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Preface

This book and accompanying digital content are the end result of a rethinking of standard, published folklore collections. Early in my studies of folklore, I found myself wondering about the people behind the stories I had read. A growing drumbeat in folklore circles seemed to be suggesting that earlier collections were based on suspect premises, in part because of the collecting that lay behind them and in part because of the overt editorial intrusion that intervened between the voice of the teller and the printed page. The implication was clear that early folklore archives were of little use for the study of folk expressive culture. Because I was predominantly interested in the role folklore played in people's understandings of economic, social, and political changes in late nineteenth-century Denmark—and therefore could not undertake my own fieldwork—I began hoping that I could somehow recover the connection between storytellers and stories and get back to the important connections that exist in storytelling as a teller moves from one story or song to the next.

While I wrestled with doubts about the legitimacy of existing folklore collections, I struggled with several other frustrations related to the collections. The first frustration was based on the way stories in the early collections were classified. Because most classificatory schemes were more or less idiosyncratic and developed for particular collections or publications, it was difficult to find comparative material either from the same tradition or from other traditions. At the same time, I often found myself wondering why a story appeared in one part of a collection when it could easily have appeared in a different part. The second frustration was

closely related to the first: because most collections were arranged topically, one had little choice but to base one's study of stories on the existing topic maps and story classifications.

Bengt Holbek's seminal work, *Interpretation of Fairy Tales* (1987), was an inspiration to me, not so much because of his groundbreaking work on analytical methodologies for the study of fairy tales but because of his thorough work on the archive of Danish folktales compiled by the nineteenth-century collector Evald Tang Kristensen. I based my dissertation and subsequent book, *Interpreting Legend* (1994), on the archival methods Holbek proposed. My goal was to explore the connections between storytellers and their stories, recognizing that a holistic view of a storyteller's repertoire could lead to a deeper understanding of how individuals use tradition—particularly storytelling tradition—as a deep cultural resource as they navigate the challenges of daily life. Unlike my Nordic colleagues, who, starting in the 1960s, had already begun to emphasize the study of individual repertoires as a key to understanding an individual's worldview, I wanted to focus on more than a single individual and a single community. I believe tradition is based on the interactions of many people in large, overlapping groups that span large social and geographical distances, so I needed to focus on the repertoires of many individuals from diverse backgrounds and different parts of the tradition area—in this case, Denmark. Ultimately, I decided that the best approach to interpreting folklore was to focus on a large group of individuals and the even larger number of stories that made up their repertoires.

As I began teaching folklore at UCLA, it became apparent to me that along with my students, I was missing a key piece for solving the Nordic folklore puzzle. What we needed was a Nordic folklore collection that included good

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English translations and thorough archival materials and was predicated on the idea of individuals and their repertoires. Until 1999, when Reimund Kvideland and Henning Sehmsdorf's collection of fairy tales from Nordic storytellers' repertoires, *All the World's Reward*, appeared, all the available collections of Nordic folklore in English were based on a topic model of folk narrative tradition—and even their collection was limited to a single genre, a form of topic modeling in itself. John Lindow's excellent collection of Swedish legends and folktales (1978) is broken into sections on "This World," "The Other World," and "The World of Religion," and Reidar Christiansen's collection of Norwegian folktales includes the categories "Historical Legends," "Legends about Magic and Witchcraft," "Legends about Ghosts, the Human Soul and Shapeshifting," and so on. Kvideland and Sehmsdorf's (1988) earlier compendium of Scandinavian folk beliefs and legends is arranged according to a similar topic model. It is difficult to discern in these collections the connections between individual storytellers and their stories. Another glaring problem for a course in Nordic folklore was that not a single substantive collection of Danish folklore existed in English translation.

In this work I attempt to address all these issues. The publication consists of two main components—a printed book and digital content stored on the accompanying DVD. The print version is a bit of a teaser, even as it offers an easy point of entry into the world of Danish folk narrative tradition. Unlike the more comprehensive digital content, the print version is intended to offer a good basis for understanding the Danish stories as the tellers themselves would have understood them and to present a series of the most compelling stories from the repertoires of five Danish storytellers. After an introductory chapter that provides some of the context for this collection, I provide excerpts from the

five main storytellers' repertoires, in English translation. The only commentary accompanying these stories is a brief biographical essay on each of the storytellers.

Each story is presented in the order in which it appeared during performance, although in the print version I have skipped over many stories; these are accessible in the digital content. Instead of including titles for the stories or developing an elaborate frame narrative, as Peter Asbjørnsen did for his early collection of Norwegian legends (1845–1848), I have simply included a reference number for each story. A story with the number 1.04, for instance, is the fourth story told during the first meeting between Tang Kristensen and the storyteller. After the reference number, in square brackets, appears the field diary pages on which Tang Kristensen recorded the story, followed by an abbreviated standard reference to the collection in which the story was published or indexed, if any. At the end of the book, a list of abbreviations used in both the book and the digital content identifies the published or indexed collections to which the abbreviations refer.

The five storytellers whose stories form the heart of this collection were all interesting people. “Bitte Jens” Kristensen was a clog maker who had served in the Danish army during the conflicts with Bismarck in southern Denmark in 1864. He owned a smallholding and was a remarkably versatile storyteller, his repertoire spanning ballads, proverbs, legends, jocular tales, and fairy tales. Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter was a relatively well-off farm wife whose stories explore, among other things, witchcraft, folk healing, and haunting. Jens Peter Pedersen lived in the northern reaches of Jutland and made his living as a lathe turner. In his stories, he largely comments on aspects of local history. He used his meetings with Tang Kristensen as a means to bolster what little social status he enjoyed in the surrounding area. Margrete Jensdatter was one

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of the many extremely poor rural women whom Tang Kristensen met on his travels. She had a remarkable fairy tale repertoire. Finally, Peder Johansen was a young journeyman miller and fiddler when Tang Kristensen first contacted him. In his stories, he often explore[STET][why past tense? The stories are still doing this for him even though he is long dead] the boundaries of acceptable behavior.

