

PRESS RELEASE

Pre-Christian mythology and nation-building in 19th century Europe

During the nineteenth century pre-Christian mythologies – especially Old Norse and Germanic myths – played a significant part in the formation of Europe's modern nations. The influential Danish theologian and writer N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) reevaluated the traditional negative stereotypes of pagan barbarians and produced a positive image of the indigenous Danes. Comparable ideas were common throughout Europe expressed in contemporary works by for example William Morris in England, Jacob Grimm in Germany and Jonás Halgrímsson in Iceland.

This interdisciplinary book offers new perspectives on the uses of pre-Christian mythologies in the formation of national communities in nineteenth-century Northern and Western Europe. Through theoretical articles and case studies, it puts forth new understandings of how cultural thinkers across Europe utilized pre-Christian mythologies as symbolic resources in the forging of national communities. Perceptions of national identity were thus shaped, many of which are still at play today.

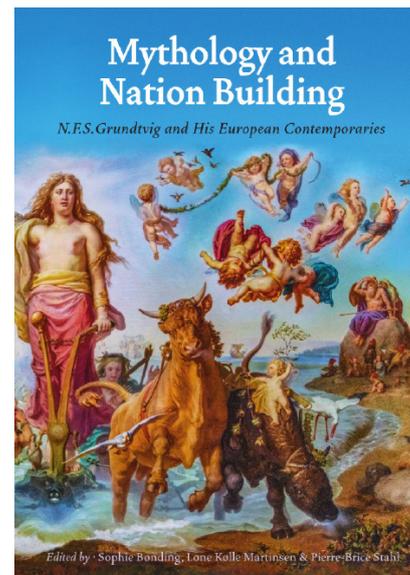
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MYTHOLOGY AND NATION BUILDING. N.F.S. GRUNDTVIG AND HIS EUROPEAN CONTEMPORARIES

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