

»Stridige Stykker snild jeg forbandt«:

Grundtvig's creative synthesis of Anglo-Saxon sources.

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For one who famously scorned the »learned«, and who wrote contemptuously of the »spirit-destroying ABC« and of »dead alphabetic writing«,² Grundtvig was an extraordinarily zealous scholar and learned writer and publisher. A man who, for example, amid a multitude of other activities, not only learns to read the most ancient recorded forms of a language not his own, forthwith publishes a translation of a lengthy epic poem from that ancient language, Anglo-Saxon, and offers to compile a Reader to introduce others to its literature,³ but against all kinds of odds starts to prepare ambitious editions of the poetry of that ancient language, and then *composes new poetry in that language*, to serve to introduce his work to the public, such a man is no anti-academic dilettante.

Grundtvig was a learned and scholarly Anglo-Saxonist. He knew himself to be such. He had established his credentials in publishing corrections to Thorkelin's *editio princeps* of *Beowulf*, proposing important emendations to the manuscript text of that poem,⁴ undertaking the first full translation of *Beowulf* in any modern language,⁵ and achieving the first comprehensive interpretation of the poem other than Thorkelin's flawed reading.⁶ And indeed, when he thought his contributions to learning were not receiving the credit they deserved, he could show all the symptoms of a scholar's injured *amour propre*. Thus in 1840, he saw the *desideratum* of a new Danish edition of *Beowulf*, which in scholarly fashion should make good the many shortcomings of Thorkelin's edition, as an issue of Denmark's international honour - which he himself stood ready to settle. »*Beowulf* is an issue of honour for Denmark,« he wrote »not only because this old-northern heroic poem to a great extent treats of Denmark and first saw the light of day here, but especially because the Danish edition [of Thorkelin] does us daily more shame, unless my Danish translation and associated corrections are recognised as a considerable reparation; thus it would be very desirable that I should be in a position to furnish a Danish edition of the text, which with

the whole of my authorial status I dare vouch would, in this point, save Denmark's honour.« By the same token, he is indignant that the London antiquaries (who were by then issuing those Anglo-Saxon texts Grundtvig had himself once dreamed of publishing in England) made no mention of him and his work: »the English Anglo-Saxonists seem hardly to know that I exist or to know at all where those corrections to Thorkelin's text of *Beowulf*, which lie behind my Danish translation, come from.«⁷

But, of course, it was not learning or scholarship in itself that Grundtvig despised under these terms of insult: it was the lifeless pursuit of them - the dreariness and sterility of making them ends in themselves. The positive opposite of the »spirit-destroying ABC« which he condemned was »spirit-illuminating figurative language« [»det aandsoplysende Billed-Sprog«; *Phenix-Fuglen*, p. 20], and the opposite of »dead alphabetical writing« was »the living word« [»det levende Ord«; *ibid.*]. In pursuit of these, learning and scholarship certainly had their part to play. Grundtvig gives an example, in the introduction to his edition of the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Phoenix*, with reference to the Phoenix-myth itself [*Phenix-Fuglen*, p. 16]. He learnedly informs his reader that the poet's ultimate source is *The Book of Job*, ch. 29, v. 18 - according to the rabbinic interpretation of the passage, which is not reflected in the Danish translation of the Bible but which is cited by the Venerable Bede and followed by the Anglo-Saxon poet. The most learned, he says, will declare that the Phoenix-story resolves into nothing more than a way of representing a certain orbital cycle of the planets. These latter-day men of learning »really seem to believe that the Almanac's eternal truths are both far more correct and more poetic than the whole of human life with all its vicissitudes, its entrance and its exit, yearning and hope.« In their preference for the factual and scientific over the poetic and symbolic they bring upon themselves regrettable consequences, he suggests: they set a gulf between themselves and those who lived and wrote within a differently perceived world, a world of symbolic portent in which things apparently disparate may be proved to conjoin within one truth. »They hardly know therefore,« he says of these men of Almanac-mentality, »how they are to excuse the Fathers of the Church who...saw in the Phoenix myth a beautiful prefiguration both of the Lord's resurrection and of ours. But we on the other hand,« he declares, flatteringly incorporating his readership into his own more

visionary perception, »we on the other hand will rejoice that this interpretation is found even more fervently and daringly worked out in the Anglo-Saxon poet than in any of the Fathers of the Church.«⁸

Thus, at the one pole stands sterile learning. Close towards the other pole are ranged the Fathers of the Church, eliciting testimony of the catholic creed of the Church from the symbolic language of *Job* unproblematically conjoined with rabbinic interpretation and with Eastern myth; and there too is the Anglo-Saxon bard in the fervency of his catholic creed and the daring of his poetic imagination and language. And *at* the other pole stand »we« - that is to say, stands Grundtvig, defining himself as heir to the Fathers and the Christian Anglo-Saxon poets, and persuading »us« his audience to stand with him, rather than with the »most learned«, and soul-destroying, spoilers of the poetic perception and articulation of spiritual truth. Grundtvig indeed »had in high degree a sense of what the Anglo-Saxon and English Church has preserved and mediated of the Early Church's faith and custom and literature«⁹ and evidently wishes here to conjoin it, in some way and to some degree, with the Lutheran-Protestant faith, custom and literature of his contemporary Danish audience, in this 'new year' of a new reign.

'Poetic' was a word which clearly mattered to Grundtvig, among those words which characterised both his image of the Danish people and his own image of himself. A poetic spirit was a *sine qua non* in any culture or any individual who sought to understand ancient poesy. Speaking of recent Danish work on the Phoenix-myth, he says that »the Danish gleaning probably put more into the bushel than the French or German harvest, partly because they knew nothing of the Anglo-Saxon poem, which comes now for the first time to the light of day, and especially because an unpoetic people will never succeed in explaining what olden-poesy means.«¹⁰ The French and the Germans were an unpoetic people but the Danish nation possessed a poetic spirit - which was of course manifest in Grundtvig himself. Recalling his dilemma over the winter of 1830 - whether to withdraw from the project of publishing the corpus of Anglo-Saxon literature or whether to risk trying to spearhead such a monumental project in England while continuing to reside in Denmark - he declares that »I still had enough of my poetic dare-devilry to choose the latter without a second thought«.¹¹ Jocular and ironic though the context is, Grundtvig betrays some anxiety to get *his* version of events into print

in Denmark - and he would have it known that his mission to England was indeed an act of poetic daring. He means, I think, not only that the daring was itself 'poetic' in character (like the intrepid adventure of some hero of old), and a projection of the poetic temperament of the Danish people; but that it was an intrepidity pursued *within the field of poetry* - in that he offered to the task a boldness of interpretative and polemical approach which in his view was itself poetic in its inspiration.

He had already put into print evidence of his poetic daring as regards the treatment of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in the introduction to his translation of *Beowulf* and in articles on the poem which he had published in Denmark.¹² These were very probably known to Benjamin Thorpe, his arch-rival and a villain in Grundtvig's dramatisation of the story, who had studied Anglo-Saxon in Copenhagen and could communicate to the increasingly suspicious London antiquaries in 1830 something of Grundtvig's concepts of Universal History and of The Word (Ordet).¹³ These are the concepts which, according to his own idiosyncratic (and poetic) criteria of interpretation, Grundtvig finds articulated by the poet of *Beowulf*.¹⁴ And according to his own idiosyncratic self-perception as a judge of poetry and as a poet himself, within the same Northern tradition, he teaches these concepts onwards to a latter-day audience-the readership of his book - which, in his view, lives still under the same divine and worldly dispensation as prevailed in the ancient poet's day.

This last instance of Grundtvig's deft conjunction of disjointed entities - the sense of 'present' and the sense of 'past' - may seem symbolic. In the introduction to his edition of the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Phoenix*, he regrets that there has been a great cultural and spiritual discontinuity between the past and the present, exemplified for him in the discontinuation of the figurative language of the ancient North and of the ancient East over the period of the Middle Ages. Now at last in the nineteenth century, he says, there has thankfully come about a Phoenix-like resurrection of both these ancient figurative languages, exemplified for him in the attention given to the Phoenix-myth itself to which he has himself contributed in his edition of the Anglo-Saxon poem. It is a good thing, he writes, that Ovid and his admirers found the Phoenix-bird worth a glance in their writings, »because doubtless only thereby have his name and essential meaning been preserved from that deep oblivion into which the

figurative language not only of the North but also of the East sank through the Middle Ages. Only in the present century, which will doubtless win the name of 'the Resurrection from the dead', has there come to pass a new-year's-time for the figurative language of the East as well as of the North.«¹⁵

The application Grundtvig himself makes of the Phoenix-myth - in its christianised Anglo-Saxon dress - is itself an act of poetic daring. He uses it metaphorically, in the manner of those in whose tradition he consciously stood, to present to his readership political, spiritual and general cultural issues in contemporary Denmark. This is an act of rehabilitation, of deliberate reestablishment of near-disrupted continuity, a demonstration in practice of the concept of the unity of truth between civilised religious community in the ancient past and civilised religious community in the present¹⁶.