The digital content included on the accompanying DVD is more comprehensive than in the print book. The book's introductory chapter is replaced by a series of wide-ranging essays on the changing political, social, and economic landscapes of nineteenth-century Denmark, the history of folklore scholarship in Denmark, Evald Tang Kristensen's life and works, folklore genre theory and analysis, theoretical approaches to the individual and folklore repertoire, and a critical overview of the use of mapping in the study of folk tradition. Each of the print version's brief descriptions of the five main informants is similarly expanded into a comprehensive essay exploring the storyteller's life in the context of late nineteenth-century rural Danish society. A sophisticated mapping interface allows one to explore Danish geography in the context of the storytellers' lives and stories. Each story is presented in multiple versions and is accompanied by a thorough scholarly annotation as well as links to other, related stories. In all, the digital content includes 568 storytellers and 907 stories. Among those, the repertoires of the five main storytellers, which are presented in full, comprise 434 stories.¹ A description of how to use and install the digital content appears in the back matter of the book and on the accompanying DVD.

All the stories in the repertoires of the five main storytellers exist in two versions—the original manuscript version and a published version.² Most of them also exist in an intermediate “fair copy” version. For the digital content, I

transcribed the stories from the original manuscript versions, retaining the original line breaks and abbreviations. In cases where the original manuscript version was missing, I transcribed from the fair copy. All the published versions of the stories were scanned and subjected to optical character recognition (OCR) and subsequent proofreading. The English translations of the manuscript versions are as close to literal as possible, although I have expanded and translated abbreviations. The English translations of the published stories are less literal and attempt to capture the style of the original. I relied heavily on Feilberg's *Bidrag til en ordbog over jyske almuesmål* (*Contribution to a Dictionary of Jutlandic Peasant Speech*) for transcribing unclear passages and translating unusual words. Although I have tried to present as clear and accurate translations as possible, I have undoubtedly introduced errors in both transcription and translation, and I will be the first to claim these as mine.

Acknowledgements

I began sketching out this book in my first year of teaching at UCLA, frustrated that there was no equivalent collection of Danish folktales to John Lindow's *Swedish Legends and Folktales* (1978), Reidar Christiansen's *Folktales of Norway* (1964) or Jaqueline Simpson's *Icelandic Folktales and Legends* (1972). I was particularly impressed by Lindow's annotations in his volume, presenting, as they did, sophisticated critical commentary to Swedish stories in a remarkably brief yet informative manner. I decided I would like to do the same for Danish folktales. Since I began working on this volume, I have been in close contact with John Lindow, and he has provided a great deal of patient advice, intellectual guidance, and support. In addition, my students' comments on translations, and their insightful questions about vague, unclear or difficult aspects of Danish folk belief helped shape many of the story annotations. Students and colleagues at Harvard where I spent a semester as a visiting professor of folklore on the invitation of Stephen Mitchell also offered useful critiques.

A burgeoning interest in "visualizing" the landscape of folk belief led me to revisit the cartographic methods that many folklorists had abandoned. I had the good fortune of having received excellent cartographic training during summer work in the early 1980s at Clark University's cartography laboratory under the expert tutelage of Herb Heidt and a crew of generous graduate students and postdocs who showed me what one should and shouldn't try to do with maps.

During my time as the leader of the Center for Folkloristics at the University of Copenhagen, I began

exploring what a digital representation of a folklore collection might look like. I would like to thank Helle Preuss Justesen, Marianne Tyllesen and Hanne Pico Larsen for working with me as these initial ideas developed into more formal structures. Kirsten Brøste, the administrative assistant at the Center, cataloged the various digital materials and corrected the very first scan of Tang Kristensen's memoirs, *Minder og Oplevelser* (1923-1928). Michael Chesnutt acted as an intellectual sparring partner as I developed the ideas for the navigation of the digital materials and outlined the history of Danish folklore study. Torkil Damsgaard Olsen deserves thanks for providing funds to start the digitization efforts.

Assembling the archival material was a fascinating journey, taking me to national and local historical archives throughout Denmark. I would particularly like to thank Maja Andersen, Sophie and Søren Rasmussen, Jan Baltzersen, and Christian Bredholdt at the Todbjerg-Mejlby Egnarkiv, Aksel Hjort at the Rosenholm Egnarkiv, Poul Jørgen Christensen at Støvring Kommunes Lokalhistoriske Arkiv, Enrico Tychsen at Sindalegnens Lokalhistoriske Forening, and Leif Juul Pedersen at the Skanderborg Egnarkiv for their help in discovering details about the lives of the five main storytellers. Their local knowledge and their archival prowess were instrumental in developing the nuanced picture of the storytellers that appear in the digital materials. Finally, I would like to thank Ingelise Rahn at Lansarkivet for Nørrejylland and Henrik Stissing Jessen at Rigsarkivet for their assistance.

Nearly all of Tang Kristensen's materials are housed at *Dansk folkemindesamling*, and I owe a great debt of gratitude to the archivists and librarians working there. They were always helpful in allowing me access to the manuscript, loose-leaf and photographic collections. Palle Christiansen, Henrik Stavnsborg and Else Marie Kofod deserve special mention in

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Developing a navigational interface to a complex digital folklore collection has been a great learning process. I was helped in this task by the talented staff at UCLA's Center for Digital Humanities, including Vergil Castello who developed the early design concepts for the interface. I explored aspects of the digitization, storage and retrieval of materials during a semester at the National Science Foundation's Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics where colleagues including Fernando Diaz, Yannet Interian, Kendall Giles, Tina Eliassi-Rad, Peter Jones, Mark Green and Russ Caflisch all provided helpful comments and expert guidance. Colleagues at two UCLA summer institutes on "Network Analysis for the Humanities" funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities—particularly James Abello, Katy Börner, Peter Leonard and Nischal Devanur—helped me develop methods for search and retrieval that have been used in the organization of the digital materials. My initial, amateurish database design for the project was completely overhauled and brought up to a professional standard by Barbara Hui.

The lion's share of the thanks for the presentation of the digital materials is reserved for Peter Broadwell, whose patience, perseverance, dedication and intelligence is matched only by his friendliness—without his efforts, this project, which at its outset appeared more like an impossible task set by an ill-tempered fairytale villain, would have failed. Working with Peter has been like having the magical genie from one of Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter's fairy tales at hand: seemingly impossible suggestions would magically be realized the next day. Peter steered the project away from bad ideas and gently proposed changes that always improved the project considerably. I cannot imagine a better collaborator.

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Notes

¹ I use the word *story* throughout this work to refer broadly to any of the folk expressions collected by Tang Kristensen.

