2

The Rise of Folklore Scholarship

The study of folklore is based largely on folklore collections. Yet, for many years, the number of extant folklore collections was quite small. In the eighteenth century, the few studies of folklore that existed were based largely on a combination of existing written records, literary accounts and reworkings of oral traditions, with actual field collections playing but a small role. It was not until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that European scholars turned their attention to producing collections of oral traditions. Their efforts were largely motivated by a shift among the literary elites of the time toward local and national culture and away from classical literature.

In Denmark, folklore collection started in earnest in the early nineteenth century. These efforts increased in scope through the mid nineteenth century and continued well into the first decades of the twentieth century. By the turn of the twentieth century, significant folklore collections, including those of Svend Grundtvig (1824-1883), were housed at the newly established Danish Folklore Archive (*Dansk folkemindesamling*, founded 1904) and folkloristics had emerged as a field of scholarly study in its own right. In the waning decades of the nineteenth century, Tang Kristensen was in the midst of what could best be described as a publishing

frenzy, producing dozens of printed volumes based on his folklore collections, and was still actively collecting folklore. Axel Olrik (1864-1917), who was both a key player in founding the folklore archives and served as its director until 1915, was named the first instructor of folklore at the University of Copenhagen, first as a docent in 1897 and later, in 1913, as a professor.[1] In this manner, a strong intellectual infrastructure had been assembled for the discipline of folkloristics in Denmark, mirroring similar developments across Scandinavian and northern Europe.

Unfortunately, by the 1920s, the field was in retreat in Denmark, reeling from the effects of Olrik's early death (Holbek 1990, 7). The field never quite regained its momentum; but the remarkable collections produced during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remain, and provide a unique window into the daily lives of the largely rural Danish population during a period of enormous social, political and economic change.

A Brief History of Folklore in Europe

In Europe, the collection and study of the oral expressions of the rural populations received a great boost in the late eighteenth century. Fed by the emerging philosophies of romanticism, a burgeoning scholarly and literary interest in the "anonymous poetry" of the "folk" soon developed. The "folk" were defined as the uneducated, rural masses that worked on farms or as hired hands and had little or no experience with the industrialization of the rapidly expanding cities. In Britain, James Macpherson's *Ossian* (1765) set the stage for the literary swing toward a love affair with the local agrarian population and their songs. In elite literary circles, *Ossian* was widely received as the Scottish equivalent of

Homer's epics, and marked a significant shift in European literary culture away from the glorification of Classical literature. Instead, literary figures and scholars alike turned their attention to local cultural expressive forms in the vernacular. These expressions were seen as encapsulating the spirit of the local people, and provided fuel to stoke the fires of an incipient nationalism—or rather incipient nationalisms—that took hold in the last decades of the eighteenth century. In several collections of Gaelic heroic poems leading up to the publication of *Ossian*, Macpherson (1736-1796) made the representation that he had simply discovered the poems and songs in various manuscripts, most of them narrated by "Ossian" and all of them describing the exploits of early Scotts heroes as well as the Irish hero, Finn. By incorporating the Irish traditions along with the Scottish traditions, Macpherson proposed a common Gaelic heritage for the region and *inter alia* revealed how oral traditions could be manipulated to serve political if not outright nationalistic ends.

Ossian caught the attention of the young German author, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), who was well on the way to becoming one of Europe's leading literary figures on the basis of the success of his *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774). Goethe was so fascinated by *Ossian* that he translated portions of it into German and, at one point in this debut novel, had his protagonist Werther proclaim, "Ossian has banished Homer from my Heart!" Goethe's close friend and contemporary, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), was equally intrigued by the work as evidenced by his copublication with Goethe and Justus Möser of the manifesto, *Von deustcher Art und Kunst* (Concerning German Manners and Art) (1773). In this polemical compendium, Herder contributed an essay, "*Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*" (Extracts of a Correspondence

Concerning Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Folk), in which he agitated for a collection of German folksongs, suggesting that an equally important "discovery" could be made in Germany (and in other countries for that matter as well) if scholars would only turn their attention to the local poetry of the rural folk. Importantly, it is also in this essay that he uses the term *Volkslied* [folk ballad] for the first time, opening the terminological floodgates to a conceptualization of a generally illiterate rural population, the *Volk*.

Inspired by *Ossian*, Herder became convinced that the oral traditions of the peasantry—particularly their songs—were the wellspring of the true voice of the nation. While arguing for a folk poetics that was simple and straightforward—and thus attempting to influence the artistic direction of his contemporaries—he also argued for both the anonymity and originality of these expressions that, in his view, hearkened back to the prehistoric culture of the Germans (Möller-Christensen 1988, 17). Building on Macpherson's implications with the publication of *Ossian*, he believed that in these popular (read non-literate, non-elite) forms of expressive culture one could uncover the first stirrings of a national poesy. Yet Herder's original thoughts on the folk were not solely nationalistic. As Boberg notes, "There is nothing particularly nationalistic in Herder. Rather, he values folk around the world and their poetry.

The first Romantics had overwhelmingly similar ideas. Their interest in fairy tales focused not on the German ones—which they hardly knew existed—but the French and the Oriental and popular books [folkebøger]" (Boberg 1953, 17). For example, his first collections of folk ballads, *Volkslieder nebst untermischten anderen Stücken* (Folksongs with Other Pieces, 1778-79), published posthumously as *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (The Voices of the Folk in Song, 1807), included ballads from many different countries (Boberg 1953,

16; Adler and Köpke 2009, 30). These compendia make this emphasis on the importance of folk songs and ballads for the understanding of folk spirit abundantly clear. They also influenced the burgeoning belief that oral traditional expressions carried with them an echo of an earlier, original Germanic people.[2]

One first encounters the use of terms such as *Volksdichtung, Volkspoesie* and *Volkslied* in Herder's works, emphasizing the connection he saw between the uneducated rural *Volk* and the hypothesized original culture (*Urkultur*) of the Germans (Möller-Christensen 1988, 17). Accordingly, Herder's work on folk traditions, far more than *Ossian*, marks the beginning of scholarly interest in oral traditions of the peasantry, and paves the path for the considerable collection endeavors that blossomed throughout Europe in the nineteenth century. Up through the nineteenth century, many of these collections and Herder's initial theoretical premises became part of the larger project of describing and delimiting the earliest histories of different nations and their "national spirit."[3]

Like Herder, the group of young literary figures and scholars who flocked to Göttingen also had nationalistic tendencies (Boberg 1953, 18). During the rise of Frederik the Great, German nationalism was reawakened from a slumber induced by the French influence in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, finding inspiration in the English ballad tradition that was garnering wide attention throughout Europe, composed a *Kriegslied* [war songs] in 1749, a forerunner to Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Glem's *Preussische Kriegslieder von einem Grenadier* (Prussian War Songs of a Grenadier, 1758) that praised the German nation and king (Boberg 1853, 13). Klopstock soon headed off to Copenhagen where he made a close association with Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg (1737-1823). The

fascination with Nordic mythology that had taken hold in Europe in the aftermath of the Frenchman Paul-Henri Mallet's translation of the Nordic myths in *Monuments de la mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes, et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves* (Monuments of the Mythology and Posey of the Celts, Particularly of the Ancient Scandinavians, 1755-1756) resonated particularly well in Germany, even though it also led to some discussion of the authenticity of the early Nordic source materials (Boberg 1953, 12-14). After von Gerstenberg traveled to Copenhagen, both his nationalistic interests and his interest in Nordic mythology received a significant boost—his *Kriegslieder eines dänischen Grenadiers* (War Songs of a Danish Gernadier, 1762) is closely related to Glem's work while his *Gedicht eines Skalden* (Poems of a Skald) is inspired by Klopstock. This latter work presaged a shift in German literature away from Classical mythology and more toward Nordic and Germanic mythology.

The attention of these younger German Romantics—those who had followed on the heels of Herder—quickly turned toward the idea of the German *Volk,* a concept that they enthusiastically embraced. This reinvigorated nationalism can be seen in no small part as a reaction to the Napoleonic wars. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who had married Klopstock's niece Johanna Rahn, gave a series of addresses to the German people in Berlin in 1807-1808 while Napoleon's troops were garrisoned in the city (Boberg 1953, 19). In these speeches, published as *Reden an die Deutsche Nation* (Address to the German Nation, 1808), Fichte, who was best known as a philosopher and educator, rallied a nationalistic sentiment focusing on the common characteristics uniting all Germans, and positioning Germany as the savior of the world against the despotism of Napoleon. Some of these ideas concerning the worth of early Germanic culture were further expressed in Fr. L. Jahn's book *Deutsches Volksthum* (German Nationality;

Lübeck, 1810) and by E. M. Arndt, who is now best-known for his patriotic poetry that was later used both by the Nazis and the East Germans in their own larger nationalistic—and fascist—projects.

Around this time, a small group of literary figures emerged in Heidelberg who were less politically aligned than Fichte, Jahn and Arndt, but still deeply interested in the earliest poetic expressions of the nation. They traced these expressions, like Herder before them, to the *Volk* and their culture—in short, to folklore (Boberg 1953, 19). The foremost of these were Clemens Brentano (1778-1842) and Achim von Arnim (1781-1841), whose collections of German folk ballads published under the title *Des knaben Wunderhorn* (The Youth's Magic Horn, 1806-1808) constitute the first major publication of German folklore based primarily on collections from unwritten sources (Boberg 1953, 20). Unfortunately, as was the practice of the day, all the ballads were rewritten and edited, and, in this case, aligned with von Arnim's aesthetic tastes (Boberg 1953, 20).

If Herder provided the philosophical foundations for folklore collection, and Brentano and von Arnim the initial examples of how to publish folklore so as to attract widespread attention, then the Grimm brothers, Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859), perfected these processes. Inspired by Herder's work on folk poetry as well as Brentano's collections of folklore, the Grimm brothers turned their considerable scholarly talents to the collection of German legends and folktales. Since Herder had already proclaimed that the fairy tale was a reflection of the spiritual world of the nation and had ostensibly revealed the primacy of the folk ballad as the purest expression of the national spirit, the Grimms focused their efforts on collecting these traditional expressions, further connecting the supposed anonymity of folk poesy with the ideas of the national spirit

and nature. Jacob Grimm, for instance, wrote about the folksong that "sings itself," while his brother Wilhelm mentioned the "innocence" and "unconsciousness" of folk composition (Möller-Christensen 1988, 23). In essence, the Grimms espoused a superorganic theory of folklore, a position that proposes a life for tradition separate from the people who create and perpetuate it. August Wilhelm Schlegel, in a criticism of the Grimms that prefigures more modern folklore theory, took strong exception to this theory, emphasizing that, irrespective of the seeming anonymity of folkloric expression, individuals are always behind any composition (Boberg 1953, 26).

Early on in their academic careers, after abandoning the juridical careers for which they had been educated, the Grimm brothers were enlisted by Brentano and Arnim to collect for *Des knaben Wunderhorn*. Once that work was complete, the two brothers turned their attention to the collection of fairy tales with the result that by Christmas 1812, they were able to produce a small published volume. They entitled this first collection and several subsequent volumes *Kinder und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales), thereby emphasizing both the domesticity and the literary innocence of the tales. This characterization was not meant in any way to diminish the tales' import as cultural artifacts. Jacob Grimm in particular held that fairy tales were the remnants of earlier myths and heroic poetry—accordingly, the fairy tales were to be recorded and reproduced with as much fidelity to their original oral form as possible. While the underlying motivation for the Grimms' insistence on fidelity has proven to be based on faulty premises, the enduring result of this philosophy of presenting materials as close as possible to their original form fortunately influenced later generations of folklore collectors and editors, including Svend Grundtvig in his editions of Danish folk ballads, and Evald

Tang Kristensen in all of his folklore collection. Ultimately, this underlying collecting and editorial philosophy allowed for the emergence of folkloristics as an academic discipline based on the study of multiple variants of folk expressions.