This then is perhaps what Grundtvig also has in mind when he mentions his 'poetic dare-devilry': and one might plausibly say that here Grundtvig draws an absolute distinction between his own work and that of more orthodox scholars such as Thorpe. Grundtvig's approach is not that of an antiquarian addressing fellow antiquarians alone, but of a man conscious of a larger, more popular public - the whole Danish people, in a quite specific sense (the work was dedicated to Christian VIII in the year of his coronation), and, in a more general sense, all the people of the Northern tradition.¹⁷ And his mission is not simply to inform, but to polemicise; to elicit from his ancient sources a wisdom, both religious and political, relevant to the age in which he and his readership lived; to deliver the response of a poet to this ancient poetry; to mediate these ancient memorials¹⁸ with the authority of a poet who still stands in the same continued tradition; to link together what others might see as discrete or even conflicting materials and motivations - all this, as though he were at once both a latter-day Cædmon and a latter-day Father of the Church.

There is enough sharpness of distinction between the London antiquaries' position and the Danish Grundtvig's position for us also to diagnose a cultural confrontation across national boundaries. One must not slip into clichés here and oversimplistically invoke the unhappy political relationships of England and Denmark during the Napoleonic Wars. Yet there is clear evidence in both English and Danish sources of a real problem of nationalistic pride and prejudice,

vis-à-vis the alarmed London antiquaries, behind Grundtvig's poetic-picturesque metaphor of himself as a new-age viking »who, after the example of my dear forefathers, wanted to enrich both myself and Denmark with England's treasures.«¹⁹ It is also plain, from the same sources, that this was a cultural confrontation between the *kinds* of scholarship which could be acknowledged as respectable within the two communities: it was a national-cultural confrontation over the proper parameters of the concept 'scholarly'.²⁰

Grundtvig, then, scorns those, and all like them, whose understanding of truth and whose insight into the poetic are circumscribed by the Almanac, or by any other manual which fastidiously avoids the reaches of speculative thought, proscribes the rich poetic ambivalence of figurative language, and remains unalert to the unity of significance which may be found in the conjunction of things ostensibly discrete and incompatible.

One convenient and not uninteresting focus of this distinctive attitude of Grundtvig is his composition of original (pastiche) poetry in Old English. A single, but a particularly significant example of poetic dare-devilry - of Grundtvigian synthesis - may be looked at here: namely, Grundtvig's incomplete draft for an Anglo-Saxon poem apparently intended to introduce an edition and translation of the 'Cædmon Paraphrases' (that is, the contents of Oxford Bodleian Library MS Junius 11; comprised of *Genesis, Exodus, Daniel, Christ and Satan*), one of several compositions in Anglo-Saxon written by Grundtvig to preface his intended Anglo-Saxon publications.²¹

These compositions perhaps merit some fresh critical attention for, though pastiche as a genre has rarely commanded the same kind of esteem as 'original' composition, while pastiche in an ancient language can look simply quaint and eccentric, Grundtvig's Old English poems are far from being a mere patchwork of phrases snipped out of the fabric of *Beowulf* or *Genesis*. Grundtvig is alert to the contextual associations which particular words and phrases carry over from their Anglo-Saxon ambience into his own discourse. There is an evidently exploited reverberation between concept-words imported from Anglo-Saxon poems and the contemporary application he makes of them in his pastiches. He also works with some considerable sense of the dynamics of Anglo-Saxon poetic form, particularly in respect of the manner in which, in Anglo-Saxon poetry at its best, part of the whole meaning of an utterance is resident in the *form* of the poetry,

and not within the semantic and syntactic aspects of the language alone. Here too was scope for another kind of conjoining of disparate or even conflicting elements.²²

This kind of composition called for spadework of a decidedly learned and scholarly sort. Grundtvig shows an early interest in the vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon from 1815 when Thorkelin's edition of *Beowulf* appeared, and provoked him into learning the language. About this time²³ he began making word-lists of Anglo-Saxon words, sometimes culling them from Lye's dictionary,²⁴ sometimes from printed texts. Sometimes he glossed them in Danish or in Latin; sometimes he brought to bear his already-established interest in Icelandic etymology to pursue cognates in both these ancient northern languages. Thus Fasc. 329, nos. 1-3 contain a list of »notable AS words« [*»Mærkelige Ange[l]sacsiske Ord«*]. On pp. 1r-2v is an extensive alphabetically arranged list of Old English words, clearly drawn from a wide range of source texts (though the sources are not cited), with Danish or Latin glosses.²⁵ On pp. 13r-16v appears an Old English/Danish alphabetical word list, stated there to be drawn from Lye, letters A-E. On pp. 17r-18v and 19r-24v is another Old English/Danish alphabetical word list, covering the whole alphabet, entitled *»Dansk-Angelsaxiske Ord«*. In Fasc. 329, nos 4-5, on pp. 25r-25v, Grundtvig makes notes on the Anglo-Saxon word *wyrd* ('Weird', destiny, fate, providence), noting its later occurrence in the poetry of the medieval Scots poet Gavin Douglas and in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*; and shows an interest in the Anglo-Saxon word *metod* (the Measurer, the Ordainer, God) together with its Icelandic cognates, glossed in Latin.²⁶

In Fasc. 328, item 20, p. 41r-41v, another list of Old English words occurs, evidently drawn from various texts, glossed in Latin. But - particularly notable in the context of this present paper - there is also found in the same Fascicle, item 6, p. 8r, a list of some twenty words and phrases, with page and line references, from 'Cædmon' - that is, from the poems contained in Oxford Bodleian Library MS Junius 11.²⁷

The special significance of this last list, for present purposes, lies in the fact that, according to the view of history recorded by the Venerable Bede, Cædmon is the first Christian poet of the English language²⁸ - and therefore, in Grundtvig's view of history, the first Northern Christian poet, and, as such, an archetype, a patriarch,

indeed the founding father, among Christian poets of any subsequent age working within the languages and poetic traditions of the North.²⁹

The figure of Cædmon as defined by Bede appears providentially appointed to his time and his place. He emerges from the unlearned common people; his poetic voice is given to him and to the world by God as a gift of grace; by no coincidence, surely, this gift of religious poesy is given into the world in a stable, at the dead of night, attended, if not by the ass then certainly by oxen; and Cædmon dedicates this gift of the Spirit to the conversion from worldliness to godliness of all who would hear him. Fittingly then, Grundtvig hailed the poetry which, following earlier scholars, he believed to be the remaining corpus of Cædmon's work (the contents of Bodleian MS Junius 11), as »this golden adornment of the Church's, as much as of poesy's, history in Early England ... such a treasure.«³⁰ To Grundtvig, Cædmon was a figure with considerable charisma.

Some insight into what Grundtvig found symbolised in Cædmon is afforded by his early poem *Ragna-Roke (et danske Æmter)*.³¹ In one sequence, when Nornegjæst has sung in gratitude to the uprisen Lord on Easter morning, the spirit of Luther is heard in conversation with Holger Danske. Luther speaks and prophesies. Nothing is dead that lives with God. The dust and ashes of the long-departed shall not be scattered before the wind: dissolution in the flesh is only the prelude to their binding in the spirit. »Ashes and dust! in the Blessed One's name, embrace each other with joy! Become an old man with snow-white hair! Let his eye mirror his lineage and circumstances! Let furrows and wrinkles not mar him! His crown he found in the path of righteousness. Become a living harp so fair, framed to resound in beauty for God! Become a harp, and become a hand, a tool for the Bible's holy spirit! Who is the spirit the Christ-hallowed heart yearned after, whether in joy or in pain? Let him come hither, compose to the harp, guiding his hand in the way of his thought.«³²

And so the Spirit of Cædmon appears. Speaking in Anglo-Saxon-style two-stressed half-lines without end-rhyme, and quoting in Anglo-Saxon the opening lines of *Genesis* and *Beowulf* (marked here in italics), Cædmon says:

»I dreamed, I dreamed that I saw King David: he gave into my hands his harp so fair. The golden strings I struck with might. In middle-earth still my song is recalled. I bent my ear to the ancient

Book; its speech found tone and tongue found voice. Pictures sublime my gaze discovered, cheerfully I spent my talent on the text. *Great duty is ours, that we praise with words the heavens' Keeper, the Glory-King.* Notes such as these, I well dare hope, never would sink in Time's foaming waves. My ear I lent also to olden-day legend, I wove them in garlands, I bound them with art, like swaying branches one gathers and binds and fashions an arbour in forest wild. *Lo! we have heard of the majesty of the people's kings of the Spear-Danes in days of yore;* and still, I trust, Hrothgar and Beowulf recite in the hall the warriors' praise. Thus on the harp I exalted true legend, ennobled to epic olden-day poesy; fragments once fractious I deftly conjoined, truth took on beauty and fable truth. To David belong all those harps whose strings are made to resound in church; therefore I come and with justification call upon the harp which is fashioned, David's and mine.«³³

