

On Grundtvig and his use of bible references

Musings of a software developer

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig is one of the most influential persons in Danish history. He was a polymath and very prolific, “a pastor, author, poet, philosopher, historian, teacher and politician”, as [Wikipedia \(2003-\)](#) describes him.

In this paper I present some statical analyses of his use of bible references in his writing. The background to this study is that Grundtvig used, referred to or quoted the bible intensively. However, his references to different locations in the scripture varied a lot over time. I discovered this when developing and testing the *find bible references* feature for the Center for Grundtvigforskning's and Det Kgl. Bibliotek's (2020) [Grundtvigs Værker](#).

A bible reference is typically a string like 1 Kor 13,13 in some text. This refers to a unique target location in the scripture, namely: *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*¹ Grundtvig used that target 41 times, but he liked verse before that one even more, since he referred to 1 Kor 13,12 54 times.

The number of times a given bible location is referred to as presented in this paper depends on two factors, where the number of times he actually used is just one. The other one is the philologists effort to identify the references, and their ability to identify a reference which is perhaps only vaguely.

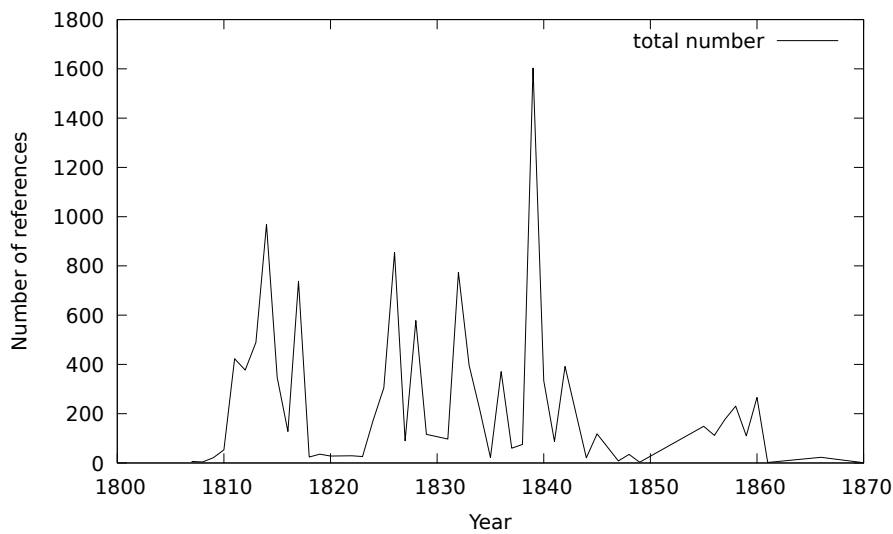
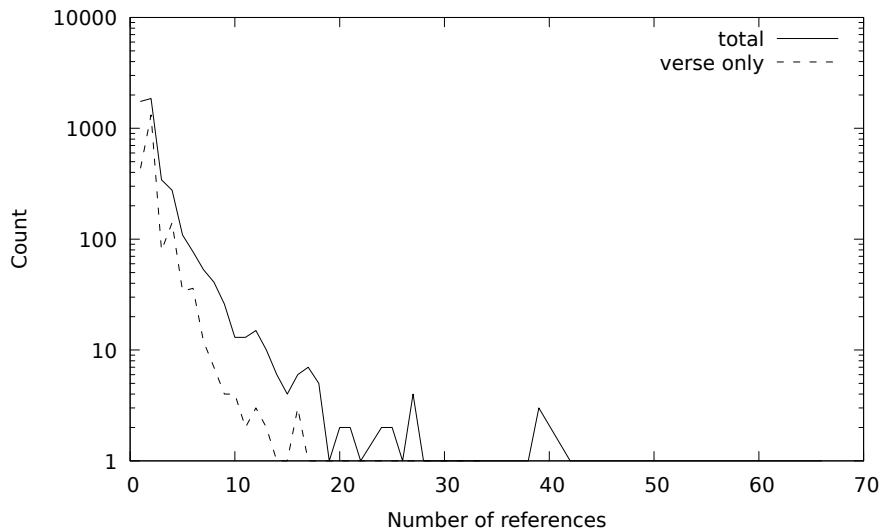
The Grundtvig data for the portal comes from the Århus university's (2009) [Center for Grundtvigforskning](#), the publisher of [Grundtvigs Værker](#). (I refer to the scientific edition of Grundtvig's works as GV in the following.)

