamental to the continued utilization of pre-Christian mythology and images in medieval texts, including the homiletic genre, just as it

spiration for a typological approach to history not least in the writings of Snorri Sturluson and Saxo Grammaticus, both of whom applied this form of thinking and who were both learned Christians (on Snorri, see Clunies Ross 2005, 121-124; on Saxo, see Skovgaard-Petersen 1987). In *Nordens Mythologi* (1832), Grundtvig praised Snorri's "Prologue" to *Edda* as being "among the most brilliant things written about myths" [Noget af det mest Genialske, der er skrevet om Myther] (Grundtvig 1832, 179).²⁸

In *Brage-Snak*, the typological view of history is ubiquitous. Grundtvig clearly employed a biblical template of the Old and New Testament, discerning between Nordic antiquity on the one hand (as attested in Old Norse mythology and Nordic legendary history) and contemporary affairs on the other hand. Throughout the lectures, he made typological connections between the two time periods. He regarded his own time (since the end of the eighteenth century) as containing certain breakthroughs; it was the beginning of a bright future for the Danish community. He described it as a new time of deeds, heralded by a "new" or "reborn" time of skalds.²⁹

guided the interpretation of pre-Christian elements in visual art in the Christian period (Clunies Ross 2005, 123; Gschwandtler 1990).

²⁸ In his prologue, Snorri stipulated the theoretical basis of his approach to pre-Christian mythology and the pre-Christian gods using a combination of different learned frames of interpretation prevalent in the European Middle Ages (cf. Mats Malm 2018). On Grundtvig's enthusiasm with Snorri, see Auken (2005, 493); Lundgreen-Nielsen (2018, 11).

²⁹ Thus, *Brage-Snak* is not concerned with how Old Norse mythology prefigured Christianity but how it prefigured matters in the secular sphere. Grundtvig touched on the mythology's prefiguration of Christianity in other texts, e.g. in *Haandbog i Verdens-Historien* [Handbook in world history] (1833-1843) where he contended that the pre-Christian mythology of the Saxons could fertilize the ground for the coming of Christianity among them. He explained that a people who had worshipped Thor, the slayer of the Midgard Serpent and fought for Valhöll, would readily accept the story of Christ who smashed the serpent's head and created a new paradise for his followers (Grundtvig 1836, 226; see also Auken 2005, 536-539). This resonates with a general trend in the Romantic, nativist paradigm of nineteenth century nationalism of viewing pre-Christian, ethnic religions as national Old Testaments that reflected the spiritual constitution of the people and that had naturally made way for Christianity when the time had come (cf. Halink 2017).

In the North a new time of deeds has begun which will explain the old deeds of the Æsir and their kinsmen far better than I am able to do; the best and most certain omen for this is the new time of skalds which has [already] begun.³⁰

In Grundtvig's view, the (civil religious) awakening had begun, and his contemporary poets – whom he understood as revitalizations of ancient skalds – played a significant role. Grundtvig credited Heinrich Steffens (1773-1845) as a crucial contributor to the reintroduction of Old Norse mythology to Denmark, a process that Grundtvig poetically described as “Idun's homecoming” [*Idunnes Hjemførelse*] (1844, 109). Moreover, Grundtvig referred to his close friend B.S. Ingemann (1789-1862) as a “skald of Danes” [*Dane-Skjald*] (1844, 373) whose poetic oeuvre was a good “omen for the future of Denmark and the North” [Varsel for *Danmarks* og *Nordens* Fremtid] (1844, 374). Thus, Grundtvig understood the poetry of his time to show great potential, although it had yet to reach its zenith (1844, 335). He spoke about Ingemann's poems about Ogier the Dane [Holger Danske] as something which “as if fallen from the sky, will once again revive the memory about the folk hero and proclaim his homecoming” [som faldet ned fra Skyerne, igien opliver Mindet om Folke-Helten og melder hans Hjemkomst] (1844, 374). The religious flavour of the wording here is hard to miss.³¹

Social cohesion: Rousseauian top-down and Durkheim bottom-up

In addition to the civil religious elements identified so far – namely Grundtvig's use of religious terminology, his use of the biblical template of the Old and New Testament, and his use of an interpretational strategy obtained from bible exegesis – a paramount argument for the civil

³⁰ i Norden er født eller dog undfanget en *Daadstid* paany, der, langt bedre end jeg kan, vil forklare Aserne og deres Ætmænds gamle Bedrifter, derfor er vist nok den gienfødte *Skjaldetid* det sikkreste, saavel som det bedste Forvarsel (1844, 110-111).

³¹ This bifurcation of Danish history does not contradict Grundtvig's tripartite division of universal history into Antiquity, Middle Ages, and New Year's Time [*Oldtid*, *Middelalder*, and *Nyaarstid*]; the two models serve different purposes.

religious character of Grundtvig's vision for the Danish community is his emphasis on Old Norse mythology as a means to foster social cohesion and provide moral underpinnings for the Danish community.

A central function of civil religion is to elevate questions of the legitimacy of the state above everyday political disputes (Warburg 2013, 13); the centrality of this function is evident in Rousseau's reflections on the *religion civile* and in Bellah's analysis of civil religion in America. Since Bellah's 1967 article, an entire sub-field of studies of civil religion has emerged.³² Studies often employ an analytical distinction between two dimensions of civil religion: what they term a Rousseauian top-down and a Durkheimian bottom-up dimension. The top-down dimension is termed after Rousseau's idea about the content of *religion civile* as formulated by and primarily communicated through the state apparatus in order to impart certain morals and sets of values to its citizens. Conversely, the bottom-up dimension reflects what can analytically be termed a Durkheimian understanding of religion, viewing civil religion as rooted in the community and reflecting communal values that are expressed by the community in religious terms (cf. Hammond 1980; Cristi 2001, 114-136; Warburg 2008, 168-170; Warburg 2015, 610-611). The top-down and the bottom-up dimensions both point to civil religion as an integrative factor in the community, and the two dimensions can be seen as complementary ideal types (Warburg 2008, 170; 2015, 611) and not as contradictory forces.³³ As emphasized by Margit Warburg, the top-down perspective must

³² For useful overviews and discussions, see Cristi (2001, 47-89); Stewart (2005); Cristi & Dawson (2007); Warburg (2015). The concept of civil religion is subject to theoretical debate, not least concerning the question of whether a transcendent point of reference (i.e. a trans-empirical dimension) is a definitional requirement for civil religion or whether a purely functionalistic definition suffices – an issue that concerns the concept of religion in general (cf. Jensen 2019). In relation to Grundtvig this question is, however, of lesser interest, as he did operate with such a reference, primarily to the spirit of the North but also to God.