Luther concurs: »That the harp shall belong to David, that is an immutable saying. If you can delectably stir the strings, you are his plenipotentiary in the North.«³⁴

It might initially surprise us, amid the vigorously anti-papal polemic of the poem, to find such acknowledgement of the status of the monkish Cædmon; but Grundtvig, like Cædmon the poet, is deft in conjoining things that were fractious. Before the spirit of Cædmon appears, Grundtvig (through the speeches of Nornegjæst) has already conjoined the valiant Reformation-spirit of the North with the ancient heroic Northern world of *Beowulf*, by crafty metaphorical use of the figure of Beowulf and the society of the Danish king Hrothgar within his hall Heorot, to represent the Lutheran confrontation with Rome. Similarly, on the other side, the monstrosities of Rome confronted by Luther have already been neatly likened by Nornegjæst to Grendel and his vengeful mother. Now, having instantly invested Cædmon the singer of Creation with the impeccable authority of king David the psalmist, Grundtvig links him also with the *secular* heroic poesy of the North by having him speak the opening lines of *Beowulf* - a device which achieves the equally important effect of keeping the Danish nation (*Gar-Dena*, 'spear-Danes') at the heart of the dialectic.

Thus, in a manner essentially dependent upon the *metaphorical* and *symbolical* mode in which he is here working, Grundtvig conjoins in a philosophical and quasi-historical unity elements which at

first appear disparate. There is therefore no conflict conceded between what Cædmon says he has taken from Scripture (represented by the quotation of the opening of the Old English *Genesis*) and what he has taken from the ancient Northern secular tradition of legend and of poetic form (represented by the quotation of the opening of *Beowulf*). There is no conflict conceded between Cædmon as monk and Cædmon as the great vision-inspired Christian poet of the North. There is, by implication, a simplicity, a directness of inspirational relationship between God and his mouthpiece, the poet-seer, speaking to the congregation of God's people, just as there ever has been back to the days of David. There is an untainted purity about the 'old-church'³⁵ spirit of Cædmon - and therefore he may be honoured without any betrayal of the spirit of the Reformation.³⁶

Grundtvig, to some extent prompted onwards by the availability of such amenable metaphor and symbol in the story and poetry of Cædmon, is already exploring ideas concerning the link between the post-Lutheran church and the 'old-church' which by-passes the corruptions of Rome - ideas which will eventually play their part in *Christenhedens Syvstjerne*.³⁷

We need not think that there is anything particularly eccentric about Grundtvig's perception of Cædmon - or rather, God working through him - as one who conjoined in unity conflicting elements. The concept is after all an aspect of Christology. The very words of Grundtvig's Cædmon seem to echo the words and the spirit of St Paul's letter to the Ephesians: »But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us...And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.«³⁸ There can be little doubt that this is the Christian rationale which Bede himself had in mind, when he framed and historicised the Cædmon-story as he did: the gift of the Spirit to Cædmon, naturalising Christian truth in the vernacular English language and in the forms of secular poetry, was yet another proof that the *gens anglorum*, once counted among the peoples that walked in darkness, had through Christ been adopted into the house-

hold of God; and there can be little doubt that Grundtvig understood that Bede saw the story in this light.³⁹

Furthermore, the fragment of Caedmon's poetry preserved with the story in a number of the manuscripts of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* manifests exactly that synthesis of conflicting elements that Grundtvig attributes to Cædmon's genius. Its Christian religious theme is articulated in the vernacular language, through traditional Germanic (even pagan) idiom, formulaic techniques, alliteration, line-structure, and rhetorical mannerisms, such as also characterise secular heroic vernacular poetry. And the so-called 'Cædmonian' poems of Junius 11 (*Genesis, Exodus, Daniel, Christ and Satan*) manifestly display a similar genius for synthesis of international Christian exegetical orthodoxies with the vernacular language of the Anglo-Saxons, and with their traditional poetic technical repertoire and narratorial techniques. It may be difficult to determine which is the primary direction of influence, but it seems clear that a two-directional process is working here. In part, Grundtvig is interpreting the story and the poetry of Cædmon in conformity with already formulated theology and theory of history. In part, he seems to be making formative first-encounters with ideas, images and idioms which he will absorb into that evolving synthesis of theology and history which will characterise the mature Grundtvig.

If we wish to enquire further to what end Grundtvig was so concerned with the idea and with the practice of conjoining that which was disparate in this context, it is important to understand that these 'Cædmonian' poems are not, as their old title wrongly suggests, *paraphrases* of the Scriptures. This is evident to any reader of them. In these poems, individually and as a sequence, the narratives of the Age of the Law are approached - in a way highly typical of the early medieval Church - as complex prefigurations of the Age of Grace. They combine as an account of Christian redemption history from the creation of the world; through the expulsion of the rebel angels and Satan's subversion of Adam and Eve; through the true and faithful witness of Noah, Abraham and Moses; to the story of Daniel, the Three Children in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, and the downfall of Belshazzar and Babylon; to Christ's victorious struggle with Satan in the desert and, by allusion, to the triumph of the Cross and the Harrowing of Hell, and the last and everlasting humiliation of Satan at the Day of Judgement. Of particular significance is the fine poem

Exodus, in which the crossing of the Red Sea (and, by recall, the crossing of Noah's Flood) are perceived as types of the sacrament of baptism. The poem is elaborately full of baptismal imagery and (poetically dressed and figuratively presented) redemption theology.⁴⁰ The sequence of poems taken as a whole presents an optimistic, buoyant reading of Christian history. Despite the fall of man, in each poem the principal figures retain through generation upon generation something of the image of God in which they were created. This is manifest not least in their inward capacity to recognise and to mirror that truth of which God himself is the embodiment and the never-faltering example: they are *soðfæst* ('steadfast in truth, righteous') towards a God who is himself defined as *soðfæst*. Meanwhile, their adversaries equally manifestly partake in the subversive purposes of Satan and are repeatedly defeated - until, in the final poem, the perfectly *soðfæst* man, the Christ and the consummation of all the preceding images of righteousness and steadfastness in truth, ultimately renders vain and worthless all Satan's purposes and deeds. The poem *Genesis* and the poem *Christ and Satan*,⁴¹ which open and close the sequence, have the relationship that Creation and Incarnation have in St John's Gospel: the benevolence and the light-bringing, life-willing fiat of the Creator God is manifest again in the coming of the Son into the world in order to put death and the darkness of sin to rout. In the cycle of poems in this codex, creation theology and redemption theology are perceived in a unity.⁴²

Grundtvig's own Old English poem - to come to it at last - evidently sets out to celebrate this same unity. In the standard manner of Anglo-Saxon poetry it consists of 68 verses or half-lines of Old English, each comprising two (occasionally three) stressed syllables and a variable number of unstressed syllables. The half-lines alliterate together in pairs which, in modern editorial convention, are printed together (as below) to form the standard long line. Some 36 half-lines are sequences imported from Anglo-Saxon poems; the remainder is composed of either short phrases borrowed from Anglo-Saxon poetry or half-lines devised in imitation of common poetic formulations. The text breaks off incomplete.