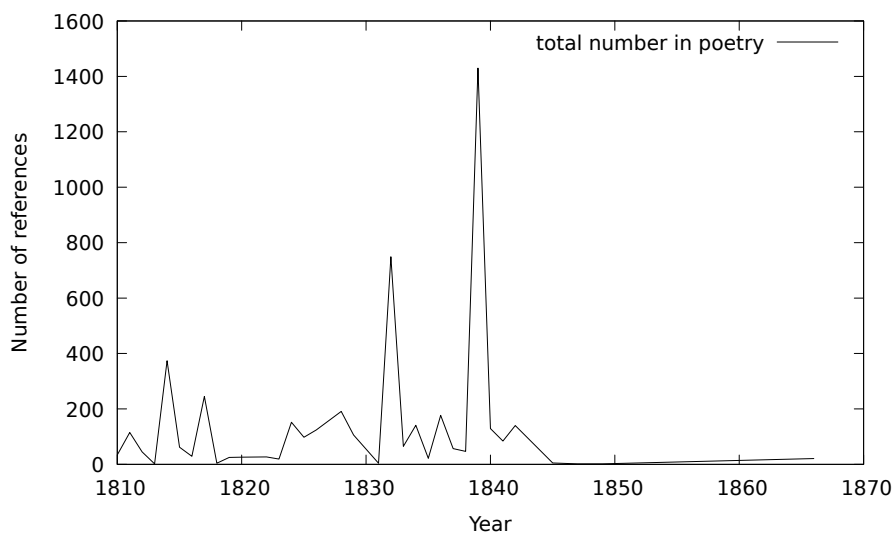
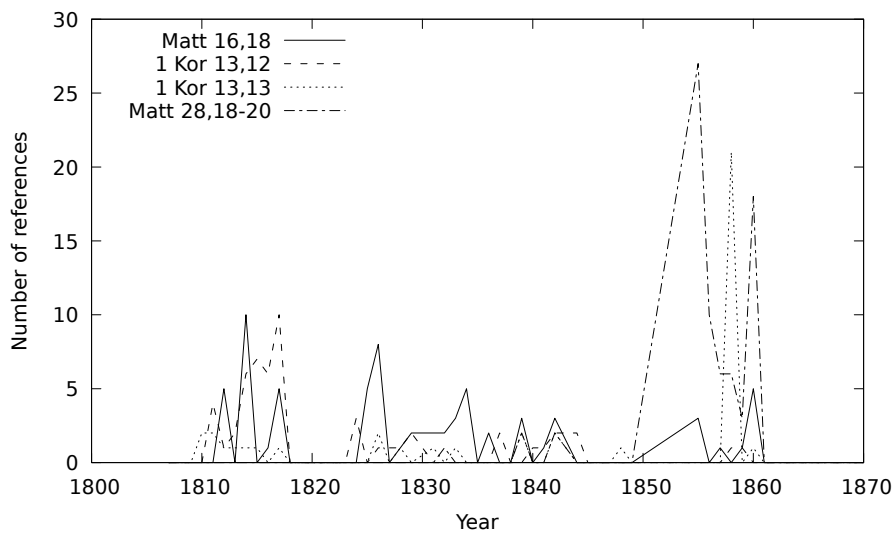
What you find below is an outline of my analysis of of his bible references from a technical point of view.

¹ https://biblehub.com/bsb/1_corinthians/13.htm (English)
https://www.bibelselskabet.dk/brugbibelen/bibelenonline/1_Kor/13 (Danish)

Analyses

I use the counts of individual bible references to compare all the years of Grundtvig's professional life. The philologists at the Grundtvig centre has identified 11499 references to the bible in the GV. They refer to 4637 different locations in the bible, i.e., he uses each location 2.5 times on the average. In reality there are large number of bible locations that just appear once in a reference, whereas there are a number of favourites which is cited 50-60 in the corpus.





Discussion

References

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