The Grimms' collections spanned most folklore genres. However, they appear to have been less interested in folk ballads than in other genres. This emphasis on prose narrative constituted a significant deviation from the general enthusiasm for the ballad in nineteenth century Germany and opened the study of folklore to an increasingly broad range of genres. While proverbs had already been the object of several centuries of scholarly attention, and while ballads and myths (as well as fairy tales) had been attracting increasing scholarly attention, the Grimms' work led to an important increase in the scope of genres that folklorists would consider. After their first collections of fairy tales, the Grimms produced two substantial collections of German legends, *Deutsche Sagen* (German Legends) in 1816 (volume 1) and 1818 (volume 2). In the foreword to the 1816 edition, Jacob makes the important genre distinction between fairy tale and legend, "Die märchen ist poetischer, die Sage historischer" [The fairy tale is more poetic, the legend more historical] (1816, v). Brief and to the point, this comment essentially launched the study of genre in folkloristics.

The Grimms were not solely focused on the collection of folktales and legends but were also deeply involved in the comparative study of historical linguistics. Their folklore collections became treasure troves of primary source materials for these philological studies and allowed them to develop their elaborate descriptions of the development of Germanic languages. These studies in turn fed the emerging field of comparative historical linguistics, a field that Jacob Grimm and the Dane Rasmus Rask are generally credited with establishing (Boberg 1953, 30). The Grimms' historical

linguistic studies were also informed by their long-standing study of early Germanic mythology (related in large part to their work on heroic ballads), and the work *Deutsche Mythologie* (German Mythology) clearly reflects the interrelatedness of all this work (1835). In this work, the Grimms—particularly Jacob—emerged as the leading scholars to propound a theory of origins for the fairy tales and mythology that held that these stories hearkened back to an earlier Indo-Germanic period. This theory proposes that fairy tales are degraded forms of earlier myths. Close readings of the fairy tales and their motifs, in turn, allow one to catch glimpses of earlier mythological stories. These ideas were eventually combined with theories about fertility cults propounded by Wilhelm Mannhardt (1831-1880) and later scholars developed a tightly woven view of the relationship between folktales and ballads on the one hand, and mythology on the other, a relationship that was informed by highly inventive readings that linked the stories to ancient Indo-Germanic agrarian rites. The underlying idea behind these studies was that German culture could be traced through the study of fairytales, back through myths, to an ancient Indo-Germanic culture that had been present in Germany for millennia.

The one strong corrective to this approach came from Theodor Benfey (1809-1881). Although originally expected to become a physician, Benfey's attentions turned to philology early on in his student career. He soon became a formidable scholar of Hebrew but then turned his talents toward Sanskrit. Through his studies of the Vedas and a translation of the *Pantschantantra*, he became convinced of a radically different solution to the origin of fairy tales than that proposed by the Grimms. Benfey argued that fairy tales did not derive from the myths of a common ancient Indo-Germanic past. They were instead a product of relatively recent transmission between people. The stories, he felt, must have originated

primarily in India. The study of folklore, in his view, should not be tied to the discovery of ancient mythological expressions hidden in the symbolic-yet-degraded language of the fairy tale. Instead, the main questions were ones of transmission: How did stories get transmitted from India to Europe? What happened to the stories in the course of the transmission? These questions became significant theoretical problems as the field of folklore developed.

Early Danish folklore collecting and folklore scholarship was also influenced by intellectual developments in Great Britain. The Renaissance awakened an interest in the local and the regional, as well as the national, among the literary and scholarly elite in England. John Aubrey's *Miscellanies* (1696) included legends and descriptions of folk belief about elves, revenants and magic among other things and is considered to be one of the earliest British collections of folklore (Boberg 1953, 81). Aubrey's interest in folk belief followed on the popularity of proverbs among literary elites and theologians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By the eighteenth century, the British had been bitten by the folk ballad bug. Samuel Pepys's seventeenth century collection of over 1800 broadside ballads was a remarkable early achievement. Ambrose Philips's subsequent *A Collection of Old Ballads* (1723-1725) was largely inspired by Peder Syv's Danish collection of ballads, a collection that Philip's undoubtedly became acquainted with during a sojourn in Copenhagen.

Macpherson's publication of *Ossian* was a watershed event for modern folklore collecting and study throughout Europe. In England, Thomas Percy (1728-1811), the Bishop of Dromore, was greatly inspired by Macpherson's work, and this led him to produce his massive ballad collection, *Reliquies of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). This collection in turn became a source of inspiration for poets such as Walter Scott and

Robert Burns (Boberg 1953, 83). Percy's collection also was one of the inspirations for Herder, as it had already been translated into German by 1767 (Boberg 1953, 83). As with their German counterparts, the majority of British scholars also focused their attentions on ballads. One small exception can be found in Thomas Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends and Traditions of Ireland* (1825), a work that was translated into German by Wilhelm Grimm. This collection also seems to have been a source of inspiration for the Norwegian Peter Chr. Asbjørnsen, who made use of a similar frame narrative in presenting his folktales (Boberg 1953, 88).

The single largest systematic collection of English folk ballads was produced by the Harvard trained American, Francis James Child (1825-1894), a somewhat ironic twist given the overtly nationalistic ideologies that informed the field of folkloristics at the time. Child's early education included a stint in Göttingen, where he had the opportunity to study with the Grimms. By 1857, he had produced a small collection of ballads, *English and Scottish Ballads* that, unlike many other collections, showed no editorial intrusion in the ballad texts (Boberg 1953, 89-90). In this early collection, Child made little distinction between narrative songs (ballads) and lyric songs; it was not until he learned about Svend Grundtvig's work, presumably some time around 1861, that he began to follow Grundtvig's more sophisticated genre distinctions. By 1872, Grundtvig and Child were in frequent contact, and one can easily discern Grundtvig's influence in Child's main work, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1894). While Child's methodology was influenced by that of Grundtvig, he did break with him theoretically. As Boberg notes, "In contrast to Grimm and Grundtvig, [Child] did not believe that the ballad was created by the folk, but rather that each ballad had its own author. The author, however, is of little importance, since his ballad first becomes a folk ballad

in the moment when it is accepted and preserved in the memory of a folk whose community of thoughts and emotions are so intertwined that they collectively comprise a single individual. Accordingly, one cannot attribute folk ballads to the lower classes. Many of them originate in the upper classes and it is only over the course of time that they sink down to become the property of the peasantry" (Boberg 1953, 91). Although correct in noting that folk ballads are not authored collectively, Child falls prey to the dominant notions of the time that folklore is superorganic, having a life of its own outside the lives of those who remember and perpetuate it. Similarly Child, perched on the cusp of a reconfiguration of the notion of folk along more modern lines, stops short of suggesting that everyone can be considered "folk." Instead, he substitutes an idea that is a precursor to Hans Naumann's ultimately ideologically dangerous notion of *gesunkenes Kulturgut* [sunken cultural goods], an idea that held that many non-elite cultural expressions were an attempt on the part of non-elites to mimic the culture of the elites (Naumann 1922).[4] Nevertheless, Child's more modern approach to folklore collection and theory underscores the increasing importance of Svend Grundtvig's theoretical principles for the collection of folklore throughout Europe.

British folklorists were not all focused on the traditional expressions of the islands. Because of the reach of the British Empire, there was considerable attention devoted to the cultures of Africa and India as well. While the German mythologists were entranced by the prospect of tracing contemporary folk expressions back to an earlier, prehistoric proto-Germanic past, the British theorists focused more on theories of transmission and the evolution of societies. Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917) was among the most prominent of these scholars. In his works, one can trace his refinement of Adolf Bastian's (1826-1905) idea that all cultures had

developed through identical phases; this commonality in evolution, coupled to the possibility of the transmission of culture from person to person, could account for the similarities in folk expressions across widely divergent areas (and did not require the type of common history as was espoused by German mythologists such as Max Müller). Tylor proposed that cultures left traces of their development in their contemporary folk expressions, labeling these traces "survivals" (Boberg 1953, 96).

Andrew Lang (1844-1912) similarly rejected the Grimms' idea of fairy tales as the remnants of myths, proposing instead that fairy tales actually hearken back to the earliest stages in a culture's development. In that regard, Lang also rejected Benfey's theories of the fairy tales originating in India, and wandering purely by word of mouth to Europe. George Gomme (1853-1916) continued Lang's work in his two important works, *Ethnology in Folklore* (1892) and *Folklore as an Historical Science* (1908), while his wife Lady Alice Bertha Gomme distinguished herself as one of the most significant collector's of British children's games and songs. In 1878, Tylor, along with Lang, the Gommes and Edward Clodd (1840-1930), who was best known for his studies of name magic, cofounded "The Folklore Society," one of the first academic societies for the study of folklore. The first president of the society was William Thoms (1803-1885) who is perhaps best known for coining the term "folklore" as an English equivalent to the German *Volkskunde*.

A Brief History of Folklore in Denmark

Very early figures such as Saxo Grammaticus (1150-1220) could arguably be labeled the first of the great Danish folklore collectors. Saxo wrote the first history of the Danish

kingdom, *Gesta Danorum* (Chronicle of the Danes, ca. 1208) based in large part on heroic and mythological accounts dating back to prehistory and fitted loosely into a historical narrative (Zeeberg and Friis-Jensen 2005). Clearly, Saxo made great use of both oral and written sources in creating his sixteen-volume work, and in this way his chronicle prefigures the great historical work on the earliest Norwegian kings, *Heimskringla* (Orb of the World, ca. 1230), written in Old Icelandic by Snorri Sturluson (1178-1241) (Bjarni 1941). *Gesta Danorum*, written in Latin, was produced essentially under contract to Archbishop Absalon (1121-1201) to bolster the political prestige of both the bishop and the ruling monarchs, Valdemar I (1131-1182, called Valdemar the Great), Knud VI (1163-1202) and Valdemar II (1170-1241, called Valdemar the Victorious).

Positing Saxo as the first great Danish folklorist, however, would probably fall under the rubric of nationalistic indulgence and tug at the boundaries of the modern field of folklore. Saxo was neither aware of, nor particularly interested in, the dynamic and productive tension between individuals and tradition. Rather, he was engaged in creating a written history of the Danish kingdom. Saxo's project is much more in line with those of other late medieval historical writers, including Snorri. Mikhail Steblin-Kamenskij reminds us that the conception of history in these works differs radically from modern conceptions of history (Steblin-Kamenskij 1973). Whereas the modern historian shies away from using oral narrative as a primary source material, in preliterate society such sources often outnumbered the few written sources that existed. Nevertheless, Saxo undoubtedly saw himself as engaged in writing history, in stark contrast to the folklore collectors of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who perceived themselves engaged in preserving the

expressive culture of the rural population and, by extension, the nation.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth century, humanism began to make inroads in intellectual circles in Denmark. Christiern Pedersen (1480-1554) who, like Saxo, harbored strong nationalistic sentiments, was the first to publish *Gesta Danorum*. Because the earlier manuscript record of Saxo's work has been lost, it is Pedersen's edition that now forms the basis for all subsequent editions and translations of *Gesta Danorum*. Unfortunately, Pedersen's later translation of Saxo has also been lost, going up in flames in the Copenhagen fire of 1728. Apart from his work on Saxo, Pedersen is known for translating Æsop's fables into Danish (1556) and for an edition of proverbs he published in 1515. The proverb collection was based on a hand written bilingual edition of proverbs (Danish and Latin) attributed to Peder Låle, a schoolmaster who apparently lived at the end of the fourteenth century. Because Pedersen decried Låle's Latin as "absolute crap" (*det bare skarn*), and because the majority of the proverbs were originally Danish, it seems likely that Pedersen was engaged in a form of early folkloric publication rather than in promulgating a particularly good Latin exercise book as had been earlier proposed (Boberg 1953, 141).

Most overviews of Danish folklore point to Anders Sørensen Vedel (1542-1616) as the first true folklore collector in Denmark. Although this reputation is probably deserved, Vedel was not interested in folklore in the modern sense of the term. Rather, much like Saxo, he was interested primarily in the early history of Denmark, a history that many of his contemporaries saw reflected in the heroic ballads that were in wide circulation at the time. Not surprisingly, Gesta Danorum and its description of the earliest Danish kingdom fascinated Vedel. His translation of Saxo (1575) is the earliest extant translation into Danish.[5] Instead of translating the text

verbatim, Vedel allowed himself a great deal of latitude, his intention being similar to that of N. F. S. Grundtvig several hundred years later. The translation was intended to garner a large audience by presenting a more fluid and aesthetically pleasing (to a sixteenth century reader) version than would otherwise be the case given Saxo's crenellated medieval Latin.