*Grundtvig's Fragmentary Old English Poem
on Creation and Redemption*

Us is riht micel þæt⁴³ we rodera weard,
 wereda wuldor-cining, wordum herigen,
 modum lufien. He is mæгна sped,
 heafod ealra heah-gesceafta,
 frea ælmihtig. Næs him fruma æfre, 5
 or geworden, ne nu ende cymþ
 ecean drihtnes, ac he biþ a rice
 ofer heofen-stolas. Heagum þrymmum
 soþfæst and swiþfeorm⁴⁴ swegl-bosmas heold.
 He se ælmihtiga scop eormen-rice,⁴⁵ 10
 wlite-beorhtne wang swa wæter bebugeþ;
 gesette sige-hræpig⁴⁶ sunnan and monan,
[fol. 1 verso]
 leoman to leohte landbuendum,
 and gefræt Wade foldan sceatas
 leomum and leafum. Lif eac gesceop 15
 cynna gehwilcum þara þe cwice hwyrfaþ.
 Wundor is to secgan hu wealdend engla⁴⁷
 manna-cynne on middan-gearde
 blæd and beagas bliþ-heort sealde.⁴⁸
 Wordum and weorcum weras stepte, 20
 hæleþum fægum helpe gefremede,
 sunu alwealdan; wigena baldor,
 deaþ-cwealm þrowade: dæd-fruma lifes,
 ealle gefælsode fæge and forhte.
[fol. 2r]
 He wæs leohtes leoht, lifes brytta; 25
 ufan eorþe⁴⁹ cunnode þær he ærest wearþ
 feasceaft funden. He þæs frofre gebad:
 weox to wolcnum, weorþmyndum þeah,
 astig to heofenum, sigora ealdor.
 Næfre on eorþan nergend usser 30
 forgyteþ ne forgymeþ gumena bearna.
 Ðeah þe hea-setl heafod-cyninges
 biþ ofer swegles begong sionum benumen,
 no þy læs heaþo-deor heord-geneatas ...⁵⁰

[Ours is a great duty: that with our words we praise the ruler of the skies, the glory-king of hosts, that with our hearts we love him. He is the plenitude of powers, head of all his exalted creatures, the Lord almighty. Of him was never beginning nor origin nor shall an end come of the eternal lord, but he shall be ever puissant over the thrones of heaven. In glories sublime, steadfast in truth and abounding in plenty, he ruled the expanses of heaven. He, the almighty, created the earth, the plain, radiant to look upon, which water encircles; glorious in his accomplishing, he established the sun and the moon, those luminaries, as a light to dwellers in earth, and adorned the land's surfaces with branches and with leaves. Life too he created in each of those kinds which go live about. A wonder it is to tell how the ruler of angels, gracious of heart, granted to human-kind in the world glory and gifts; by words and by works he encouraged men, and afforded help to those doomed to die. Son of the omnipotent, lord of his warriors, he suffered the pain of death; lord and author of life, he cleansed all the doomed and the fearful. He was light of light, giver of life. From above the earth he quested to where he first was found poorly arrayed: for this he was to find consolation. He burgeoned up to the skies, received the acknowledgement of his worth; lord of victories, he ascended into heaven. Never on earth will our saviour forget or neglect the children of men. Though the high-throne of the supreme king is above the sky's expanse, withdrawn from sight, none the less the brave champion [watches over?] the companions of his flock...]

The poem is in part a latter-day renewal of Cædmon's original celebration of the Creation. Its opening is the opening of the 'Cædmonian' *Genesis* from Junius 11, articulating the Anglo-Saxon view that the Creation is cause for Christian gratitude and homage to God the Creator. But Grundtvig discerns and celebrates the creative will and accomplishment of God far beyond the act of the Creation of the World - as did Cædmon himself, according to Bede, and as does the cycle of poems in Junius 11. God's bounty does not cease when land and sea, sun and moon, and all the living species are created, but he continues to invest in his creature humankind »glory and gifts« (*blæd and beagas*, line 19). And this creative fecundity leads naturally into, and culminates in, the giving of his Son (*sunu alwealdan*, »the son of the Ruler of all«, line 22) into the world to

bring relief to the doomed and the fearful (*fæge and forhte*, line 24). Thus the poem advances from Creation to Incarnation, and becomes a summary account of the *second* great divine act of life-giving into the world, the giving of the Son incarnate to suffer death (*deap-cwealm þrowade*, »he suffered the pain of death«, line 23) in order to restore life to those doomed to death and to the fear of death; and the opening of a way from earth to heaven, at the Ascension (*astig to heofenum*, »he ascended into the heavens«, line 29), for the benefit of the Saviour's faithful comrades.

The first nine lines are drawn from the opening section of the Old English *Genesis* (lines 1-9) in Junius 11. Lines 10-16 are slightly adapted from *Beowulf* (lines 92-98). The 'Creation' song from *Genesis* in Junius 11 has its obvious rationale: Grundtvig deliberately takes as his own starting point the Creation-homage of the ancient Northern poet of the Anglo-Saxon *Genesis*. The duty of thanking God for the gifts of creation is still (in the nineteenth century) 'ours' (the Danes', but also all humanity's) just as it was in Cædmon's seventh century, and as it ever was.

The 'Creation' song from *Beowulf* brings with it vivid recall of the circumstances of its singing within that poem. There, it is part of a paradigm of human communal happiness, realised, legendarily, among the Danish people under the good governance of the Scylding dynasty. It recalls the hall Heorot, whose building by the Danish people at their king's behest (the *Beowulf*-poet makes clear) was a benign human emulation of the creativity of God. The people with their king gather in Heorot to share in all that God has given, and the poet sings of The Creation. It is categorically this innocent and pious desire of the Danish people to honour the creative will of God that provokes the envious malice of Grendel, the creature that dwells in darkness and chaos. The passage is freighted with symbolic meaning in its context in *Beowulf* and Grundtvig at a stroke imports this freight into the context of his own poem by this strategic quotation. At the same time he tacitly enlarges his poem's meaning by demonstrating a seamless unity between the religious ambience of the *Genesis*-poet and the secular-heroic ambience of the *Beowulf*-poet - exactly as he had already done in creating the Spirit of Cædmon in his poem *Ragna-Roke*.

Lines 26b-29 are also adapted from *Beowulf* (lines 6-8), and here again Grundtvig seems to wish to import into his own composition

not only the ready-made rhetoric but, more importantly, the pre-established sense of his source. In *Beowulf* these lines apply to the founder of the great Scylding dynasty, Scyld Scefing, who was first discovered in destitution, having mysteriously arrived alone across the ocean, as a child; and, like the song of creation, these lines form part of a paradigm of good kingship and communal happiness at the opening of the poem. The poet strongly implies that it is through God's providence that Scyld has been sent to the Danes when they were lordless and wretched, and that Scyld's success in compelling peace among a wide federation of peoples and becoming a great king is also part of the providence of God, as is the birth of a son and heir »whom God sent as a comfort to the people« [*þone God sende, / folce to frofre*, lines 13-14]. The prospering of the Danish nation in legendary antiquity, then, is owed categorically and explicitly to the providence of God.

In Grundtvig's poem, the greatest act of God's providence after the act of creation itself is the sending of Christ as a man into the world - not into the majesty of earthly kingship but into obscurity and poverty, from which he emerged as lord of victories (*sigora ealdor*, line 29). But whereas Scyld »flourished beneath the skies [i.e. on earth]« [*weox under wolcnum*, *Beowulf* line 8], Christ »grew up to the heavens« [*weox to wolcnum*, line 28]. Perhaps Grundtvig has in mind Askr Yggdrasils, the world-tree. Certainly he has in mind, because he says so in the next line, Christ's ascension: *astig to heofenum*, »he ascended into the heavens.« Once again Grundtvig has deftly conjoined two patterns of story - that of Scyld and that of Christ - which have a unity in the one truth, the truth of God's redemptive providence through all the ages. The event in divine history subsumes and consummates the event in legend history.

In taking over actual sequences of Old English poetry, which are all effective pieces of Anglo-Saxon poetic rhetoric in their own right, Grundtvig also takes over various potent thematic concept-words and rhetorical effects.

A notable example of the adoption of concept-words is his incorporation of the term *sod̥fæst* [»steadfast in truth«] in line 9. This is a concept and term which thematically links the poems of Junius 11 - as mentioned above - and comprises one of the ways in which the Anglo-Saxon poet (and Grundtvig?) asserts that something of the image of himself, in which God made his human creature, survives

the Fall and all the subversions of the Devil, to be at last perfected anew in Jesus Christ as God-made-man. It is to the judgement of the *soðfæste* that Beowulf's soul departs upon his death (*Beowulf*, lines 2819-20). The paradisaical bliss adjudged to the *soðfæste* is a major topic in *The Phoenix*. Grundtvig has knowingly, and creatively, brought aboard a powerful concept-word here.

A notable example of his adoption of ready-made potent rhetorical effects is line 15, where the thematic key-word *lif* [»life«] is placed in the high-profile headstave position (first *stressed* syllable of the second half-line, which must always be included in the alliterative scheme and must be the only alliterating element in the second half-line) and represents a culmination of the alliterating pattern of the first half-line (*leomum and leafum*).

In those parts of his composition which are not based upon whole sequences from *Genesis* and *Beowulf*, but which do make use of single words and short phrases culled mainly from *Genesis* and *Beowulf*, or are devised upon models found in those poems, Grundtvig shows some skill of his own in emulating authentic Anglo-Saxon effects.

He is skilled, for example, in exploiting the dynamics of the metrically-divided, alliteratively-conjoined Anglo-Saxon poetic line. In line 21, the thematic key-word *helpe* [»help«] is placed in the headstave-position and links alliteratively with the preceding *hæ-leþum* [»men«] who are in need of the help, being *fæge* [»doomed«], in their own separate half-line; or in line 23 where the 'death'-concept is encapsulated in the first half-line while in the second half-line is encapsulated the concept of Christ as source of life, triumphant over death, with the headstave incorporated in the key-word *dæd-fruma* [»deed-originator; lord and author«]; or in line 25, where the thematic key-word *lifes* [»of life«] is placed in the headstave position and represents a culmination of the preceding half-line's alliteration on *leoht leohtes* [»light of light«]. There are also some formal weaknesses by Anglo-Saxon standards: double alliteration in a b-verse, in line 24b; and irregular positioning of the verb *scop* which should have followed the word containing the headstave, *eormen-ric*, in line 10b.