² Although the stories of the ancillary storytellers also exist in these forms, for these tellers only the published version and the English translation of that version are included on the DVD.

1

Introduction

Danish folktales have captured the imagination of audiences around the world. Their popularity is in part due to the erroneous yet widely held belief that the extraordinary literary tales of Hans Christian Andersen are part of Danish folk narrative tradition. H. C. Andersen, as he is known in Denmark, was a literary author, and his tales were the written artistic expressions of a single individual—in that sense, they can hardly be seen as part of Danish folklore tradition.¹ Despite this unusual state of affairs in which many readers come to Danish folk tradition essentially by mistake, many of Andersen's tales were inspired by Danish folk stories and an intriguing overlap exists between his tales and stories from oral tradition. Like Andersen's fairy tale world, the world of Danish folk narrative is seductive, populated by trolls, mound folk, elves, werewolves, nightmares, mermaids and mermen, ghosts, witches, robbers, murderers, Satanic apparitions, church-wrecking serpents, corrupt government officials, violent manor lords, pestilence, princes and princesses. Yet a simple encounter with this narrative world raises more questions than it answers. To understand Danish folk tradition, one must get closer to the culture in which the stories and songs circulated, and the lives of the people who created, told, and listened to these stories.

What lies behind this narrative world? Who told these stories, and for what reasons? Were these stories only told by

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poor people, a major premise of early folklore scholarship? Were they told by people living in rural areas, another artifact of that scholarly orientation? Were the people who told these stories literate? How did the storytellers make their livings? How did they get around? When did people tell these stories and sing these songs? What was going on at the time, politically and culturally, when the storytellers told their stories? Does that context matter, or are these stories politically irrelevant and culturally nostalgic? Are these stories and songs really old, or are they fairly recent inventions? Who collected the stories and songs? Why would anyone spend so much time collecting them? Did the collector or someone else publish the stories and songs? Were they changed from the time they were collected to the time they were published and, if so, why? Who read these collections when they were first published? And why are almost all collections of folklore presented thematically? Does that make a difference? Do these stories say something about all Danes at all times? Or do they say more about some Danes at some specific times? This book and the accompanying digital content are an attempt to address these questions while presenting for the first time in English a substantial, fully annotated and thickly described collection of folktale repertoires from Denmark.²

Folklore and Folk Narrative

Folklore emerges out of the dialectic tension that exists between the individual and tradition—a tension that animates all the processes of composition, transmission and variation that characterize folkloric expression (Chesnutt 1999, 11). Individuals grow up in cultural environments, become enculturated through their long and repeated interactions with other individuals, and learn how to behave competently

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within the close and often homogeneous groups in which they live, work and play. Among the many aspects of culture to which individuals necessarily develop a relationship during the simultaneous processes of enculturation and performing culture is tradition.

Some scholars have misinterpreted tradition as a static, superorganic identity that has a stable life of its own and is able to survive outside of the minds of the people who create and perpetuate it.³ But tradition is not a superorganic entity. Quite to the contrary, it is bounded entirely by the people who perpetuate it. Tradition is not immutable, timeless, a product of the collective imagination, or a survival of the ancient past. Rather, tradition is a dynamic process that relies on the creativity of individuals who recognize that on some level they are part of a larger group (a family, a village, a guild, a region, a political party, a nation, a pan-national group, etc.), and who indicate, through their expressions, a willingness to perpetuate the traditional expressions of the groups to which they belong. As Alan Dundes suggested, a “folk” is any group of people who have at least one thing in common (Dundes 1977). Sometimes, the only thing that members of a group have in common is their traditions.

Not all traditions are folklore, yet all folklore is traditional. This important distinction helps limit the scope of folkloristic enquiry. Folkloric traditions are those cultural expressions that are characterized by their transmission during informal, predominantly oral interactions between individuals in a group or across groups. A folkloric expression (song, story, joke, gesture, basket, tool, etc.) is considered traditional if at least some members of the group perceive the expression to be part of their tradition, and indicate a willingness to perpetuate that expression. In this sense, tradition can be seen as a “will to persistence” rather than any generically limited set of expressions.

As part of everyday life, individuals struggle to make sense of the social, political, economic and physical environments in which they live. One cultural resource for making sense of environmental stressors is tradition, particularly folkloric traditions. In a study of Bolivian copper miners, for example, Michael Taussig discovered that, when confronted with rapid change, people often appealed to folkloric traditions as a means for understanding and adapting to that change (Taussig 1980). Through the performance, reception and re-performance of such traditions, people can impart to others in their group a sense of history, belonging and identity. At the same time, such traditional interaction allows individuals to debate the boundaries of the norms, beliefs and values (taken together, cultural ideology) that their traditional expressions convey.

Because an individual is often a member of multiple groups, he or she engages the traditions of all the groups to which he or she belongs. Consequently, an individual might find himself attempting to reconcile traditional expressions from various groups that are contradictory. This constant struggle between the individual and tradition results in the ongoing, dynamic negotiation of the contours of tradition. Folklore is much more about change than it is about stasis. Importantly, one of the dominant forums for the negotiation of cultural ideology is folk narrative, an observation holds true even in contemporary society. It is a particularly apt description for the small agricultural communities of Jutland where most of the stories in this book were collected.

The following chapters and accompanying digital content reveal how a small number of individuals appealed to and refigured folk traditions as part of their ongoing negotiation of the ideological landscape of their communities in the rapidly changing social, political, economic and physical environments of rural Denmark during the last decades of the

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nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. The storytellers whose repertoires are presented here were all members of various groups—families, village communities, churches, occupations, the imagined communities of smallholders or farmers, the similarly imagined communities of political parties, the larger imagined community of Jutlanders, and the imagined national community of Danes (Anderson 1983). All these groups were in a state of flux as participatory democratic institutions replaced the absolute monarchy of previous centuries, as free market economies replaced earlier controlled economies, as monetized transactions replaced barter, as literacy and education became the norm rather than the exception, as transportation and communications infrastructure were rapidly expanded, and as early modes of production, land use, and class structures were fundamentally refigured.