Vedel had received his early Classical training at the University of Copenhagen, after a remarkable childhood in Jutland during which he had distinguished himself by learning to read and write Latin by the age of eleven. When his schoolmaster in Ribe was made the minister at the Copenhagen cathedral, Vedel, who was the son of a well-respected merchant, accompanied him. He soon became one of the most promising young students at the university. Not long after his arrival, he was chosen to accompany another young man, Tyge Brahe (Tycho Brahe)—five years his junior—on a study trip to Leipzig and Wittenberg; the two became lifelong friends, and this early exposure to the German universities motivated him to return to Wittenberg to complete an advanced degree in 1566. He returned to Copenhagen as the castle minister in 1568 and began his translation of Saxo. He completed the project in no small part due to the help of Tyge Brahe: a paper shortage in Denmark threatened the production of the book, and Brahe made a public appeal to Denmark's women to sacrifice their linen so that the very large work could be printed!

The translation brought Vedel a great deal of attention, and several of Denmark's leading aristocrats, including Peder Oxe and Jørgen Rosenkrantz, encouraged him to continue Saxo's abbreviated history by writing a history of Denmark up to their current period. With the backing of these powerful men, Vedel was soon excused from his duties as castle minister, and moved to Ribe where he began preparations for writing this comprehensive history. During a

study trip around the country to get a better understanding of its geography, he visited his good friend Brahe at Uranieborg, the extraordinary castle that Brahe had built on the island of Hven. While Vedel was there, Queen Sophie of Mecklenburg (r. 1524-1586) stopped by and Brahe mentioned to her that Vedel had collected a large number of ballads as part of his historical work. Queen Sophie was already deeply interested in folk ballads because of the considerable popularity of small handwritten collections of such songs at court. The best known—and earliest example—of such a collection is "Hjertebogen," [the Heart Book], a hand written collection of eighty-three love ballads in a small book shaped like a heart.[6] Vedel promised Queen Sophie that he would send her a copy of his collections when he returned home; but rather than simply copying the ballads for her, Vedel decided to edit and comment them. The resulting book, printed on his own press in Ribe, was titled, "It hundrede udvalgte Danske viser" (One Hundred Selected Danish Ballads, 1591). This relatively small book stands as the first scholarly edition of Danish folklore.

Vedel had collected additional examples of folk expressive culture, but placed less emphasis on these than on preparing for his history of Denmark. Nevertheless, a collection of love songs he made entitled, "Tragica eller gamle Danske historiske elskovsviser" (Tragica or Old Danish Historical Love Ballads), was published in 1657, long after his death. Unfortunately, Vedel never completed his historical work. Because of his insistence on both comprehensiveness and rigor, he was ultimately forced from his beloved position of Royal historiographer in 1596 and retired from scholarly pursuits.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not otherwise offer an especially welcoming environment for folklore and folk belief. While Vedel was busy with his historiographic and folkloristic work, the rest of the country

was in the throes of a series of witch-hunts and witchcraft trials (Tangherlini 2000). Peter Palladius's *Visitatsbog* (Visitation Book, 1540), for example, includes a great deal of information about Danes' belief in witchcraft at the time. Bishops and theologians circulated warnings about witchcraft and witches, among them a warning from Denmark's best known figure from the Reformation, Hans Tausen, to the ministers and deans in Ribe (Bricka 17, 112). His warnings and those of Niels Hemmingsen included significant details about these belief traditions. Jørgen Pedersen Friis's (1684-1740) writings about superstitious peasants similarly provide significant detail about folk belief and practice. Perhaps the most complete of these accidental descriptions of folk belief and folk customs is Erik Pontoppidan (1698-1764) *Everriculum fermenti veteris* (Sweeping Out the Old Sourdough, 1736), a work that was explicitly written to help sweep away the vestiges of both papism and heathendom in Denmark.

Despite the religious tides and the explicit goals of church reformers to eradicate the last vestiges of earlier folk belief and practice, Vedel with his collection of ballads had laid the groundwork for subsequent significant studies of traditional expressive culture. Peder Pedersen Syv (1631-1702) is often credited with picking up where Vedel left off, and furthering the development of folklore as an important scholarly pursuit. After a brief stint as a schoolteacher in Copenhagen, Syv moved to a more rural part of Sjælland, working as a schoolmaster at the Latin school in Næstved. At the time, he was deeply engaged in the study of language, and his first book, *Nogle betænkninger om det cimbriske sprog* (Some Thoughts on the Cymbrian Language, 1663), not only paved the way for his *Den danske Sprogkunst eller Grammatica* (Danish Language Art or Grammar, 1685), the first grammar of the Danish language, but also reflected his developing interest in both the earliest Nordic literature, including the heroic ballads

and folklore in general. These studies were aligned with significant political developments of the time. In 1660, King Frederik III, after a bloody war with Sweden (1657-1660), was able to institute an absolute monarchy in Denmark, considerably weakening the previously unchecked power of the aristocracy, while laying the foundations for what might best be called a proto-nationalism among the Danes. This change in political organization led to a greater focus on Danish history and language, thereby echoing the intense regional and national focus that was becoming more common throughout Europe.

Through the influence of the chancellor assessor, Matthias Moth, Syv was named "royal philologist of the Danish language" (Philologus regius lingvæ Danicæ) in 1683, a post that carried with it the relatively high ecclesiastic rank of dean, and an annual stipend of 100 *daler* (Bricka, Laursen and Steenstrup 1887-1905, vol. 17, 30). Moth's goal was to produce a comprehensive dictionary of the Danish language, and recruiting talent such as Syv to this project was instrumental to its success. Apart from his work on language, Syv's first folkloric work—*Almindelige Danske Ordsprog og korte Lærdomme* (Common Danish Proverbs and Short Teachings)—appeared as two volumes in 1682 and 1688, respectively. Several years later in 1695, he expanded on Vedel's collection of folk ballads, adding an additional one hundred folk songs and ballads to the original collection, and publishing this expanded collection under both scholars' names (Vedel and Syv 1695).

Ole Worm (1588-1654), whose work overlapped with that of Vedel and Syv, is the third of the noteworthy contributors to the description of Danish oral traditions during the seventeenth century (Hafstein 2003). Worm spent much of his youth abroad, with stints at universities in Germany, Austria, Holland, Italy (Padua) and England. When he finally

returned to Denmark in 1613, he quickly rose to prominence as a professor of medicine (with detours as professor of Greek and physics) at the University of Copenhagen where he was credited with bringing the study of medical science, including surgery and anatomy, up to the emerging standards of the rest of Europe. Plague epidemics were fairly frequent in all European cities at the time, and Worm's dedication to clinical practice set him apart from many other medical practitioners of the time who generally fled to safety, leaving the victims of the plague to the poorly trained barber-surgeons (Bricka, Laursen, and Steenstrup 1887-1905, vol. 19, 189). A true polymath, Worm also was deeply interested in the early history of Denmark and in natural history. One of Worm's most important legacies was his collection of artifacts related to both subjects, a collection that formed the basis for the National Museum of Denmark (Hafstein 2003).

Worm was not only interested in collecting historical artifacts, but also in the collection of less tangible aspects of traditional culture. In 1639, a young peasant girl, Kirsten Svendsdatter, discovered a gold horn at Gallehus, near Møgeltønder in southern Jutland.[7] The find provided a significant impetus in Danish scholarly circles for the study of early Danish history and, by extension, folk traditions (seen to be analogous with the horns as survivals of a lost, golden age) and the Danish language. Worm's interest in early Danish history had been piqued, like so many of his contemporaries, both by the find of the gold horn, as well as by an increasing awareness of the interconnections between language, archaeology, environment and cultural history. His 1641 work on the gold horn, for example, interpreted the figures on it as allegorical representations of the ups and downs of human life (Bricka, Laursen, Steenstrup 1887-1905, vol. 19, 192).

In a collecting effort in 1622 that prefigured the much later questionnaire method—a standard method of folkloric

collection in all of the Nordic countries—Worm, through the intervention of the chancellor Christian Friis, was able to arrange for a royal letter to be sent to all bishops in the Danish kingdom, which at the time encompassed Norway. The letter asked for all parish ministers to send him descriptions of the ancient artifacts in their parishes. These letters began arriving in significant numbers during the following years. Although Worm's goal was to develop a comprehensive catalog of Danish and Norwegian rune stones and their inscriptions, the ministers' accounts included a great deal of folkloric material as well, some of which have found their way into Tang Kristensen's much later collections of Danish folklore. Worm became widely known as an expert on rune stones based on his six volume work *Danicorum monumentorum* (1643), generally referred to as "Monumenta Danica," although his interpretations of some of the inscriptions now seem fanciful at best (Bricka, Laursen, and Steenstrup vol. 19, 192-193). Fortunately, his plan to move most of Denmark's rune stones to Copenhagen was never realized, for of the eleven rune stones that were relocated to Copenhagen, eight disappeared during the great Copenhagen fire of 1728 (Bricka, Laursen, and Steenstrup vol. 19, 194).

Nearly a century separates Vedel and Worm's folkloristic achievements from the next major developments in the study and collection of Danish folklore, namely the work of Rasmus Nyerup (1759-1829) in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the intervening years, Peder Hansen Resen (1625-1688) continued with Worm's work on the rune stones, while Erik Pontoppidan continued Worm's "topographic" (chorographic) work describing in great detail not only the geography and topography of Denmark, but also local customs and beliefs.[8] Pontoppidan's seven volume *Danske Atlas* (Danish Atlas, 1763-1781) was finally replaced by J. P. Trap's *Statistisk-topografisk Beskrivelse af Kongeriget*

Danmark (Statistical Chorographic Description of the Danish Kingdom) starting in 1858 (Trap 1858-1860; Boberg 1953, 147 and 167).

Another major figure whose work had a significant impact on the development of folklore in Denmark was Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872), one of Denmark's leading progressive Lutheran theologians and father to Svend Grundtvig. The elder Grundtvig was largely a popularist, and worked diligently to translate both Saxo and Snorri's mythological *Snorra Edda* into a language that most Danes could understand. Similarly, he laid the foundation for the folk high school movement (*folkehøjskole bevægelse*) that had as one of its main goals bringing access to higher education to the rural areas of Denmark. The folk high schools were intended in part to make recent advances in agricultural methods accessible to a broader rural audience and in part to inculcate in students an understanding of the importance of early Nordic literature and traditional expression. The schools were an enormous success, and Tang Kristensen later took advantage of the eagerness with which students and teachers at these schools studied and embraced folk traditions on many of his collecting trips. N.F.S. Grundtvig's interest in the Nordic past was largely influenced by the state bankruptcy of 1813, following on the heels of Denmark's unfortunate alliance with Napoleon. The resulting economic crisis, coupled to the loss of Norway as part of the kingdom, forced many Danish intellectuals to turn towards an examination of the Danish past to rediscover some of the lost glory of the nation. Neither Resen's, Pontoppidan's nor N.S.F. Grundtvig's studies, however, can be considered folklore research. Inger M. Boberg (1953, 150) observed that "long before one can talk about actual folklore research, a long line of historians, chorographers, archaeologists and literary scholars have occupied themselves with what we call folklore."

Rasmus Nyerup, on the other hand, stood on the cusp of the development of modern folklore collection and study.