³³ In some studies, the distinction between the top-down and the bottom-up dimensions is somewhat blurred, e.g. in Bellah (1967). Marcela Cristi has attempted to clarify the relation between the two dimensions by describing them as situated at different ends of a spectrum (Cristi 2001, 10-13, 237-242). However, I here follow Margit Warburg, who has argued that the dimensions should rather be placed as complementary dimensions in a system of coordinates, meaning for example that a strong (Rousseauian) top-down dimension does not necessarily

be mixed with the bottom-up perspective in order for a civil religion to persist (Warburg 2013, 46). Thus, the two dimensions are useful analytical categories when examining civil religions across the globe and across time. For example, Bellah's concept of civil religion encompasses both dimensions. On the one hand, he understands civil religion as reflecting the communal values of the American people, while, on the other hand, he uses presidential speeches as his empirical basis for the study – building on the Durkheimian assumption that the speeches reflect the communal values of the American people (Warburg 2015, 610).

Both dimensions are evident in Grundtvig's visions for the Danish community. His writings reflect an understanding that the formation of a national community had to involve both top-down and bottom-up processes. The community needed to be rooted in (what he understood as) the people's authentic collective traditions, their authentic self-articulation. But channelling the people's inherent sentiments and values required top-down measures, including folk-enlightenment institutionalized in the Danish school system, but national festivals that celebrated central events in the collective life of the people were also important – such as the king's birthday and the anniversary of the Battle of Copenhagen.³⁴ In other words, Grundtvig found that, in order to build popular enthusiasm, top-down measures were needed to communicate to the people what their

entail a weakening of the (Durkheimian) bottom-up dimension (Warburg 2015, 611). It must also be noted that while civil religion can serve as an integrating factor, the demarcations it involves will inevitably also carry a potential for exclusion. This is a point of tension in any identity construction.

³⁴ That Grundtvig saw national festivals as important is clear not least from the many texts he produced on such occasions. An example is *Sang i Anledning af Hans Majestæt Kongens høie Fødselsdag den 28de Januar 1839* [Song for the occasion of His Majesty the King's birthday on 28 January 1839] (1839a). The 28 May celebrations, marking the anniversary of the introduction of the advisory assemblies, is another example. These celebrations were initiated by different groups of (civil) society. Already on the eve of Frederik VI's rescript of 28 May 1831, celebrations took place among students in Copenhagen, and on the following day the city was illuminated. From 1832 and until 1849, where the Constitution was passed, annual celebrations included ever larger social circles, including the larger provincial towns (Adriansen 2003, I, 212-214). In 1839, the day was celebrated in the newly started Danish Society [Danske Samfund]. For the occasion, Grundtvig wrote his famous "Konge-Haand og Folke-Stemme" [King's hand and people's voice] (Grundtvig 1839c; reprinted in Grundtvig 1843).

inherent traditions, sentiments, and values were; they needed to become familiar with their mythology. His *Brage-Snak* lectures can be understood as an initiative in this direction, although they were Grundtvig's own initiatives and not part of state-managed education.³⁵

Civil religion is an analytical category that we can use to understand the role of myths, symbols, and rituals in society. It is not a label used by members to self-identify as members of a civil religion. In practice, civil religious affiliation is expressed through a sense of belonging, typically by referring to traditions by saying that “this is what we always do” or “my parents taught me this” (Warburg 2013, 8-9; my translation). Thus, civil religion is an embedded part of the culture and traditions of a community and not consciously recognized as civil religion.

The differences between the top-down and the bottom-up dimensions of civil religion can be clarified by their structural similarities to the two types of religion which Jan Assmann has termed primary and secondary religion (Assmann 2006).³⁶ Primary religions are not consciously recognized as religion by their members, but are understood simply as tradition and as an integral and unquestioned part of the order of the world – much like civil religion. By contrast, secondary religions are understood by their members as one possible option among several alternatives – but the only true option! – thus entailing a willful affiliation.

Moreover, primary religion is particularistic in focus and not occupied with disseminating its views across territorial borders. It is oriented towards securing the well-being of the community in this life, maintaining the religious, political, and social order of the world. Secondary religions, on the other hand, are missionary in outlook and include the idea of an otherworldly, transcendent reality that constitutes an important point of

³⁵ Grundtvig seems to have understood his public lectures as models for the type of lectures needed in public education (Baunvig 2014).

³⁶ A range of different typologies of religion exists. The two types conceptualized here as primary and secondary religion are sometimes termed “ethnic religion” and “universal religion of salvation”, respectively (see Z. Smith 1996; Jensen 2019, 33-52; Schjødt 2013, 29-32). These types are, of course, ideal types. In Assmann's taxonomy, the most critical difference on which the other differences rest is the emergence of canonical scripture – without it there can be no dogma, no distinction between true and false belief (Assmann 1996; 2006).

focus for religious practice.³⁷ Thus, secondary religion (as an ideal type) is formulated as a program of religious teaching and uses a set of tools to sustain and propagate itself, such as canonical scripture, dogma, creeds, prayer books, and catechisms (Assmann 2006). We may note that while Rousseau found inspiration in the unity of religion and politics in ancient societies (i.e. in primary religion), the tools of secondary religion are the kinds of civil religious tools that he envisioned as relevant to instil moral values in the citizens.

Primary and secondary religion, further, differ with regard to their principal type of religious specialists. While primary religion is concerned with keeping the right order of the world (including society) by ritual means, secondary religion is focused on expounding its canonical scripture to make its teachings ever relevant in the changing present. This calls for interpreters and preachers, and the mark of the good interpreter/preacher is that “his sermon is taken to heart, that is, by the translation from text to practical life” (Assmann 2006, 127). In his attempt to unite the Danes into a cultural community, Grundtvig drew on elements pertaining to both types of religion, the particularistic, this-worldly focus of primary religion, and the teaching and dissemination tools pertaining to secondary religion, notably those of scripture and the sermon which actualizes it.

A further question begs to be asked concerning Grundtvig’s utilization of Old Norse mythology: why did he, as a pastor of the Danish State Church, point to Old Norse mythology rather than to the Christian world

³⁷ Although secondary religions have arisen in opposition to the existing religious and social order in their specific milieus, their ascetic distancing from worldly attachments proved unsustainable in the long run, prompting them (in order to persist) to develop into hybrid religions in the sense that they absorbed and developed ideas and practices belonging to or characteristic of primary religion. Secondary religions, on the one hand, reject the known world as fundamentally bad, false, evil, and full of suffering while, on the other hand, they embrace it as mostly good and beautiful. Grundtvig’s theology is an excellent example of Christianity’s hybrid quality, not least when he in his famous hymn “Nu falmer skoven trindt om land” [Now the woods fade across the lands] (written in 1844 – the same year as *Brage-Snak*) lets the congregation (whom the song is intended for) collectively thank God “for the harvest here and the harvest there” [For høsten her og høsten hist]; God is praised for plentiful harvest, now secure in the barns, but also for the eternal summer by God’s side in Paradise that awaits members of the congregation at the end of their lives.

of ideas as a unifying frame of reference for the Danish population? This question is especially pertinent because multiple studies of contemporary civil religion, not least civil religion in the Nordic countries, study events where confessional religion plays a role in celebrations of the nation, for example when representatives of the Danish Folk Church are brought into the political arena. Often studies point to an overlap between civil religion and the Lutheran majority churches in the North (see Warburg 2015 and references therein). A plausible answer is that Grundtvig understood the time when the Danish state could rest on a confessional religious foundation to have passed. As emphasized above, he seems to have understood a secularizing split between the political and the churchly spheres as inevitable. It is clear from his writings about the relation between state and church (e.g. Grundtvig 1834; 1839b) that he understood the multi-confessional make-up of the Danish population in the modern age as an inescapable fact that called for new institutional arrangements.³⁸ In other words, the Christian world of ideas was too narrow to serve as a unifying frame of reference because not all Danes were Christians and because those who were belonged to different denominations and different factions, meaning that their understanding of the Christian world of ideas differed.