As one would expect of a man so interested in etymology and so generally word-sensitive, Grundtvig shows himself well alert to the potency of importing into his own composition terms and phrases

which bring with them expansive allusions from their Anglo-Saxon sources. Three examples may serve to illustrate his strategy.

The phrase *wordum and weorcum* (line 20), modelled on *Beowulf* 289, brings with it the authority of the memorably axiomatic speech in which it there occurs. King Hrothgar's thane, who guards the coast so that no enemy may do harm within the land of the Danes, challenges the newly-arrived Beowulf, listens respectfully to Beowulf's offer to rid the Danish hall of the monster Grendel, and then says that every right-thinking man must perceive the difference between words and deeds (*worda ond worca*). He expresses his conviction that Beowulf means to match his words with actions - as indeed Beowulf does - and he allows Beowulf to proceed inland, fully armed. But there prove to be others in the poem who boast much, and try to discredit Beowulf, yet do not deliver the matching deeds, and who thus serve ill the communal thriving of the people (what Grundtvig calls the »Folke-Liv« in his analysis of *Beowulf*⁵¹): thus the coastguard's definition of true heroic service remains a touchstone of true and false service throughout the poem.

So, in Grundtvig's poem, the Son of God is represented as the true hero who delivers not merely comfortable words to 'men doomed to die, mortal men' (*hæleþum fægum*) but deeds as well, and who (to use Grundtvig's words about Beowulf) »finally at the cost of his own life disarms the Power of Darkness and by strength saves the dying life of the people« [»tilsidst paa sit eget Livs Bekostning, afvæbner Mørkets Magt og redder med Kraft det døende Folke-Liv«⁵²]. Thus prepared, we may the more readily acknowledge the force of the title *dæd-fruma lifes* (line 23) - literally, 'the deed-Lord of life' - given to Christ in the culminating statement within this sequence.

A similar effect is achieved by Grundtvig's use of the term *gefælsode* in line 24. This is the word [*fælsian*, 'to purge, purify, cleanse'] reserved in *Beowulf* for the purging out of evil, violence and darkness. When Beowulf arrives in Denmark he offers to cleanse Heorot [*Heorot fælsian*, line 432] of the evil malice of Grendel, to settle alone the issue with the monster [*ana gehegan / ðing wið þyrse*, lines 425-6]. When Grendel is dead, the poet says, »the will of all Danes was accomplished after that deadly clash. He who had come from afar, prudent and strong of spirit, had now purged the hall of Hrothgar, redeemed it from envious affliction« [*Denum eallum wearð / æfter þam wæl-ræse willa gelumpen. / Hæfde þa gefælsod, se*

þe ær feorran com, snotor ond swyð-ferhð sele Hroðgares, / genered wið niðe, lines 823-7]. Grundtvig had perceived Grendel from the start as 'the Lie' [*Løgnen*] which throughout human history has been the adversary of Truth; Grendel was the manifestation of the Lie within time and temporality; and Grendel's battle against the Danes and against Beowulf was »a continuation of the battle of the Devil and the ancient giants against God.«⁵³

The purging of Heorot is therefore a symbol of God's inexorable victory over his adversaries in any age. This must be what Grundtvig had in mind when, in *Ragna-Roke*, he linked Rome's battle against Luther with Grendel's battle against Beowulf. And therefore, in applying the term *gefælsode* to the dead and risen Christ here in his own Anglo-Saxon poem, Grundtvig is doing a great deal more than mechanically quarrying words from Anglo-Saxon sources. He is once more finding and asserting a unity of truth, perceived between diverse circumstances and diverse cultural traditions. In effect, *gefælsode* is a condensed metaphor, a metaphor likening Christ's victory over the Devil to Beowulf's victory over Grendel, but also declaring that both are actually battles within the one ongoing war - the crucial difference between them being, of course, that Christ's victory is absolute and universal. Grundtvig's use of the term *gefælsode*, in short, is a strategy within his exposition of redemption theology in this poem, and a strategy which entails the conjoining of what had seemed disparate.

Finally, *heord-geneatas* in line 34. The form *heord-geneat* ['herd-companion'] might be thought an error on Grundtvig's part since this compound is not recorded in Old English, whereas the word *heorð-geneat* ['hearth-companion'] occurs in *Beowulf*. However, because the sense of Grundtvig's word, companions within the flock, is so close to Scriptural idiom - e.g., *Psalms* 95, v.7 (English *Authorised Version*): »For he is the Lord our God: and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand« - it may be safely accepted as deliberately intended, as a deft adaptation of an Anglo-Saxon term: and indeed as an example of the intelligent and creative engagement with sources which Grundtvig displays in his Old English pastiche compositions in general.

Grundtvig hoped, no doubt, that some of his readership would know, or would come to know, at least two Anglo-Saxon poems (and having looked at his poetic realisation of Cædmon in *Ragna-Roke* we

are not surprised to find that these texts are *Genesis* and *Beowulf*), and to know them well enough to recognise the elements of his pastiche, and thereby be able to follow him in the rationale of his connections. We might think that this is an ambitious expectation; and that Grundtvig could have found some other way of delivering his teaching. No doubt it is; and certainly he could. But here Grundtvig is the poet, functioning in the distinctive way of the poet, not as the exponent of the Almanac, nor as a learned pedant laboriously spelling out his lessons in »the spirit-destroying ABC« and »dead alphabetic writing« but as heir to the inspired poets of old who taught the self-same, abiding truths to the ancient peoples of the North. The lessons are surely enough embodied there in his poetic text: it is for the poetically responsive reader (and he believed that the Danish nation as a whole possessed a poetic spirit) to explore the richness of the texture and elicit the depth and complexity of its fullest meaning.

Dressed symbolically in the language and poetic forms of Anglo-Saxon poetry, these, then, are the themes which come together in Grundtvig's poem: the ages-long love and benevolence of God, in the creation, in the redemption, in the ascension, in his continuing grace towards his people; the heroic and sacrificial lordship of Christ, light of light and lord of life; the redemption of his people from the oppression of sin and death; the happiness and security of human community living as God's people; and the power of the creative word, mystically and in the form of the poetic articulation of divine truth and of the people's praise.

Clearly the creation theology and redemption theology Grundtvig found in the Anglo-Saxon poems associated with Cædmon and with the culture of the Anglo-Saxon Church struck a chord. And so apparently did Bede's exemplum of the continuing creativity of God, working through the ancient craft of poetry, and among the earliest Christians of the North, in the story of Cædmon's miraculous gift of poetry. God, *blip-heort*, gracious of heart (line 19), continues to be the abundant source of all things and source of the happiness and the hope of his creatures, humankind, particularly through his Son, light of light, lord and author of life, the world's redeemer. For the creativity of the Godhead, sang Cædmon and the poet of the Old English *Genesis*, we have a great duty to sing praise to God. This is the message which Grundtvig offers, to unite the fracture between

present and past, and to prefigure future unity between conflicting nations and cultural traditions within the continuing community of the Northern peoples.

A recent article,⁵⁴ analysing Grundtvig's spiritual and theological growth which culminated in his 'new perception' ['nyerkendelse'] in 1832 concerning the Christian religion, the human experience, and secular culture, offers a list of Grundtvig's formative encounters and undertakings leading up to 1824 and onwards to 1832. The list includes his work on the three universal chronicles; the substantial work of translation including historical writings of Snorri Sturluson and Saxo Grammaticus and of *Beowulf*; and his meeting with Irenæus.

Perhaps we do well to give full weight also to his encounter with Cædmon, Bede and the poets of the Old English *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Daniel* and *Christ and Satan*, and to the spiritual and intellectual imperatives which led him, and enabled him, to resolve »stridige stykker« into unitary and timeless truths.

Notes:

¹ The title quotes Grundtvig's poem *Ragna-Roke* (from *Danne-Virke. Et Tids-Skrift*, III, 1817, p. 342; discussed below), the speaker being the Spirit of Cædmon: »Stridige Stykker / Snild jeg forbandt: / Yndig blev Sandhed, / Og Æmter sandsynligt« [Freely translated: »Fragments once fractious I deftly conjoined: truth took on beauty, and fable truth«]. This paper arose from the context of a conference on Grundtvig and the early Christian Tradition called by the Centre for Grundtvig Studies in the University of Aarhus in April 1995, and I am indebted to a number of the participants for ideas which prompted it. I welcome this opportunity of expressing gratitude to the Centre for hospitality on that occasion, to Dr Kim Arne Pedersen for fruitful help in the library there, and above all to Dr Jens Holger Schjørring for the encouragement of his own infectious zeal. I also gratefully acknowledge financial assistance from the Grundtvig Centre and a generous grant from N. F. S. Grundtvigs Fond which enabled me to spend time in the Royal Library Copenhagen studying manuscripts in the Grundtvig Arkiv in April and September 1995.