By 1800, the study of ballads had become reinvigorated. Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg (1737-1823) published *Briefe über Merkwürdigkeiten der Literatur* (Letters Concerning Literary Curiosities, 1766) often referred to as *Schleswigsche Literaturbriefe* (Schleswigian Literary Letters) that mentioned both Danish and English ballads, and provided additional motivation to Herder (Boberg 1953, 155). Similarly, Johannes Ewald's plays, *Rolf Krage* (1770) and *Balders død* (Balder's Death, 1775) brought increased attention to Nordic mythology as a substitute for the Classical mythology. As Boberg notes about the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, "in Denmark, the English work with folk ballads and the German enthusiasm for the ancient North flowed together with a domestic interest in both the local past and earlier poetic composition, and thus secured for it a greater distribution than it had had earlier" (Boberg 1953, 156). Bertel Chr. Sandvig (1752-1786) was one of the first to revisit the early folk ballads. He published a slender volume, *Levninger af Middel-Alderens Digtekunst* (Remains of the Middle Ages' Poetic Art), an edition of a late medieval manuscript that he had received through his teacher, the Romantic historian Peder Suhm (1728-1798) (Boberg 1953, 156; Sandvig and Nyerup 1780). Although Sandvig began work with the Danish ballads in the context of the German work on folk ballads, it was Nyerup who carried the torch up into the early nineteenth century (Boberg 1953, 156).

Nyerup was, like Sandvig, trained by Suhm. He spent the majority of his career as a librarian at the Royal Library and the University of Copenhagen library. In the late eighteenth century, Nyerup revisited Sandvig's ballads, and published a supplemental volume (Boberg 1953, 157). Along with Werner H. F. Abrahamson and Knud Lyne Rahbeck, he also

produced the first multi-volume Scandinavian ballad collection, *Udvalgte danske Viser fra Middelalderen* (Selected Danish Ballads from the Middle Ages) (Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Lyne Rahbeck 1812-1814). Nyerup was also instrumental in the developing network of international folklorists, acting as a contact to both the Swede Artur Afzelius, and the Grimms in Germany (Boberg 1953, 157). In 1821, Nyerup revisited Vedel's and Syv's collections, producing, with P. E. Rasmussen, *Udvalg af danske Viser fra Midten af den 16. Aarhundrede til henimod Midten af det 18de, med Melodier* (Selection of Danish Ballads from the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century). This work included not only Syv's and Vedel's main collections, but also the ballads from *Tragica* as well as those from *Hjertebog*. Unlike the later editions produced by Svend Grundtvig that had little editorial intrusion into the language of the ballads, Nyerup took a page from Herder, Arnim, Brentano et al. and edited the ballads according to his own poetic aesthetic (Boberg 1953, 158).

If Nyerup was the leading figure in ballad study at the turn of the nineteenth century, then Just Mathias Thiele (1795-1874) was the leading figure in the collection of other forms of folklore. Unlike Nyerup, who focused primarily on publishing editions of earlier manuscripts, and N.F.S. Grundtvig, who was largely engaged in developing a coherent theological project, Thiele put his efforts into collecting. In contrast to the general emphasis on ballads and fairy tales at the start of the nineteenth century, Thiele decided to emphasize prose narrative, particularly legend. He had experienced a difficult childhood and, by 1816, had left school. He was able to secure a small position at the Royal Library, where he began copying legends from old manuscripts, and supplementing these written records with his own collections from Sjælland (Bricka, Laursen, and

Sttenstrup 1887-1905, vol. 17, 185). In 1817, he published *Prøver af danske Folkesagn* (Samples of Danish Folk Legends), with a foreword written by Nyerup. That same year, N.F.S. Grundtvig had published a call for all Danes to collect legends and proverbs from their local regions and send them to the library at the University of Copenhagen (Skar 1968, 6).

In 1818, Thiele along with his friend Christian Molbech (1783-1857) made a series of trips around Denmark, collecting primarily legends from peasants throughout the country. These narratives formed the basis for his four-volume collection, *Danske Folkesagn* (Danish Folk Legends, 1818-1823), a collection that provided the model for Tang Kristensen's later work. In 1843, Thiele supplemented this collection with an additional three hundred legends organized systematically in a new two-volume edition, entitled *Danmarks Folkesagn* (Denmark's Folk Legends, 1843; Skar 1968). Unlike Tang Kristensen, Thiele often concatenated legend variants to create a complete version. Similarly, his collecting methodology was at times less than thorough. In the foreword to the third volume of *Danske Folkesagn*, he notes, "Naar nu en ærlig Bondemand begynder at fortælle, kan jeg som oftest, naar jeg blot har hørt ham begynde, sige til ham: 'Ja,tie nu, Fa'er! Saa skal jeg fortælle jer Resten!" Og han undres over, at jeg veed lige så godt Beskeed som han..." [When an honest peasant begins to tell, I can more often than not, as soon as I have heard him start, say to him, "Be quiet now father! I'll tell the rest!" And he'd be puzzled that I knew it just as well as he did…] (quoted in Boberg 1953, 162).

Thiele's role in Danish literary life should not be underestimated (Mortensen 2005). Critics observe that, along with N.F.S. Grundtvig's editions of Saxo and Snorri, Thiele's collection is one of the driving forces behind the *nationale gennembrud* (national breakthrough), a Danish literary movement that shifted the focus away from German

romanticism toward a romanticism focused more on Denmark (Skar 1968, 7). One of the main authors of this movement was Steen Steensen Blicher, the literary author who most inspired Tang Kristensen. Despite his initial interest in folklore, in later years Thiele became more interested in art. With appointments at both the Royal Academy of Art, and at the Royal Library, he focused increasingly on the collection of copper engravings. He had become a close friend of the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen during his own travels in Italy and the Netherlands and, when he returned back to Denmark in the mid 1820s, he continued working with Thorvaldsen, eventually executing his estate. He also continued his work as a dramatist, writing numerous plays that were performed at the Royal Theater. Besides his biography of Thorvaldsen, however, Thiele's best known and clearly most important contribution to Danish culture is his collection of legends.

One of Thiele's foremost collectors from the island of Fyn was Mathias Winther (1795-1834), who, with his magazine *Raketten* (The Rocket), was otherwise known as a scandalmonger. Trained as a surgeon, Winther focused his attentions on Danish fairy tales, publishing a small collection entitled *Danske Folkeeventyr* (Danish Fairy Tales) in 1823. Despite his claim that all the fairy tales in the collection were of Danish origin, several of them also appear in the collections of the Grimms and W. A. Hoffmann (Boberg 1953, 166). Several of Winther's fairy tales in turn inspired Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875), who had begun his literary reworkings of fairy tales that would soon prove to be literary masterpieces. Winther, perhaps a bit ahead of the curve, did not receive the same market interest that Andersen later did, and he abandoned his attempts to produce a second volume of fairy tales.

Thiele's friend, Christian Molbech, who was otherwise mainly interested in early Nordic literature, decided to continue Winther's work with fairy tale editions. He produced a well received edition of international fairy tales in 1843, *Udvalgte Eventyr* (Selected Folktales), which was followed a bit more than a decade later in 1854 with a second edition. Molbech also set the stage for later work on Danish dialects with his *Dansk Dialect-Lexikon* (Danish Dialect Lexicon, 1833-1841), a forerunner to Henning Feilberg's *Ordbog over det jyske almuesmål* (Dictionary of the Jutlandic Peasant Dialect, 1886-1914). Molbech also founded the Danish Historical Association, the association that led Jens Peter Trap (1810-1885) to produce his important chorographic encyclopedia of Denmark. Near the end of his life, Molbech published a collection of Danish proverbs and rhymes, *Danske Ordsprog, Tankesprog og Riimsprog* (Danish Proverbs, Apophthegms, and Rhymes 1850; Boberg 1953, 167). But despite Thiele's and Molbech's work on more narrative genres, Danish folklorists' attention soon returned to ballads.

Among the folklorists most interested in the ballads were the lyric Romantic poets Christian Winther (1796-1876) who would later develop a significant following with his epic poem *Hjortens flugt* (The Stag's Flight), and Adam Oehlenschläger (1779-1850), whom most critics regarded as Denmark's foremost Romantic poet. Interestingly, Winther's 1840 edition of heroic ballads, *Kjæmpeviser*, and Oehlenschläger's edition of Danish ballads, *Gamle danske Folkeviser* (Old Danish Folk Ballads) appeared at the same time. The editions were not based on original fieldwork, but rather were compendia of otherwise well-known ballads. Not surprisingly, the texts were heavily edited to meet their compilers' poetic aesthetic demands. Oehlenschläger's poetry, directly inspired by Goethe, and Winther's poetry both relied heavily on Nordic mythology and folklore for motifs.

These two ballad editions sparked a renewed interest in the ballad and led to a great deal of discussion about the desirability of a comprehensive edition of Danish ballads. These discussions focused primarily on the editorial principles that should inform such an edition. The Society for the Advancement of Danish Literature, founded in 1827 by Rasmus Nyerup, became the center for these discussions (Boberg 1953, 167). While Thiele and Molbech both began considering how they would proceed with such an edition, and while the literary historian N. M. Petersen published some thoughts on possible editorial principles, their work was soon eclipsed by the ideas of Svend Grundtvig (Boberg 1953, 167-8).

Svend Hersleb Grundtvig (1824-1883), the second oldest of N.F.S. Grundtvig's sons, quickly became the most important folklorist in the Nordic region.[9] Already as a fifteen year old, Svend had begun comparing published versions of ballads with the versions contained in an old hand-written manuscript that his father had acquired in 1839 (Boberg 1953, 168). He quickly recognized that significant differences could exist between published versions and their underlying manuscript versions; and that many of the ballads in the original manuscript had never been published. Soon, he decided, as Boberg relates, to "produce both a critical and a popular edition of all the Danish ballads, and to publish the English, Scottish, Faeroese and Icelandic ballads… both in their original language and in Danish translation, along with a critical dissertation about the Nordic ballads" (Boberg 1953, 169). He started with a translation of the English and Scottish ballads (1842 and 1846), work that was greatly helped by a fortuitous trip he made to England in 1842 with his father.

In 1843, together with Christian Siegfried Ley, Grundtvig published a critique of the current status of Danish ballad scholarship entitled "Om Kæmpeviserne til danske Mænd og

Qvinder" (Concerning the Heroic Ballads to Danish Men and Women). The essay, which was published in the periodical *Dansk folkeblad*, included a proclamation calling on all Danes to collect ballads as part of an important national endeavor to preserve the vestiges of the earliest Nordic poesy.[10] Grundtvig's conception of the project was at once deeply nationalistic and pan Nordic: "Norden har nemlig en Sangskat fra Middelalderen, hvortil neppe noget andet Folk kan opvise Magen, og hvorom vore sydlige Naboer nedslagne maa tilstaae, at det er Noget, de saa godt som aldeles fattes, men trøste sig imidlertid med, at det dog Altsammen: vor Oldtids Mythekreds og vor Middelalders Sangkreds tilhører 'det store Germanien'" [As it turns out, the Nordic region has a song treasure from the middle ages to which no other folk can compare their own, and our southern neighbors must confess in defeat that this is something they understand perfectly well, although they can console themselves with the fact that altogether our ancient mythology and our medieval song cycles belong to "the greater Germania"] (Grundtvig quoted in Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948, vol. 1, 7-8). He continues with his call for people to begin collecting ballads and asks them to send these collections to him, justifying the request with strong nationalistic rhetoric: "Der lever nemlig endnu hos Folket, og da mest hos de Gamle blandt det, en stor Del af den Nationalskat, hvorom her er Talen, og det er derfor af største Vigtighed for os og for Sagen... hvor og hvorledes den har bevaret sig levende paa Folkets Tunge til denne Dag. Det er derfor vor Bøn til alle dem, som føle varmt for Fædrelandet og dets aandelig Eiendom, at de ville meddele os Alt herhid henhørende, som de enten kjende eller kunne komme til Kundskab om. Blot et enkelt Vers, som det synges i Folket, uden Hensyn til om det tilhører en forhen trykt, eller før kjendt Vise—om muligt med Melodien, der staar i en saa inderlig og væsentlig Forbindelse med

Folkepoesien—vil være et vigtigt Bidrag til dennes Historie..." [There still lives within the folk, and most noticeably in the older people among them, a great deal of this national treasure mentioned here, and therefore it is of the utmost importance for us and the cause…[to understand] where and how it has been preserved in living form on the folk's tongue until this day. It is therefore our entreaty to all who feel warmly towards the fatherland and its spiritual possessions that they will send us all things related to this that they either know or could come to know about. Just a single verse as it is sung among the folk regardless of whether it belongs to a previously printed or previously known ballad—if at all possible with the melody since the melody is so thoroughly and importantly connected to the folk poesy—would be an important contribution to the history of the ballad…] (Grundtvig quoted in Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948, vol. 1, 8). Grundtvig's accompanying critique of the current state of Danish ballad editions and research resulted in 1846 an invitation from the Society for the Advancement of Danish Literature to submit a proposal for a new Danish ballad edition (Boberg 1953, 170).