The individual lives of the storytellers are presented in the context of local and national change, and their storytelling is situated not only in its proper performance context, but in the larger context of Danish and, in some cases, Nordic folk narrative tradition. None of the five narrators considered in this work knew any of the others even though some of them lived quite close to each other. Their circles of acquaintances at times overlapped, and each one of the storytellers told stories with themes echoed in the others' storytelling.⁴ Of course, that is not surprising, as each of them relied on the deep cultural resource of rural Danish folklore tradition for their own storytelling. Intriguingly, none of the repertoires are alike. Even similar stories are told with widely divergent features—an excellent illustration of the dialectic relationship between individuals and tradition. Each one of these storytellers appropriates, adapts and performs the stories in their repertoires in ways that allow them to negotiate an

individual stance on a host of issues that were of paramount concern to each of them as they went about their daily lives.

Change in Nineteenth Century Denmark

The nineteenth century was a time of complex change in Danish society. The change actually started in the waning decades of the eighteenth century, and continued at surprising speed through the beginning of the twentieth century. At the start of this period, Denmark was an absolute monarchy, and its primarily agricultural economy was organized as a manorial system. The crown, the church, and the aristocracy controlled the vast majority of the land and, by extension, production. Market towns and cities held privileged economic positions and controlled the flow of most commerce. Similarly, the residents of market towns and cities had legal status that separated them from the peasantry [*bondestanden*] on whose sole shoulders rested the obligation to serve in the military. Peasants were often born poor, lived their lives poor and died poor. There were few avenues for upward mobility. Travel was hampered by bad roads, farming was inefficient because of antiquated technology and the constraints of the outmoded manorial system, and communication was difficult because of widespread illiteracy and an obsolete postal system.

Yet by the end of a period of little more than one hundred and twenty-five years, Denmark had become a constitutional democracy, private land ownership was widespread, the manorial system was a thing of the past, the privileged status of the market towns and cities had evaporated, literacy was widespread, a well-functioning railway connected virtually all parts of the country, high speed communication via telegraph was commonplace, and the

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popular press had become an accessible and important factor in people's understanding of community, region and nation. Furthermore, the legal divide between peasants and town dwellers had disappeared, the centralized Lutheran church had lost its stranglehold on religious expression, political parties were emerging that challenged the conservative interests of the wealthy urban elites, the beginnings of a social welfare system had been established, and significant reforms to health care along with scientific advances in medicine had changed the way people perceived health and welfare.

The land reforms of 1788 were the first step on this remarkable journey of social transformation. Up until that point, Danish agriculture had been organized as a classic manorial system.⁵ In 1788, royal estates, large land holdings held by aristocrats (counts, dukes, manor lords, etc.), and church holdings accounted for 98% of all arable land in Denmark and their agricultural output (primarily grain and cattle) accounted for nearly all of the country's gross domestic product. Manor farms had by far the largest holdings, accounting for 63% of the farmland measured in barrels of *hartkorn* (Bjørn 1988 vol. 3, 213).⁶ The manor lords exercised a great deal of control over the economic, social and political lives of the people working their lands, helping to appoint the local minister and making all significant decisions concerning the local economy. The largest manor farms were granted status by the crown as judicial districts (*birk*), which operated as independent legal entities. Because the aristocrat whose district had been granted this status was allowed to appoint the presiding judge of the largely autonomous district court (*birkeret*), he held, for all intents and purposes, absolute control over his property and the people who lived there.

Before the land reforms of the late eighteenth century, most farmers lived on copyholds—farms that had been

leased for a fixed number of years or, more often, a lifetime, from the manor. Less fortunate peasants either lived in leased houses with little or no land, or on the manorial estates themselves. Lease payments were predominantly made in kind and a significant proportion of a farmer's output was owed to the manor farm as part of these payments. One of the most important reforms of the late eighteenth century was the move away from in-kind lease payments in favor of cash payments. This change gave farmers more control over their economic decisions and much needed freedom from the potentially capricious and destructive demands of the manor. At the same time, it guaranteed the manor farms consistent value for their leased lands.

Most leases called for villeinage (*bovert*), a requirement to supply a set amount of labor per year to the manor, which constituted a significant burden on farmers and smallholders. While villeinage guaranteed manor farms a ready labor supply, it disrupted work on the leased lands usually at the most crucial times of the growing cycle. The abolition of villeinage started at the beginning of the nineteenth century but took nearly a century to complete, largely because of resistance from some aristocrats to do away with this system. Its abolition was a major and necessary stepping stone on the way to the modernization of the Danish agricultural economy. As a result of these reforms, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, most Danish farmers owned their own land and had no work obligations to large landholders.

Prior to the land reforms, fields were spread helter-skelter in long strips throughout the manor's properties. It was not uncommon for a farmer to have dozens of "fields"—narrow strips of land hundreds of meters long the width of two plows—that he had to care for. During the plowing season, he would have to move his heavy four-wheeled plow and animals from strip to strip. Similarly, he would have to

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coordinate his activities with all the other farmers in the village who worked the same fields. This system of coordinated farming was known as the *fælleskab*, or collective, and the decisions concerning what to sow on which fields, which fields to leave fallow, when to plow and when to harvest were always taken collectively in a guild known as the *bylav*. All the farmhouses were physically concentrated in villages, and fields could be quite distant from these village centers.⁷

To make matters worse, after 1733, any male who was born in a house or farm under the purview of a manor farm was subjected to adscription (*stavnshånd*), a system that required a person to seek permission from the manor lord if he wished to leave the area. At first, adscription applied only to boys and men between the ages of fourteen and thirty-six, but by 1760, it had been expanded to cover all men from age four to forty. The original intent of the *stavnshånd* had been to keep men on their farms after the abolishment of the rural militias in 1730. Up through the mid-nineteenth century, only members of the peasantry—the *bondestand*—were required to serve in the military, the rationale being that the defense of the country was part of the obligation of the manor farms toward the Crown to protect the very land that they farmed. In practice, the *stavnshånd* meant that people were bound for life to the manor on which they were born. While the system was supposed to allow for more efficient military conscription, it mainly guaranteed manor lords a captive work force.