- ² 'Phenix-Mythen', editorial essay prefacing *Phenix-Fuglen. Et Angelsachsisk Kvad* (Copenhagen, 1840), p. 20: »lærde«; »aandsfortærende ABC«; »døde Bogstav-Skrift«.
- ³ *Bjowulfs Drape, Indledning*, p. LXVIII: »An Anglo-Saxon Reader, with a glossary, is a want, which I, if no one else will, can and shall supply« [»en angel-sachsisk Læse-Bog, med Glossar, er et Savn, som jeg, om Ingen Anden vil, kan og skal afhjælpe«].
- ⁴ *Kjøbenhavns Skilderie*, nos. 60 and 63-65 (Copenhagen, 1815).
- ⁵ *Bjowulfs Drape. Et Gothisk Helte-Digt fra forrige Aar-Tusinde af Angel-Saxisk paa Danske Riim ved Nik. Fred. Sev. Grundtvig Præst* (Copenhagen, 1820).
- ⁶ *Danne-Virke II* (Copenhagen, 1817), 207-289.
- ⁷ Both quotations are from the introductory essay 'Phenix-Mythen' in Grundtvig's edition of the Old English poem *The Phoenix*, from the Exeter Book. *Phenix-Fuglen. Et Angelsachsisk Kvad etc.* (Copenhagen, 1840): »Bjowulf...er en Æres-Punkt for Danmark, ei blot fordi dette gammelnordiske Heltedigt for en stor Deel handler om Danmark og kom först her for Dagens Lys, men især fordi den Danske Udgave giör os daglig mere Skam, uden at man vil erkiende min Fordanskning og medfølgende Rettelser for klækkelig Bod, saa det var meget ønskeligt, jeg blev istand til at besörge en Dansk Udgave af Texten, som jeg med hele mit Autorskab tör indestaae for, skulde paa denne Punkt redde Danmarks Ære« (p. 13); »de Engelske Angelsachsere knap synes at vide, jeg er til, eller engang at vide, hvor de Rettelser til Thorkelins Text af Bjowulf, som staae bag ved min danske Oversættelse, er kommet fra« (p. 12). *Phenix-Fuglen* was the only portion of the Exeter Book Grundtvig managed himself to publish; but he did eventually find the means of publishing his own edition of *Beowulf* as *Beowulfes Beorh* in 1861.
- ⁸ 'Phenix-Mythen', pp. 18-19: »virkelig synes at troe, at Almanakkens evige Sandheder er baade langt rigtigere og mere poetisk end hele Menneske-Livet med alle dets Omskiftelser, dets Indgang og Udgang, Længsel og Haab. De veed derfor knap, hvordan de skal undskyldte *Kirke-Fædrene*, der...saae i Phenix-Mythen et deiligt Forbillede baade paa Herrens Opstandelse og paa vores; men vi vil derimod glæde os over, at denne Forklaring findes endnu langt varmere og dristigere udfört hos den *Angel-Sachsiske Skjald* end hos Nogen af *Kirke-Fædrene*«.

- ⁹ Bent Noack, 'Den oldengelske digtning og Grundtvig', *Grundtvig Studier 1989-1990* (Copenhagen, 1990), 141-156, p. 151: »Han havde i høj grad sans for hvad den angelsaksiske og engelske kirke har bevaret og formidlet af oldkirkens tro og skikke og litteratur.« Professor Noack's article offers a valuable Danish-orientated overview of Grundtvig's response to his encounter with Anglo-Saxon literature. His conclusion (pp. 154-5) is circumspect: »Since Old English poetry cannot be isolated either in Grundtvig's authorship (and particularly in the hymn-writing) or in our use of it, then nor may it alone receive the credit for this whole perception of Christianity having achieved so great an influence in our church. But it is a contributory factor. Without Grundtvig, Kragballe would not have translated Bede, Hammerich would not have written about Old English poetry and *Heliand* side by side, Otto Møller despite all his independence would probably not have written about *re*-demption, and Joakim Skovgaard would not have painted his picture of the descent into Hell.« [*»Når den oldengelske digtning ikke kan isoleres, hverken i Grundtvigs forfatterskab og navnlig salmedigtningen eller i vor brug af den, skal den alene da heller ikke have æren for at hele den kristendomsforståelse har fået så stor indflydelse i vores kirke. Men den er medvirkende. Uden Grundtvig havde Kragballe ikke oversat Bede, Hammerich ikke skrevet om den oldengelske digtning og Heliand i forlængelse af hinanden, Otto Møller formodentlig, trods al sin selvstændighed, heller ikke skrevet om *gen*løsningen, og Joakim Skovgaard ikke malet sit billede af nedfarten til helvede«*].
- ¹⁰ *Phenix-Fuglen*, p. 15: »...men ogsaa her turde den danske Eftersamling fylde meer i Skieppen end den Franske og Tydske Höst, deels fordi man slet ikke kiendte det Angel-Sachsiske Digt, der först nu kommer for Lyset, og især fordi det aldrig vil lykkes upoetiske Folk at forklare hvad Old-Poesien har at betyde.«
- ¹¹ *Phenix-Fuglen*, p. 11: »jeg havde endnu Nok af min poetiske Forvovenhed til uden Betænkning at vælge det sidste.« In the event, of course, Grundtvig returned to London in 1831 to find that Black, his publisher, had opened negotiations with Thorpe and now »was close to saying straight out that he did not dare to have anything more to do with me, so as not to be branded a traitor to his country« [*»var nær ved reent ud at sige, han ikke turde befatte sig mere med mig, for ikke at stemples til en Landsforræder«*] (*op. cit., loc. cit.*).
- ¹² *Bjowulfs Drape* (Copenhagen, 1820), *Indledning og Fortale*, pp. XXIII-LXXIV. Articles about the poem appeared in, for example, *Kjøbenhavn's Skilderie*, nos. 60 and 63-65 (Copenhagen, 1815) and *Danne-Virke. Et Tids-Skrift* (4 vols., Copenhagen, 1816-19).

- ¹³ An introduction to the bearing of Grundtvig's theology of 'the Living Word' upon his response to the encounter with Anglo-Saxon literature is my paper 'Grundtvig, Anglo-Saxon Literature, and »Ordets Kamp til Seier«' in *Grundtvig Studier 1989-1990*, pp. 216-245.
- ¹⁴ A characteristic example is his broad assessment of the poem's universal mean and of its consequent stature, in *Bjowulfs Drape*, Indledning, p. L [my italics]: »I find in fact that Beowulf is, with a deep poetic insight, conceived and in lifelike manner presented as humankind's northern hero who, finally at the cost of his own life, disarms the power of darkness and by his strength saves the dying life of the people, and if I am right, then the poem is also undeniably exalted, indeed a *Thors-Drape* [the Icelandic poem *Brymskviða*], of which not even Iceland can show the like« [»Jeg finder nemlig at Bjowulf er med et dybt poetisk Blik betragtet og levende fremstilt som Menneske-Slægtens Nordiske Helt, der, tilsidst paa sit eget Livs Bekostning, afvæbner Mørkets Magt og redder med Kraft det døende Folke-Liv, og har jeg Ret, da er Digtet ogsaa unægtelig høit, ja en *Thors-Drape*, hvortil selv ei Island kan opvise Mage«].
- ¹⁵ *Phenix-Fuglen*, p. 15: »thi kun derved er sagtens hans Navn og Grund-Betydning frelst fra den dybe Forglemmelse, hvori ikke blot Nordens men ogsaa Østens Billedsprog giennem Middelalderen nedsank. Først i nærværende Aarhundrede, der sagtens vil vinde Navn af 'Opstandelsens fra de Døde', er der oprundet en Nyaarstid saavel for Østens som Nordens gamle Billedsprog.«
- ¹⁶ For a valuable discussion of Grundtvig's use of the Phoenix-myth, and its bearing on the contemporary relationship of poetry and theology, see Jens Holger Schjørring, *Om Fugl Fønix motivet. Til belysning af forholdet mellem poesi og kirkelære in Ordet, kirken og kulturen. Afhandlinger om kristendomshistorie tilegnet Jakob Balling*. Ed. by Carsten Bach-Nielsen et al. Aarhus 1993, pp. 379ff.
- ¹⁷ See further my chapter '»The First New-European Literature«: N. F. S. Grundtvig's Reception of Anglo-Saxon Literature' in A. M. Allchin, D. Jasper, J. H. Schjørring and K. Stevenson (eds), *Heritage and Prophecy: Grundtvig and the English-Speaking World* (Aarhus and Norwich, 1994), 45-72, especially p. 49-50.
- ¹⁸ 'Oldtidsminder' - the term Grundtvig uses of *Beowulf*, in *Bjowulfs Drape, Indledning*, p. LII: »It is in all respects an outstanding memorial of antiquity« [»det er i alle Maader et udmærket Oldtids-Minde«].