Grundtvig's proposal for the ballad edition was predicated on his developing ideas of the need to publish all variants in their entirety, with no editorial intervention. This approach marked a sharp departure from that of the more literary minded scholars who came before him. As Boberg notes, however, this approach was consonant with Grundtvig's developing theory of folklore composition, namely, that: "Folket er altså Forfatteren, fra dets Mund er det altsammen kommet til os, med dets Vidnesbyrd, som fra Slægt til Slægt udviklede og forplantede det" [The folk is actually the author; all of it has come to us from the folk's mouth, this testimony that, from generation to generation, developed and propagated it] (Grundtvig, quoted in Boberg

1953, 170). Grundtvig clearly subscribed to a superorganic view of folklore, attributing little import to the individuals who composed or performed ballads. Rather, he saw in each recording of a ballad the possibility for cumulatively developing a clearer picture of the ultimately anonymous and essentially collective composition behind these songs. Many years later, this reluctance to recognize the role of the individual in tradition led to a great deal of tension between him and his most prolific collector, Tang Kristensen.

Grundtvig's proposal for a thorough ballad edition was not without its critics. Foremost among the critics was Molbech, who believed the edition should only include a single variant of each ballad chosen and refined by the editor into the best example of any given ballad type. Although Molbech had many important literary figures on his side in this dispute, Grundtvig, too, had several formidable allies. These included the novelist and poet Bernhard Severin Ingemann, several leading folklorists including George Stephens and Gunnar Hyltén-Cavallius, and his father. The dispute of Grundtvig and his supporters versus Molbech and his supporters was eventually dubbed the "battle of the ballad" (Petersen 1905). Fortunately for modern folkloristics, Grundtvig prevailed, and his proposal was accepted. When word came down of the acceptance, Grundtvig was serving as a front line Lieutenant in the Danish army; indeed, along with being an excellent folklore scholar, Grundtvig was apparently a gifted officer, being knighted for meritorious service at one of the most notorious battles of the Three Years' War (1848-1850), the Battle of Isted (Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948, vol. 1, 10).

As soon as the war was over, Grundtvig set to work, making use of the many ballads that had started to stream into his offices in the aftermath of his folkloric call to arms six years earlier. The first volume of *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*

(Denmark's Old Folk Ballads, abbreviated DgF), as the multi-volume edition was soon to be called, appeared in 1853 (Grundtvig 1966). Not surprisingly, this first volume focused on the *kæmpeviser* or heroic ballads; Grundtvig considered these to be the oldest and therefore the most important ballads in the context of national poetic treasure. In keeping with his proposal, the volume included thirty-two different ballad types, with numerous variant attestations and thorough historical and source critical essays for each ballad type. The next full volume appeared in 1856 and followed a publication model that soon became the norm for DgF, with full volumes appearing in installments over a number of years: thirty-nine ballad types of this second volume appeared in 1854, and an additional forty-three were published two years later, completing the volume; these ballads were largely about supernatural beings.

As the work on DgF progressed, the number of variants Grundtvig considered increased dramatically, as did the thoroughness of his academic apparatus. Grundtvig did not complete the third volume for another six years. That volume, focusing on historical ballads, appeared in 1862 and contained sixty-eight ballad types discussed in 933 pages. The final volume that Grundtvig was able to finish before his untimely death in 1883 focused on the courtly ballads. By then, he had developed an elaborate network of collectors, foremost among them Tang Kristensen, as well as a cadre of very competent young scholars, foremost among them Axel Olrik.

Grundtvig did not focus solely on folk ballads, even though they took up an increasingly large amount of his time. Already in 1844, he recognized that his work would be far too one-dimensional if he concentrated solely on ballads (Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948, vol. 1, 9). Consequently, he decided that an equally aggressive collecting effort should

be launched focusing on other folkloric genres: legends, folktales, and rhymes (Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948, vol. 1, 9-10). In 1854, Grundtvig published the first volume of a three-volume work, *Gamle danske Minder i Folkemunde* (Old Danish Memories in the Mouths of the Folk, 1854-1861). In the foreword to this small collection of fairytales, legends and ballads, Grundtvig writes, "Der er ikke et Sogn, ikke en By, ja vel neppe et Hus i hele Danmarks Rige, uden at der jo bor et eller andet Minde fra gamle Dage: et gammelt Æventyr, et og andet Sagn, eller som vore Fædre kaldte sligt: gammel Snak og Tale; ja mangensteds kan man ogsaa endnu en og anden gammeldags Vise, som man ike har lært af Bøger, men som man har hørt en gammel Faster eller Bedstemoder synge... endnu er der dog meget af alt det gamle, som ikke er rent gaaet ad Glemme, endskjøndt det dog allerede nu egentlig kun er de gamle, der veed noget derom; de ældste veed mest, og de yngste veed mindst af slige Sager... saa det ser ud til, at der ikke vel vare meget længe, før der ikke er halvt saa mange af de gamle danske Minder i Folkemunde, som der endnu er; og de bliver bestandig mere uklare, mere forvirrede. Hver en gammel Kone, der stædes til Jorde, hun tager noget af det med sig i Graven" [There isn't a parish, not a town, not even a house in all of the Danish kingdom where some memory of the old days doesn't live: an old fairy tale, one legend or another, or as our forefathers called it: old chit chat; yes in many places there might even be an old ballad which hasn't been learned from books, but has been heard sung by an old aunt or grandmother… there is still a lot of the old that hasn't been completely forgotten, even though it is only the old people who know anything about it; the elderly know the most and the youngest know the least about these things… it seems that it won't be long now that there won't be half as many of the old memories in the mouth of the folk as there are now; and they are getting less and less clear, more

confused. Each and every old woman who is buried in the ground, she takes some of it with her to the grave] (Grundtvig 1854-1861, vol. 1, 1-2). In this passage, Grundtvig clearly emphasized two of the most common ideas that informed Danish folkloristics at the time: that older informants are better informants, and that folklore is disappearing. Because of this threat of disappearance, Grundtvig also included an appeal to his readers to contribute to his collections: "saa var det vel paa den høje Tid at tænke paa, hvad der kunde gjøres for at faa den reddet fra den truende Glemsel. Og der er da klart nok, hvad der herved er at gjøre, nemlig strax at tage fat og se til at faa alle de gamle Minder skrevne op saa tro og fuldstændig som de nu kunne findes... Hovedsagen er naturligvis, at Folk tager fat og skriver de Ting op; men jeg vilde dog dertil endnu føje det Forslag, at man vilde betro mig saadanne Opskrifter, som jeg da vilde sørge for efterhaanden bleve trykte og kom Meddelerne tilhænde..." [so now it is high time to think about what can be done to save [the folklore] from the looming threat of being forgotten. And it is clear enough what should be done, namely to immediately start in and get all of the old memories written down as accurately and completely as they can currently be found… The main thing is that people get to work and write these things down; but I want to add one more suggestion, that these recordings be entrusted to me, and I will make sure that they are eventually printed and that these come into the hands of those who send their recordings to me…] (Grundtvig 1854-1861, vol. 1, 2-4). Although this call to action was not nearly as emotional as the first, it had a similar effect, and many people throughout the country began collecting folklore in earnest, and sending these collections to Grundtvig.[11]

Grundtvig's work with *Gamle danske Minder i Folkemunde* gathered steam over the next seven years, with the second

volume appearing in 1857, and the third and final volume appearing in 1861. The foreword to the 1861 volume is significant for in it Grundtvig used for the first time the term *folkeminder* (folklore) as an umbrella term for all of the traditional expressions with which he has been working: "Udgiveren skal her nævne de forskjellige Gulve i denne Lade, Salene i det Museum, han haaber at faa rejst for alle Danmarks Folkeminder" [The editor would here like to mention the various floors in this barn, the rooms in that museum, he hopes he has established for all of Denmark's folklore] (Grundtvig 1854-1861, vol. 3, iv). His representation of the collection as both a barn and a museum is an intriguing concatenation the emerging ideas of the museum and the rural notion of the barn. This museum is to house, "Danmarks Folkeviser, efter gamle og nye Kilder… Danmarks Folkeæventyr i en fulstændig Udgave… Danmarks Folkesagn, i gamle og nye optegnelser, ordnede dels efter Indhold, og dels efter Sted… Danmarks Folkeliv, omfattende alle de Oplysninger, der fra Fortid og Nutid kunne indhentes om Folkets Skikke og Sædvaner… Danmarks Folketro… Danmarks Ordsprog og Mundheld" [Denmark's ballads, from old and new sources… Denmark's fairy tales in a complete edition… Denmark's legends, in both old and new recordings, organized according to content, as well as to location… Denmark's folklife, comprising all of the information from the past and the present that can be collected concerning the folk's customs and habits… Denmark's folk belief… Denmark's proverbs and sayings] (Grundtvig 1854-1861, vol. 3, iv). It is hard to miss the heavy emphasis on the national in this catalog of genres.

Because of the increasing demands of *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, as well as his military duties during the Schleswig wars, and his professorial duties at the University of Copenhagen where he had received an appointment in 1862,

Grundtvig was unable to continue his work on other folkloric genres (Boberg 1953, 173; Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948, vol. 1, 10). He did, however, manage to complete an index of the Danish fairy tales (Lunding 1910), an important precursor to Antti Aarne's (1910) classic *Verzeichnis des Märchentypen* (Boberg 1953, 173). This index was also a precursor to three small volumes of fairy tales that he published in 1876, 1878 and 1884 under the title *Danske Folkeæventyr* (Danish Folktales). Unlike the ballads in *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, which were accompanied by an extremely detailed scholarly apparatus, the fairy tales in these collections completely lack commentary or scholarly apparatus, revealing Grundtvig's desire to reach nonscholars as well. This same popularizing ethos motivated his publication of *Danske Kæmpeviser* (Danish Heroic Ballads, 1867) and *Danmarks Folkeviser i Udvalg* (Selected Danish Folk Ballads, 1882).

Although much of Grundtvig's rhetoric was clearly marked by nationalism, he was in some regards more of a pan-Scandinavianist than a pure Danish nationalist. The pan-Scandinavian movement, which was supported by the periodical *Fædrelandet*, was liberal in its outlook, and received a significant boost during the Three Years' War when Sweden and Norway pledged assistance to the Danish war effort.[12] Grundtvig's Scandinavian interests are most apparent in his collaboration with the Icelander Jón Sigurðsson along with whom he published a scholarly edition of Icelandic ballads, *Íslenzk fornkvæði* (Medieval Icelandic Ballads, 1854-1859). Grundtvig, like his father before him, was also interested in the Edda, and had a close collaboration with Sophus Bugge, whose 1867 critical edition was an important scholarly resource for the study of Nordic mythology. Grundtvig's other clearly pan-Nordic work was with his brother-in-law Jørgen Bloch focusing on Faeroese ballads.

At the time of his death from an acute case of dysentery, Grundtvig was deeply involved in DgF and was still intending to return to the publication of other genres (Tang Kristensen 1923-1928, vol. 2, 354). While Grundtvig's scholarly endeavors, particularly DgF, passed quickly into the competent hands of Axel Olrik, his other collections were left to gather dust. Many of the other legend and fairy tale recordings he had received—and continued to receive even after the publication of the third volume of *Gamle danske Minder i Folkemunde*—from collectors throughout Denmark remained unpublished during his lifetime. In the 1940s, Hans Ellekilde at the Danish Folklore Archives, produced a two volume edition of Grundtvig's legends, *Danske folkesagn, 1839-1883* (Danish Folk Legends, 1839-1883, Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948). Otherwise, many of the collections sent to Grundtvig were incorporated by Tang Kristensen in his published editions (Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948, vol. 1, 57-60).