The manorial system was spectacularly inefficient and completely incapable of reacting to the increasingly global marketplace for grain and animal products of nineteenth century Europe (Christiansen 1996). The biggest problems were related to coordination and modernization—achieving consensus among all the farmers on decisions related to crops,

crop rotation, and growing methods was essentially impossible. Similarly, advances in agricultural techniques and new technologies were for all intents and purposes impossible to implement on a manor-wide scale given the broad resistance to change among the peasants, an uneven distribution of capital to pay for improvements, and a wide range of workers with dissimilar economic interests. Since payments to the manor farm were closely tied to productivity, farmers had little or no incentive to increase production. Consequently, manor lords found their economic fortunes tied to a rigid system that made it difficult for them to react to significant changes in market prices, while farmers and peasants found themselves tied to a system that had structural disincentives for individual initiative and ambition (Christiansen 1996 and 2002).

Under increasing pressure from the aristocrats, who found the manorial system to be both unwieldy and utterly inefficient, and the farmers, who found the system to be exploitative, the Crown relented in 1788 and agreed to a far ranging series of land reforms. Although A. P. Bernstorff and the brothers Ludwig and Christian Ditlev Reventlów were among the main aristocratic proponents agitating for change, the push for the elimination of the *stavnsbånd* and other reforms in land organization and apportionment would have come to naught had it not been for the willingness of King Frederik VI (1768-1839) to move ahead with these reforms.⁸ The implications of these land reforms were far reaching, and marked the beginning of the dismantling of the manorial system that reached its culmination with the propagation of the democratic constitution in 1849.

Perhaps the two most important aspects of the land reforms of 1788 were the dissolution of the *stavnsbånd*, and the sale of the leased manorial lands and crown estates. These two changes in the organization of the rural economy had

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huge demographic, social and political implications—not to mention an obvious economic impact—that resonated into the beginning of the twentieth century. One of the most significant changes to rural organization as part of the dismantling of the manorial system was the reapportionment of the fields (*udskiftning*) and the subsequent removal of farms from concentrated village centers out onto the fields (*udflytter gårde*).

The reapportionment of the fields eliminated the inefficient organization of land, and concentrated all of a farm's land in several adjacent plots. The task of reapportionment was complex and was based on the historic yield of different strips of land. The goal was to consolidate each farmer's holdings without a change in the overall potential yield. Moving farmhouses onto the fields would create efficiencies by eliminating the time-consuming process of moving equipment from farm buildings to fields and back again. These two endeavors took nearly half a century to implement and were not completed until well up into the nineteenth century. These changes in the organization of the Danish agricultural economy and landscape fundamentally altered the manner in which people farmed and interacted. As Bjørn notes, “Det kulturlandskab med den på én gang spredte og samtidig ret tætte landbrugsbebyggelse, der den dag i dag er karakteristisk for det åbne land i Danmark, blev i det væsentlige skabt i denne periode” [The cultural landscape with its at once diffuse and relatively closely built agricultural areas which to this very day characterizes the open spaces of Denmark was shaped to the greatest degree during this period] (Bjørn 1988 vol. 3, 13). Farmers and smallholders alike moved from being strongly tied to a manor that governed nearly all aspects of their economic and social lives to being individual players who had great personal freedom,

responsibility and independence in an emerging free market system.

By the early decades of the nineteenth century, nearly 60% of Danish farmers owned their own land; the remaining ones were tenant farmers, cotters, day laborers or craftsmen. Still, there was a growing eagerness among the farmers who did not own their own land to do so. Once the major inefficiencies and inequities had been addressed, legislative attention shifted to the question of the tenant farmer. Although many farmers now owned their lands, a large group held land as part of a tenancy agreement (*fæste*). By the mid-nineteenth century, reform of this system had become the most pressing issue in Danish agricultural politics, and significant steps were taken to end the tenancy system in the 1860s. By the time that Tang Kristensen began his collecting, not only was the age of the large manor farm long gone, but the age of tenancy was also on its way out. Small farms and cottages (with or without land), owned and managed by individuals had taken their place.

A second important development in the 1850s and 1860s that helped shape the rural landscape was land reclamation, accomplished through draining and the aggressive use of fertilizers and marl. Through these efforts, thousands of previously non-arable acres comprised primarily of swamps, meadows, low-lying wetlands and heath were all brought into cultivation (Bjørn 1988 vol. 3, 82). Government programs including low-interest loans, subsidies and land give-aways were instituted to encourage people to take on this back-breaking labor. As a result of these reform policies, Danish agricultural output increased dramatically.

Perhaps one of the most important technological developments in mid-nineteenth century Denmark was the introduction of the swing plow; over the course of little more than a decade, the Danish farmer switched from using four

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wheel plows to much more efficient and far less damaging swing plows (Johansen 1979, 25). Other technological advances included a better understanding of the use of fertilizer and marl. Better, more consistent seed along with changes in crop rotations, and more sophisticated approaches to irrigation and drainage all contributed to the increased yields on the Danish farms. The end result of all this change and development was a dramatic reorganization of the economic landscape of agricultural Denmark: where before there had largely been manor farms and the people who worked directly or indirectly for these large scale enterprises, there were now numerous classes of people working in the rural areas: at the top, there was still a small group of aristocrats and large land holders, and below them a large and growing group of farm owners whose fields produced anywhere from 1 barrel to 12 barrels of *hartkorn*. By 1835, nearly 85% of all agricultural production in Denmark took place on privately held farms with a valuation of 1-12 barrels of *hartkorn* (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 28). Another very large group was comprised of smallholders whose fields produced less than a barrel of *hartkorn* (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 26).⁹

In the middle part of the nineteenth century, prices for grain on the European market were good and Danish farms' productivity increased steadily. This period from 1830-1876 is referred to in Danish agricultural history as the grain sale period (*kornsalgsperioden*) and is considered by historians to have been a time of relative plenty (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 76). A major factor in the rise of the grain market was the decision by the British to remove their protective tariffs on foreign grain in 1849. As a consequence, Danish grain exports tripled during the 1850s and 1860s over levels from the 1820s (Olsen et al. 1988-1991 vol. 11, 43). By the 1870s, however, the grain market in Europe had become globalized, and inexpensive grain from the post Civil War-era United