But, at the same time, there is reason to suggest that Grundtvig understood the Christian world of ideas as too broad due to its universalistic scope to serve as a national marker of identity. In *Den danske Stats-Kirke upartisk betragtet* [The Danish State Church impartially considered] (1834), he writes that Christianity had, in a historical perspective, secured

³⁸ In *Den danske Stats-Kirke upartisk betragtet* [The Danish State Church impartially considered] (1834) and in *Tale til Folke-Raadet* [Speech to the people's council] (1839b), Grundtvig argued for a non-confessional State Church that would constitute an economical and judicial framework around "free", independent congregations of different confessions. This would secure room for the different factions within the State Church that already existed. Significant steps towards achieving this freedom was the dissolution of the "parish tie" [Sogne-Baad] which would allow laity to join a congregation of their choice (outside the parish in which they lived) and also allow the clergy to minister outside their own parishes (Grundtvig 1834; 1839b; see also Tullberg 2016). In 1847, Grundtvig argued that "traditional" Christians like himself needed to do their utmost to stay inside the State Church, but he anticipated that they would eventually have to break free (Grundtvig 1847). For a discussion of the three main positions in Danish church politics between 1839 and 1855, see Holm (2012).

a supra-national unity by being present in different nations although expressed through their vernacular tongues. He stressed that this unity did not make the peoples lose their distinctiveness and independence, and that it even helped their kings to gain their crowns (Grundtvig 1834, 13). In addition, when properly practiced, Christianity was beneficial to the state, as it helped produce good, altruistic citizens (Grundtvig 1834, 14-16, 56-61). However, it appears clear that while allowing the nations to retain their distinctive character, Christianity could not set one people or nation apart from others and, therefore, could not promote their national-particularistic outlook. In light of Grundtvig's views on Old Norse mythology presented above, I contend that Grundtvig understood Old Norse mythology to do just that: set the Nordic and the Danish peoples apart from others. Thus, the Nordic mythological material offered itself as a Goldilocks choice, just right in scope to provide an anchor of and a marker for national identity. As a symbolic repertoire and narrative story-world it could be shared by all Danes, regardless of religious confession.

But while American presidents repeatedly referred to God as a way to endow American society with transcendent value, thereby tying the individual to society (Bellah 2006), Grundtvig pointed to "the spirit of the North" as a transcendent entity serving as the guarantor of Danish society.³⁹ Grundtvig envisioned the spirit of the North as a transcendent entity permeating the Nordic people(s), an entity in which all individuals participated, thus connecting them across generations, social hierarchies, and geography. This spirit was pre-Christian in nature (and therefore pagan); it was separate from the Holy Ghost, existing independently of it and independently of Christianity though not in opposition to either (Auken 2005, 494).⁴⁰

³⁹ This does not mean that he did not understand Denmark and the Danes as chosen by God (e.g. Mørk Andersen 2003, 74).

⁴⁰ The ontological status of the spirit of the North is a complex matter that cannot be pursued here. Helge Grell has addressed this at length (1988), and Sune Auken more briefly (2005, 494-505).

“Geertzian” moods and motivations

Through his exegetical treatment of Old Norse mythology as a civil religious Old Testament, Grundtvig sought to actualize and vitalize it in the present. It was his ambition that once this material was propagated among the population, it would help the people get in touch with their natural dispositions (e.g. Grundtvig 1844, 9, 331). He envisioned that Old Norse mythology could be used to instil emotions, inspire values, and spur actions. This dimension, of what I term Grundtvig’s civil religious mythology project, can fruitfully be explored with reference to Clifford Geertz’ definition of religion as

(1) a system of symbols which acts (2) to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz 1973, 90)

This functional definition (like those of Durkheim and Bellah) avoids concepts of the supernatural and focuses on religion as a cultural phenomenon. The central points are that religion influences people to feel and act in certain ways and that it does so by formulating conceptions of an all-encompassing world order, a sense of how things really are and ought to be (about what is “really real”). Geertz subsumes these two mutually enforcing dimensions of religion as *ethos* and *world view* – a group’s (or a people’s) *ethos* being their moral and behavioural inclinations (values, attitudes, temperaments, emotions, and aesthetic style) and their *world view* being their conceptual ideas of the world (their concept of nature, of self, of society).⁴¹ Thus, what we can call a “Geertzian” perspective on religion is concerned with how religion as a cultural phenomenon plays a crucial role in constructing social reality and influences people’s everyday lives (Geertz 1973).

⁴¹ Both dimensions are public in the sense that all culture is public (Geertz 1973, 3-30). Thus, ideas, values, acts, and even feelings are cultural artefacts, determined by the culture in which they are embedded.

I contend that, like other religions, the civil religion Grundtvig aimed to establish as the foundation of Danish secular society (although he did not himself use this terminology) was comprised of an authentic Nordic world view and an authentic Nordic ethos which were mutually reinforcing. Grundtvig wanted to awaken compelling moods and motivations by offering conceptions of the order of the world that would, in turn, undergird these moods and motivations.

Grundtvig was clear about the status of these civil religious conceptions of the world as poetic creations and assured his *Brage-Snak* audience that he did not believe in the pagan gods (as we have seen), but emphasized the value of Old Norse mythology as living, poetic speech

even though it is always wrong to believe in something you have created yourself, whether it be termed a god or a dwarf or a philosophical system, it was wise of our fathers to create for themselves both gods and goddesses, giants and trolls, elves and dwarves for the purpose of living speech about all that performed greater actions than they themselves could comprehend.⁴²

In this passage, Grundtvig reflected on Old Norse mythology as an expression of what can be termed “natural religion”, although in an innovative version. By “natural religion” I refer to the explanatory model used by medieval writers – for example by Snorri in his “Prologue” to *Edda* – in order to explain Old Norse gods and myths as the result of the pre-Christian Northmen’s ability through reason to understand the world as governed by a divine power (see also Malm 2018). Grundtvig’s explanation differs from the prevalent version of natural religion on an important point, as he placed emphasis not on reason as the source to spiritual insight, but on the Northmen’s ability through their poetic sensibilities to recognize the existence of a higher (spiritual) power.⁴³ By classifying mythology as

⁴² skiondt det altid er galt at troe paa hvad man selv har skabt, enten det saa kaldes en Gud eller en Dværg eller et filosofisk System, saa var det dog klogt af vore Fædre, at de skabde sig baade *Guder* og *Gudinder*, *Jetter* og *Trolde*, *Alfer* og *Dværge* til *levende* Tale om Alt, hvad der udrettede større Ting end de *selv* kunde *begribe* (Grundtvig 1844, 100).