Although there can be no question that Grundtvig was the leading figure in Danish folklore for a large part of the nineteenth century, he was not the only one working on the scholarly side of the equation. Apart from Tang Kristensen, both Henning Feilberg (1831-1921) and Axel Olrik (1864-1917) deserve particular attention.[13] Feilberg is perhaps best known for his remarkable dictionary of Jutlandic dialect, *Ordbog over det jyske Almuesmål* (1886-1914). Although his work originally focused on Sønder Jylland, it gradually expanded to include all of Jutland; his ultimate goal was a global dialect dictionary (Boberg 1953, 175). Although folklore collecting was an important part of his enterprise, his collecting emphasized folklife rather than narrative genres. In 1889, he published one of the first ethnographic descriptions of Danish agricultural life, *Dansk Bondeliv, saaledes som det i Mands Minde fortes navnlig i Vestjylland* (Danish Farmer's Life as It Was

Remembered to Have Been Particularly in West Jutland); he expanded this in 1899 with additional details about family celebrations, and this was later published in a multi-volume edition (1910-1913). These descriptions of rural life in nineteenth century Denmark, along with his work on dialects stand as Feilberg's enduring legacy. In 1892, due to liver disease, he was forced to abandon his position as minister in Darum, and he moved to Askov højskole, one of the more important folk high schools that had been established on the basis of N.F.S. Grundtvig's ideas about education for young men and women in rural Denmark.

At Askov, Feilberg was not only able to focus intensely on his dialect dictionary but, because of the constant influx of students from the countryside, he was also able to collect a great deal of information about local customs and folk belief. In 1904, he published a comprehensive work on Danish Christmas traditions, *Jul* (Yule, Feilberg 1962[1904]). Feilberg was deeply influenced by both Tylor's and Lang's ideas, as well as more broad ranging ideas about the connection between early cultures and nature. In his book on Yule customs, Feilberg proposes that these celebrations were originally held to drive off evil spirits, a contrast to other theories that considered the festivals in the context of sun worship (Boberg 1953, 178). This book was followed by two equally thorough works on Danish legends and folk belief. *Bjærgtagen* (Taken into the Mountain, 1910) situates Danish, Swedish and Norwegian legends about and belief in "Alfefolk" (mound folk; hidden folk; elves) in the broader context of Celtic and Icelandic folk belief, and provides an interpretation of these supernatural beings in the context of humans' relationship to nature. His second book, *Sjæletro* (Soul Beliefs, 1914), is a much more wide-ranging comparative study of belief in spirits. At the very end of his life, he produced a thorough examination of the Danish house spirit, the *nisse*.

The work, *Nissens Historie* (The Nisse's Story, 1918), is useful more for Feilberg's thorough description of folk beliefs surrounding this figure than for any of his attempts to locate the origins of the belief. Alongside this theoretically speculative work, Feilberg continued collecting for his dialect dictionary. His additional note cards recording entries that were not included in his *Jyske Almuesmål*, form the basis of more recent dialect dictionaries.

While Feilberg is remembered for the remarkable thoroughness of his work—particularly in his dialect dictionary—Axel Olrik (1864-1917) is well known for his scholarly approach to the interpretation of folk narrative. Olrik managed to study at the University of Copenhagen with Svend Grundtvig before Grundtvig's death, learning about the Edda as well as the folk ballads. Once Olrik received his *Magister Konferens* degree, a degree akin to the Ph.D., in 1887, he was officially placed in charge of DgF, a position that he had already assumed *de facto* after Grundtvig died. By 1890, Olrik had completed the fifth volume of DgF, and before his own untimely death in 1917, completed three additional volumes (DgF vol 5-8; Boberg 1953, 187). In the first decades of the twentieth century, Olrik refined a motif-historical method for the historical interpretation of ballads; as Boberg describes it, "Olriks metode går ud på kun at medtage de motiver, de forskellige opskrifter er fælles om, foruden de nødvendige forbindelsesled" [Olrik's method is based on the idea of including only the motifs that the different recordings share as well as the necessary connections between them] (Boberg 1953, 188). This method of concatenation on the basis of similar strophes diverges from Grundtvig's method of concatenating all attested strophes, and from the method of the Danish philologist, Ernst von der Recke, in which identical strophes from multiple variants were rejected (Boberg 1953, 188).

Olrik did not limit his work to the folk ballads, but also worked on the early Nordic mythological poetry including Saxo's Chronicle. His first significant academic work was an attempt to trace the sources for Saxo: in 1892 and 1894, respectively, he published the two volumes of his dissertation, *Kilderne til Sakses oldhistorie. En Literaturhistorisk Undersøgelse* (The Sources of Saxo's Ancient History. A Literary Historical Study). Echoing the earlier work of P. E. Müller, Olrik concludes that Saxo had a great deal of Icelandic material at hand and intertwined that material with both Danish and Norwegian folk belief and legend. Olrik's engagement with Old Icelandic literature was intensive, and intersected with his studies of the Danish ballads; one of his goals was to trace the intersections between Danish tradition and other Nordic literary and oral traditions, in order to "fremstille de danske kongesagn i hele deres udvikling, at skille mellem nyt og gammelt, mellem dansk digtning og norrönt tillæg, mellem historisk grundlag og de skiftende lag af poetiske bearbejdelse, og at vise årsagene til alle disse omdannelser. Kort sagt at skrive den danske heltedigtnings historie" [represent the Danish king's legends across their entire development, to distinguish between new and old, between Danish poesy and Nordic addenda, between historic basis and the shifting layers of poetic revision, and to show the reasons for all of these reshapings. In short, to write the history of Danish heroic poetry] (Olrik, quoted in Boberg 1953, 190). The result of this engagement was his unfinished work, *Danmarks heltedigtning* (Denmark's Heroic Poetry, 1903).

Olrik's interest in Saxo and early Nordic literature, along with his deep involvement with DgF, fueled his interest in prose folk traditions. Perhaps his best-known examination of a fairy tale is his 1904 article "Kong Lindorm" (King Wivern) in *Danske Studier*, an article that resonates with more modern Danish fairy tale scholarship (Holbek 1987). Olrik's classic

work, "Episke love i folkedigtningen" (Epic Laws in Folk Poesy) was presented in Berlin in 1908 and published the same year in *Danske Studier*. The title echoes an earlier series of lectures given by Moltke Moe in 1897, *Episke Grundlove* (Epic Fundamental Laws). [14] Although Olrik agreed with Moe's concept of "laws" governing folk poetic composition, his 1908 article focused more on formal rules: the "law of contrasts" (good vs. bad, big vs. small, etc.); the "law of repetition"; the "law of three"; the "law of back weighting." Olrik continued working on these principles, refining them over several years of lecturing at the University of Copenhagen, where he had been appointed Docent in 1897.[15] These notes were organized and published after his death as *Nogle Grundsætninger for Sagnforskning* (Some Principles for Legend Research, 1921).

Even though Olrik was largely occupied with Old Icelandic literature, with a particular emphasis on the mythological, he was actively involved in creating the infrastructure for modern folkloristics both in Denmark and in the Nordic region. In 1904, he had helped found the journal *Danske Studier*, which became one of the leading journals for theoretical and philological studies related to Nordic folklore and mythology. Soon thereafter, along with Feilberg and H. O. Lange, he founded the *Dansk folkemindesamling*, the archive that soon housed all of Svend Grundtvig's collections and later Tang Kristensen's collections. While directing the archive, Olrik continued as professor of folklore (*folkeminder*) at the university, thereby wedding the theoretical study of folkloristics with the practical side of collecting and archiving. To support collecting, Olrik established the *Foreningen Danmarks Folkeminder* (Danish Folklore Society) in 1908, and the following year he co-founded the international folklore society, *Folklore Fellows* with his colleagues Kaarle Krohn

(1863-1933, Finland), Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1878-1952, Sweden) and Johannes Bolte (1858-1937, Germany).

Although Olrik was an exceptional theoretician, a thorough philologist, and an expert administrator, he was demonstrably weak at folklore collecting. In May 1888, when Olrik was just getting his feet wet as main editor of DgF, he contacted Tang Kristensen and asked if he could accompany him on a field trip. Tang Kristensen agreed, but turned out to be a hard taskmaster. Tang Kristensen describes their trip extensively in *Minder og Oplevelser* (1923-1928, vol. 2, 365-366; vol. 3, 180-183), criticizing Olrik for his lack of endurance and slowness in recording. Later examinations of Olrik's field notes from this trip reveal, however, that his slowness was attributable to the extraordinary attention to detail he paid during the storytelling sessions. Ultimately, Olrik abandoned both the field trip and any aspirations he had to being a field worker, and returned to the more comfortable realm of archival work.

Olrik, like his mentor Grundtvig, died young and suddenly. His wife had died in 1911, and in 1913, his long time friend and colleague Moltke Moe died. Olrik retreated from Copenhagen, and bought a small farm in Øverød (Boberg 1953, 193). After a trip to Oslo in 1916, Olrik fell ill. A subsequent ear operation led to an infection, which in turn led to his death in February 1917. There were few scholars of Olrik's caliber who could take up where he had left off and, while DgF continued under the editorial auspices of Hakon Grüner-Nielsen, Olrik's death, along with those of Feilberg in 1921 and Tang Kristensen in 1929, marked the end of an era of extraordinary development in folklore collection, archiving and study in Denmark (Holbek 1990, 7).

A Brief History of Folklore in the other Nordic Countries

Folklore study in the other Nordic countries followed a somewhat different trajectory than it did in Denmark. The literary culture of sixteenth and seventeenth century Sweden was marked by an increased attention to the study of national history, largely the result of an ongoing debate between Danish and Swedish historians concerning which of the two countries was the oldest (Boberg 1953, 215). Some of the studies of early Swedish history were quite fanciful, including Johannes Magnus's mid sixteenth century Swedish response to Saxo in which he traced the Swedish kingdom back to Noah's grandson Magog (Boberg 1953, 215). Johannes Magnus's brother Olaus is perhaps better known, writing the mid sixteenth century work *Historia gentibus septentrionalibus* (History of the Northern Peoples). From a folkloric perspective this work is fascinating because of Olaus Magnus's inclusion of details concerning folk belief and folklife among the Swedish peasantry (Boberg 1953, 216).