States flooded European markets, driving prices down dramatically. While this collapse in grain prices could have spelled economic doom for Danish farmers, it did not. How did the Danish farmers and smallholders adroitly sidestep this calamity? The success of Danish agriculture in the face of the collapsing grain economy can be attributed in part to the structural changes in farm organization from the earlier part of the century, in part to technological advances and a better understanding of milk production and animal fodder, and in part to the emergence of the cooperative movement. Although animal husbandry had always played a part on most Danish farms and smallholdings, it took on far greater significance in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Danish farms large and small alike switched from grains based production to animal based production. This shift was in part out of necessity, since the average size of the Danish farm was becoming less than optimal for grain production, while advances in the understanding of animal husbandry made it possible for farmers to greatly increase the size of their dairy herds. The cultivation of fodder beets, a cattle feed that was high in carbohydrates, had diuretic properties and had the added bonus of being easily stored during the winter, was an important advance in Danish dairy farming. By shifting some of his land to fodder beets, a farmer could diversify away from grain and simultaneously increase and stabilize his dairy output throughout the year. Prior to this advance, Danish dairy cows, particularly on the smaller farms, had been fed mostly hay, which, as the winter wore on and the hay deteriorated, led to rapid decreases in both milk output and quality. Other advances in the science of milk storage and treatment, animal feed, drainage and field fertilization, propagated by the Danish agricultural university and by the

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folk high schools, greatly increased the productivity of Danish milk cows and the quality of Danish dairy products.

By aligning themselves in cooperatives—first dairy cooperatives and later slaughter house cooperatives primarily for swine—Danish farmers and smallholders were able to compete effectively with the larger land holders who previously had an insurmountable advantage in regards to consistent quality of their pork and dairy products. With the explosive growth of urban centers in England and their almost bottomless demand for Danish butter and bacon, Danish farmers were able to increase their output even on the smallest plots of land. Consequently, while Norway and Sweden experienced massive emigration (primarily to the United States) during this period of collapsing grain prices, the emigration from Denmark was not nearly as dramatic. Although the Danish cities continued to grow, the large number of smallholders who were able to make a living off of their farms, coupled with various government incentives for people to continue farming, slowed what could have been unsustainable growth in the cities.

Along with changes in agricultural practice and organization, social organization changed during this period as well. The parish (*sogn*) as opposed to the village (*landsby*) became the main organizational unit for local government and social engagement. The town guild (*bylav*), which had regulated agricultural activity, ceased functioning as smallholders and farmers alike became individual market players. The festival guild (*gildelav*), which had organized local social activities, was largely replaced by associations (*foreninger*). These associations were no longer constrained by local demands, but rather represented interest groups that were more regional or even national in scope. Economic associations, educational associations, political associations and so on all developed at this time, and people soon found

opportunities to explore interests that were not constrained by the local (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 383). In short, decision-making was opened to more people while demands on individuals to secure their own financial well-being increased dramatically. Social life expanded beyond the local village to include people from neighboring parishes organized in groups that focused on common interests and issues.

The increasing emphasis up through the nineteenth century on the individual as both a market actor and as responsible for his or her own financial well-being is seen best in the ongoing debate over poverty assistance during the nineteenth century. The first attempts at a unified approach to the problem of rural poverty were expressed in the poverty laws of 1708 (Jørgensen 1940). Begging was outlawed, severe punishments were instituted, and the principal of public assistance was affirmed (Jørgensen 1940). Prior to the land reforms of the 1780s, the most common form of poverty assistance was rotation care (*omgangsbespisning*), where a poor person was assigned to different farms for a number of days throughout the year. Interestingly, this form of “controlled wandering” looked from the outside no different from begging. Yet it was fundamentally different because control over the poor accrued to the individual community and the level of support was decided by the individual farmer owners. Smallholders, to the extent that there were any, and leaseholders rarely participated in this system. Instead, the entire system relied on the good will of the local farmers. Furthermore—and quite importantly—the system let farmers offer assistance in kind, thereby avoiding the monetary tax burden that arose with later poverty assistance laws. While this solution appeared good to the local farmers, it was utterly inadequate to meet the rising demands of rural poverty. Fortunately, after the land reforms during the last decades of the 1700s and the subsequent dispersal of farms onto their

fields, this type of assistance became less common and consequently new models for providing poverty assistance and combating begging began to take shape (Jørgensen 1940, 6-7).

It was not until the very early nineteenth century that laws offering a more consistent approach to the care for the poor were enacted (Jørgensen 1940). While a new law governing care for the poor was signed in 1803, the absurdities of legislative deadlock made it impossible to pass a reform of the law until 1891 despite continued efforts throughout the nineteenth century (Jørgensen 1940). The negotiation of changes to the 1803 law was a constant business item for parish commissions. Not surprisingly, these formal discussions filtered into informal discussions and storytelling and *vice versa*. The underlying principle of the law—that localities were responsible for their own poor—resonated with calls for increasing decentralization, particularly from the farm owners' political party *Venstre* at the same time as it raised concern among these same farm owners (the new tax paying class as it were) that an unusually high burden was about to befall them, particularly given the cries from the cities' economic elite that the urban poor be "sent back to where they came from."

In comparison to poverty legislation, educational reform was relatively swift. Public education was already a concern at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and from 1721-1727, King Frederik IV instigated the establishment of two hundred and forty cavalry schools (*rytterskoler*) on the royal estates.¹⁰ The pietism of the day was one of the main inspirations for these schools that were based on the idea that education could help produce good Christian citizens from the young peasantry. The Reventlów brothers who were crucial in the land reform efforts were equally crucial in educational reform efforts. A national committee was established in 1789 to

focus on the question of public education and this resulted in the School Law of 1814, with two separate ordinances: one for schools in rural areas and one for schools in urban areas. As a result of these reforms and those to the poverty laws, power became increasingly concentrated in the local parish councils (Nørr 1981 and 1994; Jørgensen 1979 4, 126). Another result of this legislation was the establishment of teacher colleges throughout the country and the development of standard curricula both for teacher education and for the new public schools.

In 1856, new school legislation gave parents more control and choice in local schools while, up through the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the folk high schools (*folkehøjskoler*), started by the theologian N.F.S. Grundtvig, grew. Consequently, by the second half of the nineteenth century, most Danes had some schooling and the vast majority of the population was literate. In a study from 1859, for instance, 88.3% of the population could read and write, 8.9% could read, and only 2.8% were illiterate (Dybdahl 1982, 107). Similarly, the folk high schools offered young men and women—predominantly from the farm owning class—an opportunity to learn new agricultural techniques while also receiving a general education in Danish history and culture.