⁴³ What can be termed “natural religion” also figures in enlightenment thinking, where we find the idea that religion sprung from natural human sentiments that

poetry, Grundtvig had circumvented the question of the veracity of myth, deeming it poetically true rather than factually true.⁴⁴ Thus, Old Norse mythology was teeming with mythic agents, objects, places, and events that, to his mind, were all poetically true in the sense that they constituted a poetic (fantastic) story-world that had a profound effect on the Northmen (Bønding; forthcoming).⁴⁵

Belief in a spiritual reality was the central question of Grundtvig's sixteenth lecture, "Valhal og Folkvang" [Valhöll and Folkvang]. He tackled the question of Old Norse mythology's status as belief or superstition. The battle, as he saw it, was not between pre-Christian Nordic paganism and Christianity but between belief in a spiritual reality and non-belief. Grundtvig proclaimed that he would

much rather profess to what is referred to as the old warriors' superstition than to that which has long been referred to as "enlightenment," for the simple reason that so-called superstition was after all a "genuine belief," while so-called enlightenment is clearly a false explanation.⁴⁶

were rooted in "the individual's sense of gratitude to the deity for the beauty of his environment in the natural world rather than from rational thought alone" (Clunies Ross 2018, 25).

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the aesthetic dimension of Old Norse mythology and its contra-present function as a fantastic, enchanted universe, see Bønding (forthcoming).

⁴⁵ Thus, Grundtvig's innovative version of "natural religion" does not contradict his so-called "Mosaic-Christian outlook" [Mosaisk-Christelige Anskuelse] which he proposed in his preface to *Nordens Mythologi* (1832) on the basis of his separation between religious faith and outlook on life. He felt that this outlook could be shared by "true" Christians and "naturalists, with spiritual insight" [Naturalister, med Aand], the latter being those naturalists capable of acting in the interest of the spirit (Nyborg 2012, 121-123). Thus, he saw a possible common ground from where Christians and certain naturalists could work together to save the life of the Danish and Nordic peoples in the face of cultural crisis. For discussions of the "Mosaic-Christian outlook," including many different views, see Thaning 1963; Vind 1999; Pedersen 2005; Nyborg 2012 and references therein.

⁴⁶ langt heller bekiende mig til hvad man kalder de gamle *Kæmpers Overtro*, end til hvad man længe har kaldt og endnu kalder "*Oplysning*", og det af den simple Grund, at den *saakaldte* Overtro var igrunden en "ægte Tro", men den *saakaldte* Oplysning er aabenbar en *falsk* Forklaring (1844, 233).

Thus, “genuine belief” was belief in the existence of a spiritual reality – an intangible, invisible, and imagined poetic reality that was, nonetheless, “really real” to the ancient Northmen. The ancient Northmen were right to believe in Valhöll because, as a collectively imagined place (a virtual reality), it had a genuine impact on them, imbuing them with power and courage (Grundtvig 1844, 234). Grundtvig hoped that it would come to have a similar effect on his contemporary countrymen and encourage them to face the challenges of the present. In order to achieve this, it was important to reintroduce the pre-Christian Nordic Otherworld as a poetic reality to the Danes in his present.

The crux of the matter here was the question of secular, spiritual life – or to use the more accurate Danish term *åndsliv* (or the German *Geistesleben*). Grundtvig claimed in *Brage-Snak* that there was more to human life than what was visible to the eye and tangible to the hand, even in the secular sphere of life; in other words: there were supra-human and inter-human forces at play. He expressed this anthropologically by emphasizing that “man has a double world, one shared with animals but the other with the gods” [*Mennesket... har en dobbelt Verden for sig, den Ene tilfælles med Dyrene men den Anden med Guderne*] (Grundtvig 1844, 28). He termed these two worlds “Aandens Verden” [the world of the spirit] and “Haandens Verden” [the world of the hand]. Humans participate in both and, without heed to the spiritual world, they would be only biology, and no culture. This point was a criticism against contemporary “disenchanting” or rationalizing concepts of mythology. Without a spiritual dimension imbuing reality with collective symbolic meaning, Valhöll would be reduced to “bacon and mead” [*Flæsk og Miød*] (Grundtvig 1844, 233) and humans to cultureless animals. Thus, Grundtvig identified the metaphysical or supra-biological dimension of human life as crucial for the social cohesion of human groups. It was what bound them together in a community.⁴⁷ As already mentioned, the metaphysical, transcendent

⁴⁷ This point also resonates with Grundtvig’s understanding of the human being as both “divine sparkle” [*Guddoms-Gnist*] and “dust hut” [*Støv-Hytte*] (1844, 28), although here expressed in terms which he found suitable for the secular domain. It resembles the concept formulated in 1912 by Émile Durkheim about the “double human”, *homo duplex* – biology and culture, individual, physical being and social, metaphysical being. The latter according to Durkheim “represents within us the highest reality in the intellectual and moral [i.e. cultural] realm

entity that he placed as a guarantor of secular, spiritual life among the Northmen was the spirit of the North.

It seems reasonable to see these anthropological reflections as proto-sociological in nature and as related to the secularizing relegation of religion to its own societal sphere. To Grundtvig, the social cohesion of Danish society depended on the Danes' ability and willingness to acknowledge that there was a supra-biological/metaphysical dimension of reality, even as concerned secular affairs. If the Danes did not begin to cherish Old Norse mythology, it would have dire consequences for Danish society. Old Norse mythology contained an authentic world view (conceptions of the order of the world) and an authentic ethos (values, attitudes, etc.), and the Danes needed to cultivate both.⁴⁸

Grundtvig aimed to (re)vitalize Old Norse mythology as a living symbolic repertoire and narrative story-world. He believed that its use in "living speech" could, on the one hand, invigorate the collective spirit of the people and, on the other hand, channel the invigorating power of this spirit. Thus, it was imperative that Old Norse mythology not only be used typologically as civil religious scripture but become part of oral culture. People needed to take the mythology into their mouths, so to speak. Thereby, the mythic beings like the *æsir* and the *einherjar* would come to life "in living history" [i den *levende Historie*] (1844, 240) and immortalize the Nordic forefathers (who were models for emulation) through memory. This vitalization into oral culture needed to take place on a daily basis (1844, 240); only when the ancestors were remembered and thanked in daily speech and song would the people be bound together in loving community (1844, 240). Thus, Grundtvig wanted the people to realize that "Thor is still alive and drives [his chariot] in the heavens with his hammer raised" [*Thor lever endnu og ager i Sky, med Hammeren iveiret*] (1844, 332).

that is knowable through observation: I mean society" (Durkheim 1995 [1912], 15-16). On the similarities between Grundtvig and Durkheim and between their ideas about the formation of human communities, see Baunvig (2013; 2015).

⁴⁸ Geertz' position is constructionist, and so he does not share Grundtvig's essentialist views. However, Geertz' concept of culture does, indeed, seem to be inspired by Herderian cultural relativism, which, in a transformed form, has found its way into American anthropology. Importantly, Herder's relativism, although essentialist in nature, did not have chauvinistic connotations (cf. Halink 2018, 27).