In the seventeenth century, Sweden's answer to Denmark's formidable nationalist polymath Ole Worm was Johannes Thomæ Bureus (1568-1652). But Bureus's interpretation of the various runic inscriptions he studied was even more fantastic than Worm's and allowed him to conclude that Swedish was the oldest of all Germanic languages (Boberg 1953, 218-219). A later student of Bureus, Georg Stiernhielm, using a "refinement" of his mentor's approach, proved that Swedish was in fact the oldest language in the world, completely untouched by the confusion of Babel (Boberg 1953, 219). The prize for the most imaginative of these early Swedish histories, however, must be awarded to Olaus Rudbeck, who's work *Atland* (1677-1702) argued on the basis of false etymologies and improbable philology that Sweden was the lost city of Atlantis. Fortunately, not all early Swedish historians were entirely consumed by this imaginary

philological work. Bureus, as Worm had in Denmark, encouraged colleagues throughout Sweden to collect aspects of local culture (Boberg 1953, 220). These early ethnographic endeavors resulted in noteworthy collections of descriptions of daily life in many of Sweden's disparate districts and continued well into the eighteenth century. Near the end of the eighteenth century, the noted botanist Carl von Linné contributed to an understanding of daily life in the provinces through his detailed descriptions of his travels in Öland, Gotland, Västergotland and Skåne (Boberg 1953, 223). Just as in Denmark, Swedes in the seventeenth and eighteenth century had also become interested in the study of the earliest Nordic literature, including the Icelandic mythological poems and sagas.[16]

Romanticism in Sweden was ushered in, as elsewhere in northern Europe, with the publication of *Ossian*. Its subsequent translation into Swedish in 1777 caught the attention of the scholarly and literary worlds (Boberg 1953, 226). Following in the wake of the translation of *Ossian*, the poet Lorenzo Hammersköld (1785-1827) enjoyed considerable success with a ballad concerning the "Ljungby horn" (a drinking horn stolen from the mound folk), which was first published in 1809 as a broadside (Boberg 1953, 226). Hammersköld's success and the increased attention that was being drawn to folklore, Nordic antiquity and the history of common Swedes, inspired a group of academics and authors to establish *Götiska forbundet* (The Geatish Society) in 1811 (Strömbäck et al 1971, 82; Boberg 1953, 226). Among the goals of the society was the collection of Swedish folklore as part of a national Romantic project to revive the archaic Nordic past; many of the findings of the society's members were published in its journal, *Iduna* (Strömbäck et al 1971, 82). Among the two most zealous members of the society were

the poets Erik Gustaf Geijer (1783-1847) and Arvid August Afzelius (1785-1871).[17]

Soon after his election to the union, Afzelius began work on an edition of Swedish ballads based on Nyerup's method of concatenating and polishing extant versions of ballads (Boberg 1953, 227). Afzelius collected many of his ballads and their melodies himself, having been inspired in part by the work of Leonhard Frederik Rääf (1786-1872) who had amassed a considerable collection of Swedish folk ballads. Rääf not only collected ballads, but all forms of folklore including games, largely from the Ydre region (Boberg 1953, 228). When Rääf rejected Afzelius's proposed collaboration, Afzelius produced his own collection of ballads, *Svenska folkvisor från forntiden* (Swedish Folk Ballads from the Past, Geijer and Afzelius 1814; Strömbäck et al 1971, 83). Geijer not only acted as co-editor of the three-volume edition but also provided a lengthy introduction to the first volume. Having been beaten to the punch by Afzelius, Rääf never produced his own edition of folk ballads. Instead, his collections were later published by Adolf Iwar Arwidsson (1791-1858) acting as the cornerstone for his three-volume edition, *Svenska Fornsånger* (Old Swedish Songs, 1834-1842). Unlike Afzelius-Geijer, Arwidsson's edition was devoid of editorial intrusion and manipulation of texts and, as such, was a precursor to Grundtvig's much more ambitious and comprehensive DgF. By the 1830s, *Götiska forbundet* was moribund, and it was dissolved in 1844.

The mid nineteenth century saw a marked shift in Swedish folklore collecting away from ballads and the other standard folk narrative genres such as the fairy tale and legend toward folklife and material culture. The one exception to this shift was Nils Gabriel Djurklou (1829-1904). Djurklou was one of the founders of the Swedish Antiquarian Society in 1869 and several years later succeeded Per Arvid Säve as

the Keeper of Antiquities at the *Kung. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien* (Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities), a post that had been established in 1860 (Strömbäck et al 1971, 110-111). In this capacity, Djurklou was closely involved in collecting not only descriptions of daily life but also folk narrative. These collections lay the foundation for his best-known work, *Sagor och Äfventyr* (Legends and Folktales, 1883) which was illustrated by Carl Larsson, the illustrator for Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales (Strömbäck et al 1971, 112). Djurklou was not happy with this choice of illustrator, indicating that he considered the illustrations "bad for the reader's taste, imagination and reasoning power" (Strömbäck et al 1971, 113). His use of dialect in the language of his stories was an important step toward accurate reproduction of the tales as performed, and likely also aided the popularity of this collection as the stories were seen by many readers to be more "authentic." But Djurklou's use of folk expressions and dialect were highly contrived. He subscribed to a more poetic view on folktale editions than did most folklore scholars of the time and one can easily discern his editorial pen in this relatively small edition. Djurklou was not given solely to the collection and publication of folk narratives. Like many of his contemporaries, he was also deeply involved in the study of regions and regional aspects of folklife. His work, *Unnarydsboarnes seder och lif* (Customs and Life of the People of Unnaryd, 1874) is one of the earliest comprehensive studies of regional customs.

Per Arvid Säve (1811-1887) and his brother Carl Fr. Säve (1812-1876) were also inspired by *Götiska forbundet*'s incitement to collect. As with many of these scholars, the collections took on a notably regional character. The two Säve brothers, for instance, spent considerable time collecting both folklore and dialect words from their island of

Gotland.[18] Gunnar Olof Hyltén-Cavallius (1818-1889) was equally engaged in the study of regional folklore, which soon became one of the main distinguishing characteristics of Swedish folklore studies in relation to the other Nordic countries. His ethnographic description of Värend, *Wärend och Wirdarne* (1864-1868), was such a major accomplishment that it helped shift the focus in Swedish folkloristics to increasingly detailed studies of folklife and material culture. Hyltén-Cavallius's work in turn inspired Artur Hazelius (1833-1901) who founded *Nordiska Museet* (The Nordic Museum) in 1873, and later the outdoor folklife museum, *Skansen* in the 1890s, both of which reflect the strong regional and ethnographic roots of these mid nineteenth century folklore collecting efforts.[19]

Once the work with ethnographic museums got under way in Sweden, the collection and study of folk narrative essentially came to a halt (Boberg 1953, 240-241). The one exception to this was Eva Wigström, a pioneering woman author and academic. She got her inspiration for her folkloric collecting largely from Denmark through Feilberg and Svend Grundtvig's half uncle, Frederik Lange Grundtvig, whom she had met at a meeting at Askov folk high school in 1877 (Boberg 1953, 241). Wigström collected primarily in her home province of Skåne, and in 1880 published her first collections of Swedish folklore (Wigström 1880a and 1880b). Taking a page from her Danish colleagues, Wigström did not edit the texts she collected, which led to criticism from Swedish colleagues such as Djurklou (Boberg 1953, 241).

Swedish folkloristics took an important turn toward the theoretical with the early twentieth century work of Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1878-1952).[20] Like Wigström, von Sydow was greatly influenced by Feilberg. After a meeting at Askov in 1904, von Sydow turned his students' attention toward collecting, and his own attentions toward developing

more sophisticated approaches to the study of folk narrative (Boberg 1953, 245). Not surprisingly, he became a close colleague of his Danish counterpart Olrik. As with Olrik, and many of the Nordic folklorists, von Sydow's training included philology and Old Norse; many of his earliest studies focus on Nordic mythology (Sydow 1948a). Among the many important concepts that von Sydow brought into the theoretical realm were those of active and passive tradition bearers,[21] oikotypes, the memorate/fabulate distinction in the study of legends, and important informant-centered work on how traditions spread. This last position put von Sydow in opposition to the Finnish school of folklore study launched in the late nineteenth century by Julius and Kaarle Krohn (Strömbäck et al 1971, 183). His studies of folklore genres also stimulated debate that lasted well into the last decades of the twentieth century.

Folklore study and collecting in Norway were largely conditioned by Danish influence up through the early nineteenth century, and then by a reawakened nationalism as a result of Norwegian independence in 1814.[22] As Boberg notes, "after 1814, when the national work set all sails to build the Norwegian state, Norwegian authors in great numbers began seeking their inspiration in Norwegian traditions, legends and folktales" (1953, 265). Unlike the rest of the Nordic countries, however, where ballad collection and study paved the way for other folkloristic work, the earliest folklore studies in Norway focused on legends and folktales. Simon Olaus Wolff (1796-1859) undertook the first systematic collection of Norwegian folklore, centering his work in the Telemark district where he had been appointed as a Lutheran minister in 1825 (Boberg 1953, 266). Several years earlier, in 1822, he had made his love of Norway clear in a song entitled, "Hvor herlig er mit Fædreland", which includes the line "Jeg har de gamle Sagn saa kjær" [The old legends are

so dear to me] (Boberg 1953, 266). However, Wolff was beaten to his goal of publishing a collection of Norwegian legends by Andreas Faye (1802-1869), who published *Norske Sagn* (Norwegian Legends) in 1833, and Wolff's collections of legends and other folklore from Telemark were archived.

Faye decided to produce a collection of Norwegian legends that would be on par with those of Thiele in Denmark and Grimm in Germany after a visit to Germany in 1831 (Boberg 1953, 267). He also hoped that these legends would be an inspiration to Norway's emerging flock of national Romantic poets: "[sagnene kunde være et godt] stof for poetiske frembringelser—for vore unge skjalde" [the legends could be good materal for poetic compositions—for our young skalds] (Boberg 1953, 266). Faye did not restrict himself solely to unpublished stories or recordings from oral performances, but also included materials from earlier published works (Boberg 1953, 267). He also included material sent to him by other collectors, including Peter Andreas Munch (1810-1863) who was trying to gain support for his theory that the Norwegians were the earliest inhabitants of the Nordic region (Boberg 1953, 267).

The two most important figures in Norwegian folklore are without doubt Peter Christian Asbjørnsen (1812-1885) and Jørgen Moe (1813-1882). Their first collection of Norwegian folktales appeared in 1841, and was followed by three more volumes in 1842-1844. Asbjørnsen had already begun collecting for Faye in 1835 when, at a meeting in Moss in 1837, he and Moe decided to join forces and produce a joint edition of Norwegian folktales. Although originally inspired by Oehlenschläger's Romantic edition of folktales, Moe's reading of the Grimms' folktales led him to decide that he and Asbjørnsen should try to emulate them (Boberg 1953, 268). After a first test of the waters—a slim volume of five fairy tales and three legends entitled *Nor, en Billedbog for den*

norske Ungdom (Nor, A Picture Book for the Norwegian Youth)—was commercially successful, Asbjørnsen and Moe set to collecting in Ringerike and Telemark (Boberg 1953, 269). The reception of their folktale collections was extraordinary, and by 1846, the two had received stipends to continue their work. In 1852, Asbjørnsen and Moe produced an important annotated edition of fairy tales. The introduction to the volume, written by Moe, is considered to be the first theoretical piece written by a Norwegian folklorist (Boberg 1953, 271). Soon thereafter, Moe in the throes of a religious crisis abandoned his folkloristic work to dedicate himself to work as a Lutheran minister (Boberg 1953, 270).

While Moe was the more theoretically inclined of the pair, Asbjørnsen was the more poetic. Alongside his work with Moe on the fairy tales, Asbjørnsen was engaged with the collection and publication of legends. In 1845, he published a collection of legends entitled *Norske Huldreeventyr og Folkesagn* (Norwegian Folktales and Legends), which was supplemented by a second volume in 1848. In these collections, Asbjørnsen developed an elaborate frame narrative for the stories. Similarly, Asbjørnsen emended many of the stories particularly in regards language use.[23] After Moe's decision to abandon folklore, Asbjørnsen essentially stopped working as well (Boberg 1953, 273). The study of folklore, however, continued to be an important part of Norway's nation building.

As with the other Nordic countries, by the turn of the nineteenth century, folkloristics was emerging as an academic discipline in Norway. Ivar Aasen (1813-1896) is considered, along with Asbjørnsen and Moe, to be the third leg of the *nationale gennembrud* [national breakthrough]. His work on dialects and Norwegian language was a counterpart to Feilberg's work with Danish dialects. The difference in Norway, however, was that for several centuries, the

Norwegian language had been forced to the margins in favor of the colonial language Danish. Aasen's work on Norwegian—based in no small part on the various folklore collections of the nineteenth century—contributed to the rehabilitation of Norwegian as a separate language. Several other important Norwegian scholars of the final decades of the nineteenth century include Sophus Bugge (1833-1907), best known for his studies of Nordic mythology, and Moltke Moe (1859-1913), who was a close friend and colleague of Olrik in Denmark.[24]

Whereas the study of ballads was of minor importance in Norway in the nineteenth century, it was nearly the only thing studied on the Faeroe Islands. While on a trip to describe the economic conditions on the islands, Jens Chr. Svabo (1746-1824), who was the son of a Faeroese minister, fell in love with the ballad singing that he encountered there (Boberg 1953, 298). He set to the task of collecting these ballads, ultimately collecting fifty-two of them, unaware that these collections would form the basis for considerable later theoretical debate well into the twentieth century (Boberg 1953, 298; Wylie and Margolin 1981). Venceslaus Ulricus Hammershaimb (1819-1909) picked up where Svabo left off, and eventually produced substantive collections of ballads and legends. While he edited the ballads in his first editions, his later 1855 edition *Færøske Kvæder* (Faeroese Ballads), under the influence of Grundtvig, hewed to more modern theory, and he allowed each variant to stand on its own merit. Grundtvig later made sure that Hammershaimb's collections were properly transcribed as eighteen small volumes that are now housed at the *Dansk Folkemindesamling* (Chesnutt 1996).