- ¹⁹ *Phenix-Fuglen*, p. 11: »der, efter mine kiære Forfædres Exempel, vilde berige baade mig selv og Danmark med Englands Skatte.« For an examination of contemporary documents in the saga, see further Helge Toldberg, 'Grundtvig og de engelske Antikvarer' in *Orbis Litterarum*, Tom. 5, fasc. 3/4 (1947), 258-311.
- ²⁰ There may be some suspicion that the London antiquaries tacitly regarded Danish intellectual life as provincial, not so cosmopolitan as that of London; but even as Grundtvig was being shunted into the sidings the London Society of Antiquaries was negotiating to admit other Danish scholars into affiliation. Nor, it hardly needs saying, was Grundtvig universally esteemed within Danish circles for his particular brand of scholarship.
- ²¹ The text is written on a half-sheet, folded into octavo format, as item 2 in Fasc. 320. In the top left corner of the first folio are the initials *I.J.N.*, standing for *I Jesu Navn* [In Jesus' name]. Grundtvig used this form of dedication of his writing over the first half of his professional life, between 1811 and 1845, though it also appeared in the form *i.j.n.*, and with time it was reduced to three symbolic dots and finally to a tilde-like dash (H. Høirup and H. Topsøe-Jensen eds., *Registrant over N. F. S. Grundtvigs Papirer*, Copenhagen, 1957-64; vol. XXIX, p. 2). The particular designation *I.J.N.* was the commonest version during the years 1821-26 (*Registrant* XXIX, p. 37). Significantly, the form also occurs on the two folded foolscap sheets which comprise items 9 and 10 (pp. 159r and 161r) in Fascicle 316 of the Grundtvig Arkiv and which contain wordlists drawn from the 'Cædmon' manuscript, Oxford Bodleian Library Junius 11. The rest of Fasc. 316 contains Grundtvig's transcriptions of the Exeter Book (which do not display the *I.H.N.* dedication). Logically, Fasc. 316, nos. 9 and 10 would better be grouped with the other 'Cædmon' material in Fasc. 320. Criteria for use in dating Grundtvig's manuscripts are discussed in H. Toldberg, 'Dateringskriterier for Grundtvig-haandskrifter' in *Nordisk tidskrift för bok- och biblioteksväsen* (Uppsala, 1946), 107-120; and by H. Toldberg and K. Thaning in the *Registrant*, vol. XXIX.
- ²² Professor Bent Noack ('Baggrunden for salmen *Kommer, sjæle dyrekøbte*', in *Dansk Kirksangs Årsskrift* (1981-82), 83-99; cited in Noack, 'Den oldengelske digtning og Grundtvig', *Grundtvig Studier 1989-1990*, pp. 148, 156) finds that Grundtvig maintained a carefully graduated hierarchy of labelling to his various Anglo-Saxon inspired compositions, according to the extent of their faithfulness to the original source-text. This pastiche is a kind of 'lignelse' (imitation) but doesn't fit any category particularly well, being closer than translation in one respect (where it directly quotes

borrowed phrases or passages) and yet further away than the freest paraphrase (in the sense that it invests quite new meaning in the discourse).

- ²³ By the estimation of the editors of the *Registrant* XIV, commenting upon Fasc. 329. The editors also observe (Fasc. 268, nr. 16) that such lists testify to »the preeminent place of Anglo-Saxon within [Grundtvig's] etymologising« [»det angelsaksiskes fremtrædende plads i etymologiseringen«]. For an important discussion of Grundtvig's linguistic alertness and activity, see H. Toldberg, *Grundtvig som filolog* (Copenhagen, 1946).
- ²⁴ Edward Lye, *Dictionarium saxonico- et gothico-latinum auctore, Eduardo Lye...*, (2 vols, London, 1772).
- ²⁵ They include for example medical words, and the word *vælcyrían* (representing the OE *wælcyríe*, 'witch, sorceress, [valkyrie]'; but left un glossed by Grundtvig).
- ²⁶ Grundtvig made similar lists of Icelandic words and phrases, as preserved for example in Fascicle 268.
- ²⁷ Known to Grundtvig from the edition of Francis Junius, *Cædmonis Monachi Paraphrasis Poetica Genesisios etc.* (Amsterdam, 1655) through G. Hickes, *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus* (Oxford, 1705). Grundtvig notes with regret that the poems of the Cædmon manuscript are set out in Junius's edition continuously, as though they were prose [as, in fact, they are in the manuscript itself, in common with all other Anglo-Saxon poetic texts]. He does not wish to reproach the heroic Junius for this, but he cannot refrain from saying that »it is a great shame upon the book-learned men of England that, following the rebirth of Icelandic literature, they still have not learnt to understand the alliterative measures of their skalds, and have taken not one single step either to understand, or decently to publish their beautiful poems.« [»det er en stor Skam for Englands Bøglærde, at de, efter den Islandske Litteraturs Gjenfødelse, ikke endnu har lært at kjende Riim-Stavene hos deres Skjalde, og ei gjort et eneste Skridt enten til at forstaae, eller sømmelig udgive deres herlige Kvad«]. It was of course to make good this deplorable situation that Grundtvig formulated his plan of publishing a corpus of Anglo-Saxon literature, as finally proposed in his prospectus *Bibliotheca Anglo-Saxonica*, published in London in 1830.
- ²⁸ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969); *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, tr. L. Sherley-Price, revised R. E. Latham, with new apparatus by D. H. Farmer (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1990). The story of Cædmon is

narrated in Bk. IV, ch. 24. In a number of manuscripts of the work, nine lines of Anglo-Saxon poetry are recorded, which represent the opening of the narrative of the Creation which Cædmon sang at the angel's bidding. These lines are to be distinguished from the poem *Genesis* in Oxford Bodleian Library Junius 11, which earlier scholars sometimes attributed to Cædmon, and which forms the basis of Grundtvig's pastiche poem discussed here. Grundtvig quotes part of Bede's (Latin) account of Cædmon in the introduction to *Bjowulfs Drape* (1820), pp. XXVIII-XXIX.

²⁹ The status of Anglo-Saxon poetry, within its Northern linguistic and spiritual context, has by 1820 so far clarified in Grundtvig's thinking that he is able to write (*Bjowulfs Drape, Indledning*, p. LXVIII): »It is in the writings of the Anglo-Saxons that we have the most indubitable remains of the ancient North's poetic language, within which we shall learn to know and grasp its spirit, and this comprises, with Danish, which is the North's language of the heart, or, if one wishes, historic speech, and with Norse, which we may call the North's instinctual or natural language, a trinity, which the ancient Icelanders strove to bind together, but which only through a higher scholarship can be spiritually unified and developed into a Northern book-language« [»Det er i Angel-Sachserners Skrifter vi have de meest utvivlsomme Levninger af det Gamle Nordens poetiske Sprog, hvori vi skal lære at kjende og fatte dets Aand, og det udgjør, med *Dansk*, som Nordens Hjerter-Sprog, eller, om man vil, historiske Tungemaal, og med *Norsk*, som vi maae kalde Nordens sandselige eller naturlige Sprog, en Trehed, som de gamle Islændere stræbde at forbinde, men som kun gennem en høiere Videnskabelighed kan aandig forenes og udvikles til et Nordens Bog-Sprog«].

³⁰ *Bjowulfs Drape, Indledning*, p. LXXI: »dette Gylden-Smykke saavel for Kirkens som for Skjaldskabets Historie i Old-England ... et saadant Klenodie«.

³¹ Published in *Danne-Virke: Et Tids-Skrift*, III (Copenhagen, 1817); reprinted with some alterations in *N. F. S. Grundtvigs Poetiske Skrifter* IV (Copenhagen, 1882). The sequence here discussed is in pp. 512-6 of the latter.