It was therefore no coincidence that Grundtvig saw poets or skalds as the heralds of the new future. To Grundtvig, Brage still lived in Adam Oehlenschläger who, in his poetry, secured the legacy of Nordic heroic life, and Grundtvig hoped that someone of the younger generation would take over and continue “the Valhöllian stroke of the harp” [det Valhaliske harpeslag] (1844, 108). Grundtvig treated the skalds as the bearers of the mythological tradition, the cultural specialists who secured its persistence. He considered himself one of them (1844, 208) – part of the skaldic (civil religious) elite whose obligation it was to propagate knowledge about Old Norse mythology and lead the people towards (civil religious) awakening. Yet, his role in the *Brage-Snak* lecture hall moves beyond that of poet.⁴⁹ As already emphasized, he took on the role of civil religious priest, presenting his audience with a poetic universe, claiming that it bore witness to a spiritual reality that was crucial for the well-being of the cultural community. He actualized the myths and vitalized Old Norse mythic beings through his exegetical interpretations.

Grundtvig’s treatment of Old Norse mythology in the communal setting of the *Brage-Snak* lecture hall resonates with Geertz’s understanding of religious rituals as the places where ethos and world view coincide, where a fusion of what people want to do and what they feel they ought to do takes place. From the ritual gathering, the moods and motivations as well as conceptions of the world carry over into the rest of society and give the people’s everyday life its unique characteristics (Geertz 1973, 112–118).⁵⁰ As demonstrated by Baunvig, Grundtvig placed great emphasis on the importance of collective, physical gatherings – such as a Christian congregation gathering in a church or an audience gathering in a lecture hall – as the central place where communities establish and maintain themselves (Baunvig 2013; 2014; 2015).⁵¹ This was the case, too, for the

⁴⁹ For a discussion of Grundtvig’s self-perception as a poet in a long row of poets through history, see Jørgensen (2018).

⁵⁰ Geertz is clearly inspired by Durkheim’s notion of the effervescent ritual gathering (Durkheim 1995).

⁵¹ The connection to his famous 1825 “matchless discovery” [mageløse Opdagelse] (Grundtvig 1825) is conspicuous and far from trivial. This discovery, presented in revelatory terms, refers to Grundtvig’s understanding that the foundation of the Christian church was not the Bible and biblical exegesis but the congregational community, its liturgical practice and the collective, oral articulation of the creed.

“half-pagan gatherings” [halv-hedenske forsamlinger] (1844, 52) of *Bra-ge-Snak*. Just as a Christian congregation at a church service identifies with the Christian conceptual universe, with each other, and with previous generations of Christians (Baunvig 2013, 87-89), Grundtvig seems to have hoped that the collective, secular (or civil religious) gatherings in the lecture hall would help the participants identify with the Nordic conceptual universe, with each other, and with previous generations of Northmen – and Danes in particular. In Geertzian terms, this identification would let the fusion of ethos and world view carry over into their everyday lives.

Civil religious community – State, church, and king

The examination has showed that by using the concept of civil religion as a heuristic tool, we can gain interesting new insights into Grundtvig’s ideas about and ambitions for the use of Old Norse mythology to establish a Danish national community. Grundtvig was a thinker of secularization in the sense that he saw the churchly-religious and the secular-national spheres as necessarily distinct. Nevertheless, his ideas relating to the secular-national sphere were significantly influenced by underlying religious assumptions and modes of thinking.

The structural isomorphism between the way he thought about the churchly-religious and the national-secular spheres indicates that, like Rousseau, Grundtvig found significant inspiration in institutionalized, organized religion. He used the tools that he was conversant with through his theological training and office as a pastor: religious scripture, exegetical strategies, and oratory techniques. Further, in both spheres, he placed emphasis on physical gatherings and on the importance of nourishing the collective, “otherworldly” conceptions and keeping them alive among the members. The parallelism of the two spheres seems partly predicated on the facts that, first, he was rethinking both spheres simultaneously (although perhaps the secular sphere came into focus later than the churchly

The Christian church was first and foremost founded on the physical congregation of human bodies that performed collective ritual acts (Baunvig 2013) and on the oral form of communication rather than the written.

sphere) and, second, he grappled with the same basic questions in both spheres: how to establish communities and communal identities and secure social cohesion.⁵² Just as the church community was institutionalized in (the various congregations of) the State Church, Grundtvig wanted the secular (civil religious) community to be underpinned by public education as well as collective gatherings and collective celebrations of important events in the history of the people, for example the king's birthday.

Concerning the secular sphere, Grundtvig understood Old Norse mythology as the source of the people's authentic ethos which rested on the (re)vitalization and cultivation of their authentic world view. His ambitions for what is here termed a civil religious use of Old Norse mythology rested on a need to establish a new symbolic foundation for Danish society in the face of political upheaval. It is well-known that Grundtvig was a royalist who only reluctantly accepted the age of the monarchy to be drawing to an end (Damsholt 2003; Korsgaard 2015). Interestingly, *Mands Minde* from 1838 (1877) was occupied by the question of a constitution and the relation between people and king, expressing Grundtvig's well-known ideal of harmony between "King's hand and people's voice" [Konge-Haand og Folke-Stemme] with the king as the actual political power holder (Grundtvig 1839c, reprinted Grundtvig 1843; cf. Damsholt 2003, 44).⁵³ But, in 1844, *Brage-Snak* showed little interest in these questions. This difference might be due to the empirical focus of the two series of lectures: current history and ancient mythology and history, respectively. But as *Brage-Snak* was in actuality more concerned with the present than with the past, its lack of interest in the question of king and constitution is striking.

Grundtvig's main concern in *Brage-Snak* was to bring the Danish people in touch with their true collective self, a matter which he found pressing. What needed to be avoided was the temptation to make radical changes in conflict with the inherent nature of the people for the purpose of improving the state, as had been done in the French Revolution. Such changes

⁵² As emphasized by Baunvig, Grundtvig seems also to have taken note of the positive forces of revolutionary gatherings when developing his ideas about the church congregation (Baunvig 2015). In this sense, inspiration between the churchly and the secular spheres goes both ways.

⁵³ The phrase was the title of a song, written for Danish Society [Danske Samfund] and published in *28de Maj i det Danske Samfund* (1839c; 1843).

would only lead to ruin and decay (1844, 270). It was necessary that the voice of the people be directed in the right direction (cf. Korsgaard 2015, 200-201). Although the figure of the king was not a central theme in *Bra-ge-Snak*, Grundtvig referred to the king as a symbolic figure, central to the collective identity of the people. He posited that the funeral of Frederik VI made the people vividly recall the story of the legendary Danish king Frode Fredegod, whose reign Grundtvig understood as a poetic image of the Danish Golden Age. The king was not highlighted for his political role but as a focal point for the crystallization of collective ideas and collective identity, undergirded by the Nordic mythological and legendary material. It could be said that the Nordic civil religious scripture endowed the king, as a symbolic figure, with civil religious status.