Along with land reform, progressive poverty legislation and the development of a broad public education system, the health care system was systematized during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1803, the Health Collegium (*Sundhedskollegium*) was established and charged with overseeing the development of a modern health care system. The emphasis was largely on urban areas, and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the number of physicians was sufficient to handle the urban population. In the countryside, the situation was dire with only one hundred rural doctors for the entire country in 1870 (Johansen 1979,

298). Despite the strong quacksalver laws that the collegium had supported in an effort to stamp out local “cunning folk,” these same local healers were often given permission to set bones and treat other injuries (Rørbye 1976a and 1976b). Throughout Denmark, a well developed network of usually competent midwives delivered the majority of babies. By 1910, the situation had changed significantly and the number of physicians available in the country had more than doubled (Dybdahl 1982, 35).

Changes in transportation and communication also contributed to the fundamental changes in social organization and daily life in rural Denmark during the latter half of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of that century, roads in Denmark were predominantly dirt roads and in the vast expanses of Jutland were often little more than rutted wagon wheel tracks. Although a systematic improvement of roads had begun in 1763, progress was largely halted on these projects with the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath. The work was restarted in earnest in the 1820s and, by the mid-1800s, work on completing the 1100 kilometer long highway system was in full swing in Jutland helped considerably by a shift away from communal villeinage toward bid contracts (Olsen et al. 1988-1991 vol. 10, 20-22).

Since Denmark is a country of islands, the numerous channels and sounds were main impediments to travel between regions of the country. Improvements in the ferry system, particularly the introduction of steamships in 1828 on the Storebælt channel between Sjælland and Fyn, helped linked distant parts of the country. These developments also greatly reduced the travel time for mail, in many cases halving the delivery time. Nevertheless, by the middle of the century, only the large cities and towns that had benefited from the development of the road network and the steam boat lines. In Jutland, these improvements were largely constrained to

the east coast and the main axis of towns from Vejle in the south, Skanderborg, Århus, Aalborg and Frederikshavn in the north.

The most dramatic change in Danish transportation and communication came with the advent of the railway in the 1860s. The debates concerning possible railway lines through Jutland were complicated with competing interests advocating different routes. Some advocates thought that east-west routes would serve the expansion of trade with England, whereas others were more interested in moving livestock to Germany along a north-south axis. The intervention of the British entrepreneur Samuel Morton Peto (1809-1889), who proposed a zig-zag route up through Jutland, along with the masterful political maneuvering of D.G. Monrad, minister of the interior at the time, resulted in a solution that appeased many of the competing interests. As a result, the railways on Jutland that were begun in 1861 were essentially complete by 1869, offering people access to nearly five hundred kilometers of railway (Olsen et al. 1988-1991 vol. 11, 51-52).

The development of the railway changed the manner in which goods and people circulated. Although early railway ticket prices were high, these dropped along with increased ridership and continued investments from the state. The rail network made postal correspondence speedier, and also allowed booksellers and newsprint vendors access to markets in towns and urban centers throughout the kingdom. Along with the railways came the widespread introduction of the telegraph. The first telegraphs in Denmark were already installed in the early 1800s, but these were “optical” telegraphs—a series of very high posts, usually seventy feet high, where semaphore signals were read and relayed from mast to mast using telescopes. In 1854, the Danish government installed the first telegraph in Denmark on a stretch between Copenhagen and Fredericia (Olsen et al.

1988-1991 vol. 11, 53). This electro-magnetic telegraph, based on the technological innovations of the Dane H. C. Ørsted, the Brit William Sturgeon and the American Samuel Morse, allowed signals to be sent long distances over electrical wire. C. F. Tietgen, a Danish entrepreneur, developed an international telegraph company that linked Denmark and Norway with England via underwater cable already in 1869, and later connected Europe to Russia and China (Olsen et al. 1988-1991 vol. 11, 53). Although the telegraph was largely reserved for business transactions, it aligned well with the greater globalization of the Danish market, and mirrored the dramatic changes in communication presaged both by the expanded railway and postal service, and the dramatic increase in literacy.

By the time Tang Kristensen began his folklore collecting, Denmark was no longer the manorial world that inspired nostalgia in the Romantic nationalists. Rather, it was a rapidly modernizing country, one that had emerged from several crushing military defeats and economic setbacks as a dynamic young democracy. The division of society into citizens and peasants had evaporated, people now played a significant role in determining their own economic success, education was widespread, health care was rapidly improving, and the beginnings of a progressive social welfare net were being developed. The class of smallholders was slowly but surely becoming a political force to be reckoned with. Indeed, their movement, the Cotters' Movement (*Husmandsbevægelsen*) with literary political figures such as Tang Kristensen's one time protégé, Jeppe Aakjær, in the lead became a major political force in Denmark at the start of the twentieth century (Tangherlini 1999a). Danish agriculture had shifted away from inefficient and outdated modes of production toward nimble distributed models of organization best exemplified by the cooperative movement. Parts of the country that had

been disconnected and distant from each other at the start of the 1800s were now connected physically through greatly improved transportation networks and virtually through greatly improved communication networks. Widespread literacy, a result of a massive reform of the educational system making education not only free but compulsory, made it possible for Tang Kristensen to realize his folklore collecting project. As a schoolteacher himself, he could rely on a newly developed network of teachers to supply him with local knowledge. At the same time, the people in these rural areas were now aware of Denmark as a unified conceptual cultural category and could act not only as storytellers but also as audiences for printed folklore collections.

These changes in macro-organization had noticeable effects on micro-organization, influencing everything from the rhythms of everyday life to the distribution of household work. One of the most marked changes in the rural household was the differences that emerged in daily life among the three main classes that made up the majority of the rural population: farmers, at the top of the socio-economic ladder; smallholders (or cotters) and successful craftsmen, on the middle rung; and the rural poor consisting mostly of daylaborers, young journeymen, and less successful craftsmen, on the lower rungs. On the very bottom rungs of the economic ladder were people who were unemployed, sick or elderly.¹¹

As farmers became more self-sufficient and the production emphasis shifted from grain to animals, women's role in household work shifted markedly. Whereas at the start of the nineteenth century, women and men played equally important roles in running farms (*gårde*), by the end of the century, women's roles had generally moved toward food preparation and care of children (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 391). One important exception was in the dairies. Although dairy

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production was becoming increasingly industrialized, female dairy workers still constituted the majority of this workforce. Unfortunately, despite the increasingly rigorous and systematized training for these dairy workers, the management positions were still largely reserved for men (Bjørn et al. 1988 vol. 3, 387-391). In smallholders' households, things remained relatively static, with the division of labor much as it had been before. Men worked in the fields and with the large animals, while women worked in the house and with the small animals. At planting and harvest times, everyone including the children pitched in. Among the day laborers, the situation became increasingly worse, as mechanization displaced many of their jobs.