Iceland looms large in the history of Nordic folklore, in part because of the significance of the earliest Nordic saga literature and mythological works. Because of its isolation and poverty, and because it was under strong Danish control in

the eighteenth century, Iceland did not experience any real national Romantic movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Yet, by 1845, Jón Árnasson (1819-1888) and Magnús Grímsson (1825-1860) had begun collecting folklore and, in 1852, they published a small collection of Icelandic folktales, *Íslenzk Æfintýri* (Icelandic Folktales) (Boberg 1953, 307).[25] After Magnús's all too early death, Jón, with the encouragement of the German scholar Konrad Maurer, published his main collection of Icelandic folktales and legends, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri* (Icelandic Legends and Folktales, 1862-1864) (Boberg 1953, 307). In 1858, Jón had issued an appeal for people to send him collections of folklore, in a move reminiscent of Grundtvig and other Nordic folklorists before him (Strömbäck et al 1971, 422). The results of this appeal were considerable, and folklore collections streamed in from around the country (Strömbäck et al 1971, 422).

Jón was deeply interested in riddles, a genre that is both popular and widespread in Iceland and may, on some level, be linked to kennings found in scaldic poetry (Lindow 1975a; Boberg 1953, 307). Along with another emerging voice in Icelandic folklore, Ólafur Davíðsson (1862-1903), a grandson of one of Jón's half sisters, Jón, even though he was in failing health, published a large collection of riddles, *Íslenzkar gátur, skemtanir, vikivakar og þulur* (Icelandic Riddles, Games, Dances, and Rhymes, 1887-1903) based on many years of collecting and the collections he had amassed in the aftermath of the national appeal mentioned above (Boberg 1953, 307-308; Strömbäck 1971, 422). In the meantime, Grundtvig had published, along with his Icelandic student Jón Sigurðsson, a small collection of Icelandic ballads, *Íslenzk fornkvæði* (Medieval Icelandic Ballads, 1854-1859), the title of which reflects Grundtvig's interest in the origins of Nordic ballad traditions (Boberg 1953, 306). Ballads, however, never gained

much of a foothold in Iceland, as the *rímur* tradition was already dominant, and left little room for another sung and versified genre (Boberg 1953, 306).[26]

Any survey of Nordic folklore history must include a consideration of the considerable advances in folklore theory made by the Finns. Indeed, many trace the emergence of folkloristics as a serious academic discipline to Finland and, in particular, to the father and son pair, Julius and Kaarle Krohn. The study of folklore in Finland is intimately related to the study of the Kalevala, the great national epic compiled over several decades by Elias Lönnrot (1802-1884), and published in 1835 (with a later expanded version in 1849). Prior to Lönnrot's monumental achievement, Henrik Gabriel Porthan (1739-1804) like many other Nordic folklorisits, had been inspired by *Ossian* and published between 1776 and 1778 a small study on Finnish poetics including folklore, arguably the first step in establishing the field in Finland (Boberg 1953, 313). Reinhold von Becker (1788-1858) also began collecting songs and folk speech both in East Bothnia and Lappmark in the early nineteenth century and this collecting, along with the collections of a country physician Z. Topelius, undoubtedly inspired Lönnrot (Strömbäck et al 1971, 2).

In the aftermath of a fire at the University in Turku in 1827 that destroyed Lönnrot's earliest academic work, Lönnrot took a long walking trip to eastern Finland to collect folksongs (Strömbäck et al 1971, 2-3). He published these early collections of Karelian folk songs as *Kantele* when he returned to the university in Helsinki (Strömbäck et al 1971, 3). As work progressed on editing the songs that eventually became the *Kalevala*, Lönnrot employed a methodology reminiscent of Nyerup, where variants were concatenated to complete an aesthetic whole.[27] In this manner, Lönnrot's editorial hand is always present in the compilation, not only in the editing of the individual songs, but also arranging the

songs into a coherent narrative—this last idea was one that Lönnrot had developed both from his study of Homer's classics, and from his mentors Becker and Carl Axel Gottlund (1796-1875) (Boberg 1953, 318). While the discovery that *Ossian* was more fiction than actual reflection of an earlier Celtic folk poetry led to a degree of skepticism concerning Lönnrot's claims to the authenticity of the *Kalevala*, people soon recognized the importance of the work not only as a rallying point for national sentiment, but also for the study of the Finnish language and Finnish folklore (Boberg 1953, 319-320).

Julius Krohn (1853-1888) began studying the *Kalevala* in earnest, basing much of his study on Grundtvig's idea that every variant had value (Boberg 1953, 321). This theoretical orientation led Krohn to the close study of the original collections on which Lönnrot based his *Kalevala*. As a result of these various detailed analyses of song variants, Krohn soon developed the foundations of what became known as the Historic-Geographic method (or simply the Finnish method) in folklore study. This method proposes that the study of variants, the variation between variants, and where they were collected can help one discover the provenance of a particular folk expression. Unfortunately, like many other folklorists, Julius Krohn died young—in this case, it was a sailing accident. His son, Kaarle (1863-1934), picked up where his father left off and, along with his student Antti Aarne (1867-1925), developed the ideas of the historic-geographic method more fully. In 1926, Kaarle Krohn published an expanded version of his father's original notes, under the title *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode* (Folklore Methodology), a work that, along with the contributions of Olrik and von Sydow, defined the field of folkloristics well into the mid-twentieth century.

Along with the work on the *Kalevala*, Aarne became deeply interested in folktales. In 1909, he visited Feilberg at Askov, and in conversations with Olrik, decided to develop further Grundtvig's ideas about a systematic catalog of folktales (Boberg 1953, 326). Aarne could not agree with Olrik on how the catalog should be developed, and so in 1910 he published his *Verzeichnis des Märchentypen* (Boberg 1953, 326). This work has become one of the main reference works in folkloristics. It was subsequently revised by Stith Thompson (1928, 1961) as *The Types of the Folktale* (AaTh), and in 2004 by Hans-Jörg Uther as *The Types of International Folktales* (ATU).

Notes

[1] The rank of "Docent" is roughly equivalent to that of Associate Professor in the American system. It has been largely replaced by the rank of "Lektor," at the Danish universities. The rank of Professor, then as now, is reserved for the most accomplished academics in the Danish university system. Unfortunately, I was the last Lektor of folklore at the University of Copenhagen, serving as a *lektorvikar* from 1999 until the close of the program in 2001.

[2] Writing later on about the stages of development of human civilization, Edward Burnett Tylor labeled similar echoes of an earlier time "survivals" (1871). While Herder and his followers believed that the ballads themselves were survivals—passed down essentially unaltered since time immemorial, Tylor believed more that folk expressions included within them survivals of earlier forms of social organization. Focusing on children's games, Tylor believed that one could find aspects of earlier, socially and economically important behavior in the games themselves.

[3] Bendix (1997) provides an excellent overview of the development of folklore studies in Germany.
[4] During the rise of the Nazi party in Germany in the early 1930s, Naumann emerged as one of the main spokesmen for the Nazi's book burnings.
[5] Two earlier translations, one by Christiern Pedersen (1540), who published the first complete version of *Gesta Danorum* in Paris in 1514, and one by Jon Tursons (ca 1555), were both lost.
[6] Of the eighty-three ballads in *Hjertebogen*, about one quarter is folk ballads, while the remainder are contemporary, lyrical pieces.
[7] Nearly a century later, in 1734, a second gold horn was discovered nearby.
[8] While the Danish word is "topografi" a more accurate English translation would be chorography. Given the relative unimportance of graphic representations in these works, it might be more accurate to describe them as chorologic works.
[9] An excellent biography of Svend Grundtvig can be found in Strömbäck et al 1971, 189-224.
[10] *Dansk folkeblad* was a well-known national liberal weekly in the mid 19th century produced by the *Selskabet for Trykkefrihedens rette Brug* (Society for the Freedom of the Press). The periodical had, as one of its main goals, public education. It was edited by Ditlev Gothard Monrad (1811-1887). Monrad was later charged with drafting the democratic constitution of 1849, and is often referred to as the father of the Danish constitution. The name of the periodical, *Dansk folkeblad*, was appropriated in 1999 by the extreme right wing *Dansk folkeparti* for their bi-monthly party journal.
[11] Ellekilde provides a thorough accounting of all of the collectors who sent material to Grundtvig (Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948). Ellekilde (Grundtvig and Ellekilde

1944-1948) breaks the legend collecting that supplied Grundtvig's legend and folktale collections, particularly *Gamle danske Minder i Folkemunde*, into three periods: a golden age (1854-1857), a silver age (1857-64) and an iron age (1865-1883). This latter period includes Tang Kristensen; the designation "iron age" by Ellekilde is a reflection of Ellekilde's critical stance toward Tang Kristensen (Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948, vol. 1, 47-48 and 57-61).

[12] The movement suffered a fatal blow during the Schleswig War of 1864, when Sweden refused to come to Denmark's assistance and Norway voiced similar reluctance.

[13] Excellent biographies of Feilberg and Olrik, detailing their contributions to Nordic folklore studies can be found in Strömbäck et al 1971, 225-238 and 259-296.

[14] These lectures were not published until 1914-1917, in the journal *Edda*, giving the illusion that Olrik was the first to present the notion of foundational "laws" in epic or folk composition (Chesnutt 1999).

[15] Olrik was appointed professor in 1913.

[16] At the time, there was considerable debate as to whether the sagas were truly Icelandic or whether, like the myths, were more pan-Nordic in origin.

[17] An excellent overview of Afzelius's work can be found in Strömbäck et al 1971, 81-88.

[18] Ulf Palmenfelt provides a thorough and engaging discussion of Per Arvid Säve's work (1993).

[19] Mark Sandberg (2003) provides an excellent overview of the development of Hazelius's museum at the time of rapid urbanization and the advent of Modernism.

[20] Gösta Berg provides a thorough evaluation of von Sydow's work (Strömbäck et al 1971, 171-188). Also, many of von Sydow's most important papers are available in *Selected Papers on Folklore* (Bødker 1948).

[21] I later modified this concept to active and passive tradition participants, and proposed a scale, rather than poles, spanning the range between active and passive participants (Tangherlini 1994 and 2008c).

[22] Norway was ceded by Denmark to the Swedish kingdom in the aftermath of the Dane's defeat in the Napoleonic wars, and the kingdom's subsequent bankruptcy. Denmark maintained possession of Iceland, the Faeroes and Greenland. Tasting freedom, Norway declared independence, wrote a democratic constitution (promulgated on May 17, 1814), and elected the Danish crown prince Christian Frederik king. This independence movement resulted in a short Swedo-Norwegian war, the outcome of which was an uneasy alliance between the two countries. Norway gained full independence on June 7, 1905.

[23] Huit (2003) provides an excellent critical analysis of Asbjørnsen's legend collections.

[24] Detailed biographies of Bugge and Moe can be found in Strömbäck et al 1971, 313-322 and 339-352.

[25] Einar Ól. Sveinsson provides a detailed evaluation of Jón's life and work, particularly the *Þjóðsögur* (Strömbäck et al 1971, 419-435).

[26] Albert Eskeröd's concept of "tradition dominants" may be applicable here (Eskeröd 1947, 81). Although he uses the term in the context of motifs, it may just as easily be applicable to genre. Here, the *rímur* genre has filled the function of a versified, sung form that can be performed in a communal fashion, greatly reducing the possibility that another closely related genre, such as the ballad, could take hold.

[27] Space does not permit a detailed study of Lönnrot's collecting, nor his work on *Kalevala*. An excellent biography

of Lönnrot is available in Báko 1985, as well as Strömbäck et al 1971, 1-10.