In retrospect, it is clear that Grundtvig was not alone in pointing to the king as a symbolic focal point for the Danish cultural community, as what can be termed a civil religious symbol. On 22 September 1857, eight years after the passing of the Danish Constitution and thirteen years after *Bra-ge-Snak*, a large civil religious ritual took place in Jelling with King Frederik VII at its center. Frederik VII, “the giver of the Constitution” who had since 1849 become increasingly alienated from the center of power in Copenhagen, was welcomed in Jelling with cheers and banners, receiving homage from the gathered crowds of local farmer families, local pastors, politicians, and students from the local teachers’ college. The festivities included a procession onto the historical mounds, speeches, and communal singing, all of which invoked the connection between King Frederik and the ancient kings of Jelling back to Gorm the Old. Thus, Frederik was venerated as a symbol of both state and nation, supported by priests who acted as ritual specialists. The unique status ascribed to Jelling as the place where monarchy, Christianity, and ancient history merged made it a fitting civil religious ritual site (Perlt & Vinding 2013).

Frederik VII had ceded his political power in 1849, but by this act, the figure of the king was left open as a symbol to which new collective meaning could be attributed (Perlt & Vinding 2013). This new collective meaning drew upon a combination of historical and Christian symbolism which served to underpin the collective identity and social cohesion of Danish society. Contrary to what Grundtvig seems to have envisioned, the civil religious sentiments that came to undergird Danish society in the

years after the Constitution were rooted as much in Christianity and the Danish monarchy as in Old Norse myths.⁵⁴

Bibliography

Works by Grundtvig

- (1825), *Kirkens Gienmæle mod Professor Theologiæ Dr. H. N. Clausen*, Vanja Taulow (ed.), in *Grundtvigs Værker*, Aarhus & Copenhagen, Grundtvig Centeret, Aarhus University (www.grundtvigsværker.dk).
- (1832), *Nordens Mythologi eller Sindbilled-Sprog*, Copenhagen, J.H. Schubothes Boghandling.
- (1834), *Den Danske Stats-Kirke upartisk betragtet*, Steen Tullberg (ed.), in *Grundtvigs Værker*, Aarhus & Copenhagen, Grundtvig Centeret, Aarhus University (www.grundtvigsværker.dk).
- (1836), *Haandbog i Verdens-Historien. Anden Deel*, Holger Berg (ed.), in *Grundtvigs Værker*, Aarhus & Copenhagen, Grundtvig Centeret, Aarhus University (www.grundtvigsværker.dk).
- (1839a), *Sang i Anledning af Hans Majestæt Kongens høie Fødselsdag den 28de Januar 1839*, Kirsten Vad (ed.), in *Grundtvigs Værker*, Aarhus & Copenhagen, Grundtvig Centeret, Aarhus University (www.grundtvigsværker.dk).
- (1839b), *Tale til Folke-Raadet*, Copenhagen, Wahlske Boghandels Forlag.

⁵⁴ Lundgreen-Nielsen has termed Grundtvig's attempt to introduce Old Norse mythology as a national symbolic language in poetic and every-day use a failed experiment, indicating a number of explanations, notably the preference among the cultured public for Classical mythology and the fact that the general public around the mid-nineteenth century was more oriented towards political newspapers than towards poetic literature about the golden national past (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1994), all compelling explanations. Yet, even if Grundtvig did not succeed in revitalizing Old Norse mythology the way he intended, he contributed (along with other Romantic cultural actors) to directing focus towards the national past as an important point of orientation for Danish communal identity. It is also worth noticing that the ceremony in Jelling in 1857 attests to the importance of collective festivals and national symbols, drawn from the collective cultural heritage that could imbue the community with a sense of togetherness and belonging.

- (1839c), *28de Mai i det Danske Samfund*, Copenhagen.
- (1843), *Sange til Festen den 28de Mai*, Copenhagen, J.D. Qvist.
- (1844), *Brage-Snak om Græske og Nordiske Myther og Oldsagn for Damer og Herrer*, Stine Holst Petersen (ed.), in *Grundtvigs Værker*, Aarhus & Copenhagen, Grundtvig Centeret, Aarhus University (www.grundtvigsværker.dk).
- (1847), “De Helliges Samfund”, *Dansk Kirketidende* 6, 81-96.
- (1877), *Mands-Minde 1788-1838*, Henrik Yde (ed.), in *Grundtvigs Værker*, Aarhus & Copenhagen, Grundtvig Centeret, Aarhus University (www.grundtvigsværker.dk).

Manuscripts

Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Grundtvig Archive, MSS: Fascicles 141, 278-84.

Secondary literature

- Adriansen, I. (2003), *Nationale symboler i Det Danske Rige 1830-2000*, 2nd vol, Copenhagen, Museum Tusulanums Forlag.
- Assmann, J. (1996), “The Mosaic Distinction: Israel, Egypt, and the Invention of Paganism”, *Representations* 56, 48-67.
- (2006), *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.
- Auken, S. (2005), *Sagas spejl: Mytologi, historie og kristendom hos N.F.S. Grundtvig*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- (2014), “Grundtvig og genrene: En introduktion”, in Sune Auken & Christel Sunesen (ed.), *Ved lejlighed: Grundtvig og genrene*, Hellerup, Forlaget Spring, 25-66.
 - (forthcoming), “N.F.S. Grundtvig and the hermeneutics of interpreting mythology”, in Sophie Bønding, Lone Kølle Martinsen & Pierre-Brice Stahl (ed.), *Mythology and Nation Building: N.F.S. Grundtvig and His European Contemporaries*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press.
- Aurbach, E. (1959 [1944]), “Figura”, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 11-76.
- Baunvig, K.F. (2013), *Forsamlingen først: N.F.S. Grundtvigs og Émile Durkheims syn på fællesskab*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Dissertation.