³² »Aske og Støv! i den signedes Navn, / Tager hinanden med Gammen i Favn! / Bliv til en Olding med snehvide Haar! Øjet afbilde hans Æt og hans Kaar! / Furer og Rynker vanhelde ham ej! / Kronen han fandt paa Retfærdigheds Vej. / Bliv til en levende Harpe saa prud, / Skabt til at tone med Ynde for Gud! / Bliv til en Harpe, og bliv til en Haand, / Redskab for Bibelens hellige Aand! / Hvo er den Aand som det kristnede Hjærte / Higede efter i Fryd og i Smerte? / Han komme hid, for i Harpen at bygge, / Haanden at raade alt efter sit Tykke!«

- ³³ »Jeg drømde, jeg drømde, / Kong David jeg saa', / Han gav mig i Hænde / Sin Harpe saa prud, / Strængene gyldne / Slog jeg med Vælde, / End vel i Midgaard / Mindes mit Kvad. // Jeg bøjed mit Øre / Til Bogen hin gamle, / Dens Tale fik Tone, / Og Tungen fik Røst, / Billeder høje / Blikket opdaged, / Venlig jeg skjænked / Skriften mit Pund. // *Us is riht micel / thæt we rodera-weard / Wereda wuldor-cyning / Wordum herigen!* / Toner som disse / Tør jeg vel haabe, / Sank ej i Tidens / Skummende Bølger. // Jeg Øre og laante / Til Oldtidens Sagn, / I Krans jeg dem fletted / Med Kunst jeg dem bandt, / Som svajende Kviste / Man sanker og binder / Og skaber et Lysthus / I Skoven saa vild. // *Hwæt we Gar-Dena / in gear-dægum, / theod-cyninga / thrym gefrunon,* / End, vil jeg haabe, / Hrodgar og Bjovulv / Kvæde i Salen / Kæmpernes Pris. // Saa jeg paa Harpen / Hævede Sandsagn, / Adled til Epos / Oldtidens Digt; / Stridige Stykker / Snild jeg forbandt; / Yndig blev Sandhed, / Og Æmter sandsynligt. // David tilhøre / Harperne alle, / Som faa i Kirken / Klingende Strænge; / Derfor jeg kommer, / Kalder med Føje / Harpen, som dannes, / Davids og min.«
- ³⁴ »At Harpen skal David tilhøre, / Det er et usvigeligt Ord; / Kan Strængene liflig du røre, / Hans Fuldmægtig est du i Nord.«
- ³⁵ I use this term in imitation of the serviceable Danish word 'oldkirkelig', derivative of 'oldkirken' as used for example in Professor Noack's observation quoted above.
- ³⁶ Anyone familiar with the structure of *Beowulf* may find it irresistible to note the similarities of compositional technique and effect between that poem and what has just been described concerning Grundtvig's conjunction of disparate elements and the specific linkage of Cædmon with David the psalmist. The *Beowulf*-poet at a stroke transposes his 'Germanic' monster Grendel into the centre of a Christian polemic by simply giving him a genealogy reaching back to the Biblical 'monster' Cain, the first disrupter of human community, the first social outcast, the adversary of God. Instantly the poet has expanded the philosophical parameters of his poem by importing into it a whole ready-made scriptural and exegetical construct (in this case, the construct of good and evil linked with Cain). Similarly, Grundtvig has instantly located Northern, secular and once-pagan poesy in the centre of a Christian polemic by making Cædmon an appointed successor of David the psalmist. Again, the *Beowulf*-poet is at pains to show that events in the foreground of the plot are only the latest manifestations of a pattern of human behaviour, seen in the backward perspective of the poem's internal history to have been going on through the many preceding generations of humankind. Out of this strategic linkage of disparate stories, the poet elicits the (sometimes tacit, sometimes explicit) affirmation that all that happens in the world happens under the providential dispensation of God,

within the unfolding accomplishment of his purpose. So too Grundtvig's linkage of the phenomenon of Cædmon with the phenomenon of David the psalmist achieves the same effect. It may be too much to claim that Grundtvig learnt these strategies from his study of *Beowulf*, but at least we may be sure we glimpse here that affinity of poetic conceptualisation between Grundtvig and the Anglo-Saxon poets which made him so responsive a reader of them, and so creative in applying the fruits of his Anglo-Saxon scholarship.

³⁷ 'The Seven Stars of Christendom' (1860), in which Grundtvig links the seven churches of *The Revelation of St John the Divine* with six historic congregations, the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin, the Anglo-Saxon, the German and the Nordic, plus a still-unidentified 'Last Congregation'. The Anglo-Saxon congregation thus holds some sort of pivotal position in the transmission of the true faith of the Church: »The English congregation stands as the morning star which heralds a new day...This congregation constitutes the transition between the first three and the last three« [»Anglermenigheden staar som morgenstjernen, der bebuder en ny dag ... Denne menighed danner overgangen mellem de tre første og de tre sidste«], Th. Balslev (ed.), *N. F. S. Grundtvig, Christenhedens Syvstjerne. Udgivet med Oplysninger* (Copenhagen, 1955), p. 119.

³⁸ *The Holy Bible (Authorised Version); The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians*, ch. 2, vv. 13-19.

³⁹ An indication of the significance accorded Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* within Grundtvig's circle is the publication in 1864, under Grundtvig's active encouragement, of Christian Kragballe's Danish translation of the work. In his preface, Kragballe stresses its unique importance as a document for the study of Universal History. He blames some Lutherans for being »so arch-Lutheran and so secular-minded« [»saa ærke-luthersk og saa ukirkelig«] that they have forgotten the Hebrew, Greek and Latin Fathers: but also, »and this above all« [»og det allermeest«], they have forgotten the witness of the Anglo-Saxon Church. Bede, in reporting this testimony to the Danish people, can thereby offer them »enlightenment and consolidation« [»oplysning og opbyggelse«]; Christian Kragballe, *Angler Folkets Kirkehistorie* (Copenhagen, 1864), *Forord*, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰ The edition of P. J. Lucas, *Exodus* (London, 1977) usefully discusses the imagery of baptism in the poem.

⁴¹ There is scholarly disagreement as to whether the poem *Christ and Satan* is a late Anglo-Saxon supplement to a collection which already contained *Ge-*

nesis, *Exodus* and *Daniel* (only) or whether it belongs within the original conception of the codex Junius 11. That problem has little relevance here.

- ⁴² The original texts are edited in G. P. Krapp, *The Junius Manuscript* (*Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, Vol. I; New York, 1931); for a modern English prose translation with critical headnotes, see S. A. J. Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London, 1982 and reprints; revised with Index, 1995); for a small selection in modern Danish verse rendering, see Bent Noack, *Helvedstorm og Himmelfart. Stykker af oldengelsk kristen digtning* (Copenhagen, 1983).
- ⁴³ Junius MS: *ðæt*. Grundtvig rather rarely uses the Anglo-Saxon character *ð*, preferring or substituting instead the character *þ*, as throughout the present text.
- ⁴⁴ Grundtvig appears to have written *swiðferom*, intended no doubt for Junius MS reading *swið-feorm* ['very rich, fruitful'].
- ⁴⁵ Grundtvig's bridging line between his citations from *Genesis* and *Beowulf* seems to be loosely modelled on *Beowulf* line 92: *cwæð þæt se Ælmihtiga eorðan worhte*. The word *eormenrice* is apparently a Grundtvigian coinage, modelled on Old English *eormengrund* ('vast ground, earth', used in *Beowulf* line 859) and *eorðrice* ('earth kingdom') or *heofonrice* ('heaven kingdom').
- ⁴⁶ *Beowulf* MS: *sigehreþig*. Grundtvig on various occasions in his compositions uses *æ* where the correct Old English vowel would be represented by the spelling *e* or *a*.
- ⁴⁷ The line seems to be modelled on the formula of *Beowulf* lines 1724-27: *Wundor is to secganne / hu mihtig God manna cynne / þurh sidne sefan snyttru bryttað, / eard ond eorlscipe*. [A wonder it is to tell how mighty God out of his encompassing heart grants to humankind wisdom, land and lordship].
- ⁴⁸ Grundtvig originally wrote *gesealde*, but in revision the prefix *ge-* was struck out, presumably with the intention of improving the metre.
- ⁴⁹ Grundtvig appears to have written *earþ*, though the OE word is correctly *eorþe* ['earth'] - which Grundtvig uses again, correctly inflected, in line 30.

- ⁵⁰ The text breaks off one or two line-spaces before the bottom of fol. 2r; fol. 2v is blank. Because the intended verb is missing, the syntax and sense of this last line remain unclear.
- ⁵¹ *Bjowulfs Drape, Indledning*, p. L.
- ⁵² *Op. cit., loc. cit.*
- ⁵³ *Danne-Virke II* (1817): »Løgnens fiendtlige Forhold mod Sandheden« (p. 279); »Grendel staaer som Tidens...onde Aand« (p. 279); »som en Fortsættelse af Djævelens og de gamle Giganter Kamp imod Gud« (p. 278).
- ⁵⁴ Bent Christensen, 'Var Grundtvigs nyerkendelse i 1832 en tragisk hændelse?', *Grundtvig Studier 1989-90*, pp. 16-31; see especially p. 18.