- (2014), “Det folkelige foredrag”, in Sune Auken & Christel Sunesen (ed.), *Ved lejlighed: Grundtvig og genererne*, Hellerup, Forlaget Spring, 66-94.
- (2015), “Come Together: Thoughts and Theories on Social Cohesion in the Work of Nikolai Grundtvig and Émile Durkheim”, in John A. Hall, Ove Korsgaard & Ove K. Pedersen (ed.), *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish Nationalism*, Copenhagen, DJØF Publishing, 232-253.
- Baunvig, K.F. & Nielbo, K.L. (2017), “Kan man validere et selvopgør?”, in Peter Leonard et al. (ed.), *Textkritik som analysemetod: bidra till en konferens anordnad av Nordiskt Nätverk för Editionsfilologer 2-4 oktober 2015*, Stockholm, Svenska Vitterhetssamfundet, 45-67.
- Bellah, R.N. (2006 [1967]), “Civil Religion in America”, in Robert N. Bellah & Steven M. Tipton (ed.), *The Robert Bellah Reader*, Durham & London, Duke University Press, 225-245.
- Blom, A. (2013), “Rasmus Rask and Romanticism”, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft* 23 (2), 241-274.
- (forthcoming), “Our Forefathers’ Old Rationalism: Rasmus Rask and Nordic Mythology”, in Sophie Bønding, Lone Kølle Martinsen & Pierre-Brice Stahl (ed.), *Mythology and Nation Building: N.F.S. Grundtvig and His European Contemporaries*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press.
- Bønding, S. (2017), “Indledning til *Brage-Snak om Græske og Nordiske Myther og Oldsagn for Damer og Herrer*”, in *Grundtvigs Værker*, Aarhus & Copenhagen, Grundtvig Centeret, Aarhus Universitet (www.grundtvigsværker.dk).
- (2018), “Danish Perspectives – N.F.S. Grundtvig”, in Jürg Glauser, Pernille Hermann & Stephen A. Mitchell (ed.), *Handbook of Pre-Modern Memory Studies*, vol. 2, Turnhout, De Gruyter, 782-787.
- (forthcoming), “Founding the Community on Old Norse Mythology: N.F.S. Grundtvig’s Attempt at Re-Mythologising the Danish Community”, in Sophie Bønding, Lone Kølle Martinsen & Pierre-Brice Stahl (ed.), *Mythology and Nation Building: N.F.S. Grundtvig and His European Contemporaries*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press.
- Böss, M. (2013), “Grundtvigs nationalisme I lyset af nationalismeteori”, in Ove Korsgaard & Michael Schelde (ed.), *Samfundsbyggeren*, Copenhagen, Anis, 57-87.
- Clunies Ross, M. (2005), *A History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics*, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer.
- (2018), “The Character of the New, Comparative Scholarship”, in Margaret Clunies Ross (ed.), *The Pre-Christian Religions of the North: Research and Reception, Volume II: From c. 1830 to the Present*, Turnhout, Brepols, 63-69.

- Cristi, M. (2001), *From Civil to Political Religion: The Intersection of Culture, Religion and Politics*, Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Cristi, M. & Dawson, L.L. (2007), "Civil Religion in America and in Global Context", in James A. Beckford & N.J. Demerath III (ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Los Angeles, SAGE Publications, 267-292.
- Damsholt, T. (1995), "'Jeg er en gammel Royalist, det ved De nok': Elementer i Grundtvigs politiske tænkning", *Grundtvig-Studier* 46, 140-162.
- (2003), "Grundtvig og de ansvarlige borgere. En diskussion af Grundtvigs politiske ideer om demokrati, frihed og ansvarlighed set som udtryk for moderne ledelsesrationaler", in Hanne Sanders & Ole Vind (ed.), *Grundtvig – Nyckeln till det danska?*, Göteborg & Stockholm, Makadam Förlag, 38-59.
- Driscoll, M.J. (2010), "The Words on the Page: Thoughts on Philology, Old and New", in Judy Quinn & Emily Lethbridge (ed.), *Creating the Medieval Saga*, Odense, University Press of Southern Denmark, 87-104.
- Durkheim, É. (1995 [1912]), *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life: A New Translation*, Karen E. Fields (transl.), New York, N.Y., The Free Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books.
- Grage, J. & Mohnike, T. (ed.) (2017), *Geographies of Knowledge and Imagination in 19th Century Philological Research on Northern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Grell, H. (1988), *Skaberånd og folkeånd*, Aarhus, Anis.
- Grimm, J. (1835), *Deutsche Mythologie*, Gottingen, Dieterich'sche Buchhandlung.
- Gschwandtler, O. (1990), "Die Überwindung des Fenriswolves und ihr christliches Gegenstück bei Frau Ava", *Pårol* 1990, 509-34.
- Halink, S. (2017), "Noble heathens: Jón Jónsson Aðils and the problem of Iceland's pagan past", *Nations and Nationalism* 23 (3), 463-483.
- (2018), "Nordic, Germanic, German: Jacob Grimm and the German Appropriation of Old Norse Religion and Myth", in Margaret Clunies Ross (ed.), *The Pre-Christian Religions of the North: Research and Reception, Volume II: From c. 1830 to the Present*, Turnhout, Brepols, 101-130.
- Hall, J.A., Korsgaard, O. & Pedersen, O.K. (2015), *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish National Identity*, Copenhagen, Djøf Publishing.
- Hammond, P.E. (1980), "Civility and Civil Religion: The Emergence of Cults", in Robert N. Bellah & Phillip E. Hammond (ed.), *Varieties of Civil Religion*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 188-199.
- Herder, J.G. von (1792), *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, vol. 4, Riga, Johann Friedrich Hartknoch.

- Holm, A. (2001), *Historie og efterklang: En studie i N.F.S. Grundtvigs tidsskrift Danne-Virke*, Odense, Odense Universitetsforlag.
- (2012), “Magtbalancen i dansk kirkepolitik før og efter 1849 – skitse til en forståelsesmodel”, in Svend Andersen et al. (ed.), *Kirkeforfatning: Kirkeretsantologi 2012*, Copenhagen & Aarhus, Anis.
 - (2019), *Grundtvig: En introduktion*, Aarhus, Forlaget Filo.
- Holmgaard, J. (1999), ... *uden at landet besværes. Studier over Frederik IV's landmilitis med særligt henblik på spørgsmålet om stavnsbånd og bønderkarlenes vilkår i øvrigt*, Viborg, Udgiverselskabet ved Landsarkivet for Nørrejylland.
- Haarder, A. (1983), “Grundtvig and the Old Norse Cultural Heritage”, in Christian Thodberg & Anders P. Thyssen (ed.), *N.F.S. Grundtvig: Tradition and Renewal*, Copenhagen, The Danish Institute, 72-86.
- Jensen, J.S. (2019), *What Is Religion?*, 2nd ed., Abingdon, Oxon & New York, N.Y., Routledge.
- (2019), *What Is Religion?*, 2nd ed., London & New York, Routledge.
- Jørgensen, L.G. (2018), “Reconstructing the past and the poet: Grundtvig and the Anglo-Saxon *Phoenix*”, *Grundtvig Studier* 69, 7-35.
- Korsgaard, O. (2004), *Kampen om folket: Et dannelsesperspektiv på dansk historie gennem 500 år*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- (2015), “How Grundtvig Became a Nation Builder”, in John A. Hall, Ove Korsgaard & Ove K. Pedersen (ed.), *Building the Nation: N.F.S. Grundtvig and Danish Nationalism*, Copenhagen, DJØF Publishing, 192-209.
 - (2018), *Grundtvig rundt: En guide*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- Leerssen, J. (2013), “Notes towards a Definition of Romantic Nationalism”, *Romantik* 2, 9-35.
- (2016), “Gods, Heroes, and Mythologists: Romantic Scholars and the Pagan Roots of Europe’s Nations”, *History of Humanities* 1 (1), 71-100.
 - (2018) (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, Electronic version, Amsterdam, Study Platform on Interlocking Nationalisms (accessed 10.07.2019).
- Liamin, S. (2018), “Images and Imageries of Norse Mythology in German Sentimentalism and Romanticism: From Herder to Heine”, in Margaret Clunies Ross (ed.), *The Pre-Christian Religions of the North: Research and Reception, Volume I: From the Middle Ages to c. 1830*, Turnhout, Brepols, 317-330.
- Lundgreen-Nielsen, F. (1965), *N.F.S. Grundtvig – skæbne og forsyn: Studier i Grundtvigs nordiskromantiske dramatik*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.

- (1980), *Det handlende ord: N. F. S. Grundtvigs digtning, litteraturkritik og poetik 1798-1819*, Copenhagen, G.E.C. Gad.
 - (1983), “Grundtvig og romantikken”, in Christian Thodberg & Anders P. Thyssen (ed.), *Grundtvig og grundtvigianismen i nyt lys*, Aarhus, Anis, 19-43.
 - (1992), “Grundtvig og danskhed”, in Ole Feldbæk (ed.), *Dansk Identitetshistorie*, vol. 3, Copenhagen, C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 9-187.
 - (1994), “Grundtvigs nordisk-mytologiske billedsprog – et mislykket eksperiment?”, *Grundtvig-Studier* 45(1), 142-198.
 - (1997), “Grundtvig as a Danish Contribution to World Culture”, *Grundtvig Studier* 48 (1), 72-101.
 - (1998), “Løven i buret: Grundtvig i 1848”, in Claus Bjørn (ed.), *1848 – det mærkelige år*, Copenhagen, Museum Tusulanums Forlag, 127-152.
 - (2018), “N.F.S. Grundtvig’s Use of Norse Mythology (1815-72) and Its Aftermath”, in Margaret Clunies Ross (ed.), *The Pre-Christian Religion of the North: Research and Reception, Volume II: From c. 1830 to the Present*, Turnhout, Brepols, 3-26.
- Lyby, T.C. (1993), “Grundtvigs tanker om præstefrihed – og grundtvigianernes”, in Per Ingesman, Carsten Bach-Nielsen, Susanne Gregersen & Ninna Jørgensen, *Ordet, kirken og kulturen*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 129-148.
- Magnússon, F. (1824-1826), *Eddalæren og dens Oprindelse*, 1-4, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- Mallet, P.H. (1763), *Histoire de Dannemarc*, 6 vols, Geneva, Claude Philibert.
- Malm, M. (2018), “The Learned Prehistory and Natural Religions”, in Margaret Clunies Ross (ed.), *The Pre-Christian Religion of the North: Research and Reception, Volume I: From the Middle Ages to c. 1830*, Turnhout, Brepols, 97-104.
- Malone, K. (1940), “Grundtvig’s Philosophy of History”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 (3), 281-298.
- Møller, J.F. (2014), “Det indskrænkede monarki og teorien om statsmagtens ligevægt”, *Historisk Tidsskrift* 93 (4), 539-564.
- Mørk Andersen, B. (2003), “Grundtvigs folkelighedsbegreb”, *Grundtvig Studier* 54, 65-87.
- Nevers, J. (2011), *Fra skældsord til slagord: Demokratibegrebet i dansk politisk historie*, Odense, Syddansk Universitetsforlag.
- Nichols, S. (1990), “Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture”, *Speculum* 65 (1), 1-10.
- Nielsen, M.C. (2002), “At tale med de døde...: Om sækularisering og hermeneutik i Kaj Thanings forfatterskab”, *Grundtvig Studier* 53, 121-141.

- Nyborg, O. (2012), "N.F.S. Grundtvig og naturalismen", *Grundtvig-Studier* 63, 109-144.
- Nygaard, B. (2011), "Demokratibegrebets gennembrud i Danmark i 1848", *Historisk Tidsskrift* 111, 37-73.
- Pedersen, K.A. (2005), "Grundtvig og fundamentalismen", *Grundtvig-Studier* 56, 86-124.
- Perlt, M. & Vinding, N.V. (2013), "Frederik VII og folkets kærlighed. Dansk civilreligion i en overgangstid", in Margit Warburg, Signe Engelbreth Larsen & Laura Marie Schütze (ed.), *Civilreligion i Danmark: Ritualer, myter og steder*, Høbjerg, Forlaget Univers.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1997 [1762]), *The social contract and other later political writings*, Victor Gourevitch (ed. & transl.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Schjødt, J.P. (2013), "Reflections on Some Problems in Dealing with Indigenous Religions of the Past: The Case of Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religion", in James L. Cox (ed.), *Critical Reflections on Indigenous Religions*, Farnham, UK & Burlington, USA, Ashgate, 29-47.
- Shippey, T. (2005), "A Revolution Reconsidered: Mythography and Mythology in the Nineteenth Century", in Tom Shippey (ed.), *The Shadow-Walkers: Jacob Grimm's Mythology of the Monstrous*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1-28.
- Skovgaard-Petersen, I. (1987), *Da Tidernes Herre var nær: Studier i Saxos historiesyn*, Copenhagen, Den danske historiske forening.
- Smith, A.D. (1997), "The 'golden age' and national renewal", in Geoffrey Hosking & George Schöpflin (ed.), *Myths and Nationhood*, London, Routledge.
- Stewart, C.L. (2005), "Civil Religion", in Lindsay Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, New York, Macmillan Reference, 1812-1817.
- Thaning, K. (1963), *Menneske først – Grundtvigs opgør med sig selv*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- Toldberg, H. (1946), *Grundtvig som filolog*, vol. 8, Copenhagen, G.E.C. Gads Forlag.
- (1950), *Grundtvigs symbolverden*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- Tullberg, S. (2016), "Indledning til *Den Danske Stats-Kirke upartisk betragtet*", in *Grundtvigs Værker*, Aarhus & Copenhagen, Grundtvig Centeret, Aarhus Universitet (www.grundtvigsværker.dk).
- Vind, O. (1999), *Grundtvigs historiefilosofi*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- Warburg, M. (2008), "Dannebrog: Waving In And Out Of Danish Civil Religion", *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 21 (2), 165-184.

- (2013), “Gud bevare Danmark: Dansk civilreligion i det store og det små”, in Margit Warburg, Signe Engelbreth Larsen & Laura Maria Schütze (ed.), *Civilreligion i Danmark: Ritualer, myter og steder*, Højbjerg, Univers, 7-53.
 - (2015), “Civilreligion”, in Armin Geertz & Tim Jensen (ed.), *Religionsforskningen før og nu – Nyere tid*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal.
- Weber, M. (2002 [1919]), “Wissenschaft als Beruf. 1919”, in Dirk Kaesler (ed.), *Max Weber Schriften 1894 – 1922*, Stuttgart, Alfred Kröner Verlag, 474-511.
- W. Weber, G. (2001), *Mythos und Geschichte: Essays zur Geschichtsmythologie Skandinaviens in Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, Trieste, Edizioni Parnaso.
- Zernack, J. (2018), “Pre-Christian Religions of the North and the Political Idea of Liberty”, in Margaret Clunies Ross (ed.), *The Pre-Christian Religions of the North: Research and Reception, Volume I: From the Middle Ages to c. 1830*, Turnhout, Brepols, 255-266.
- Z. Smith, J. (1996), “A Matter of Class: Taxonomies of Religion”, *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (4), 378-403.
- Ægidius, J.P. (1985), *Bragesnak. Nordiske myter og mytefortælling i dansk tradition (indtil 1910)*, Odense, Odense Universitetsforlag.