As dairies and slaughterhouses became centralized, an increased mechanization of farm labor also took hold. Automatic harvesters and threshers, as well as the first examples of tractors began appearing on Danish farms toward the end of the nineteenth century. Milling equipment that did not rely on water or wind and could be installed easily in a farm began to make broad inroads in Jutland. Consequently, seasonal work related to harvesting and threshing—the latter a source of income for many smallholders and daylaborers during the relatively quiet winter months—disappeared and the role of the miller became less important. Finally, the railroad greatly increased access to industrially produced and lower-cost goods, including shoes, clothing, furniture, and equipment. Ultimately, the daily life on the farm and smallholdings became transformed as the economy shifted toward greater specialization and people began to purchase, rather than produce or obtain through barter, the staples of daily life.

Notes

¹ The debate over what is and is not “folklore” has raged for years in academic journals (Oring 1986, 1-22). Without getting too caught up in this important, yet maddening, debate, I propose that, for the purposes of this work, folklore is taken to be the traditional, primarily oral, expressions of individuals. Consequently, a literary author’s production is not “folklore” because it is neither oral nor traditional. “Traditions” are those cultural expressions that individuals (the “folk”) hoped would persist. By remembering and performing such expressions, they gave voice to this “will to persistence.” The “folk,” for the purposes of this work, are taken to be Danes living in the last decades of the nineteenth century in Jutland. Of course, a lively tension exists between individuals and the groups to which any individual belongs, and this dialectic tension between individual goals and desires, and the expressive culture of the group as a whole, gives rise to the dynamic processes that animate folklore.

² The concept of “thick description” is borrowed here from Clifford Geertz (1973). Lauri Honko applies this concept of thick description to the issues of repertoire and corpus (2000).

³ The notion of folklore having a life of its own is known as the “superorganic” theory in folklore, and can be found in the scholarship of late nineteenth and twentieth century scholars such as Olrik (1908). The superorganic view holds that there is a level of culture that is not controlled by the organic level—i.e. the level of human control—but which guarantees a consistency in human behavior (Pentikäinen 1978, 17; Dundes 1965, 129-130).

⁴ All the stories are cross-referenced across the five repertoires, to allow for easy comparisons between variants.

In addition, a large group of variants referenced in the annotations by collection, volume and number from other storytellers' repertoires are included in the accompanying digital materials. Navigation through the digital materials allows for multiple avenues of inquiry into this complex material.

⁵ An excellent overview of the Danish manorial system can be found in Palle O. Christiansen (1996).

⁶ The standard method for valuing farmland in Denmark was to calculate the potential output of the total acreage in barrels of *hartkorn*.

⁷ The description of agricultural organization in Denmark presented here is necessarily abbreviated. The best and most accessible overview of Danish agricultural can be found in the four volume history published by the *Landbohistorisk Selskab* in Denmark (Bjørn et al. 1988).

⁸ Although Frederik VI did not officially become king until the death of his father Christian VII in 1808, his father's insanity made it impossible for him to rule. Instead, crown prince Frederik essentially ruled as regent from 1784, when he was made a member of the privy council.

⁹ The smaller farms, with a valuation of one to two barrels of hartkorn were known as *bolsted*.

¹⁰ These were called *rytterskoler* or cavalry schools because they were established on those of the royal estates that supplied men and materiel for the cavalry

¹¹ These categories were by no means fixed, and people often moved up and down the socioeconomic ladder over the course of their life.

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

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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 deutscher 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 Grenadier, 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 *Volke*, 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, *Reliques 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, *Løvninger 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 *Danske 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 *Danske 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 mængsteds 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 gøres 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 Meddelelserne 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 forskellige 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 Folkeeventyr* (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, *Íslenskr 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.

The Rise of Folklore Scholarship

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 "Alfepfolk" (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, *Sjæleetro* (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 norrønt 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 *Atlant* (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, Västergötland 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 förbundet* (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 Säv

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 Säre (1811-1887) and his brother Carl Fr. Säre (1812-1876) were also inspired by *Götiska förbundet's* incitement to collect. As with many of these scholars, the collections took on a notably regional character. The two Säre 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 Västernorrland, *Västernorrland och Västernorrland* (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 material 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 gjennombrud* [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, *Íslenzkæ 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, *Íslenzkæ 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 Daviðsson (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, *Íslenzkæ gátur, skemtanir, vikiðvakar 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, *Íslenzkæ 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 folklorists, 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

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

3

Evald Tang Kristensen's Life and Works

By the time of his death in 1929, Evald Tang Kristensen (1843-1929) had become the single most prolific collector of folklore in Europe if not the world. Over the course of a collecting career that spanned nearly five decades, he recorded ballads, folktales, legends, rhymes, proverbs, games, cures, prayers, jocular tales (*schwank*), descriptions of daily life and every other possible type of folklore on tens of thousands of pages in his field diaries and on loose pieces of paper. He collected from over three and a half thousand people, and hundreds more sent him their own smaller collections of local folklore. In most surveys of Tang Kristensen's work, his collection is summarized as comprising "3000 viser med 1000 melodier, 2700 eventyr, 2500 skæmtesagn, 25.000 sagn, talrige ordsprog, rim og gåder samt titusindvis af optegnelser om skik og dagligliv, foruden at han samlede folks egne håndskrifter, småtryk og noder samt fik tilsendt meget stof" [three thousand ballads with one thousand melodies, two thousand seven hundred folktales, two thousand five hundred jocular tales, twenty-five thousand legends, countless proverbs, rhymes and riddles, along with tens of thousands of recordings of customs and daily life; in addition he collected people's own hand-written manuscripts, small publications and musical notes, and also was sent a

great deal of material] (Bricka, Engelstoft, and Dahl 1933-1944 vol. 9, 501; Rockwell 1982, xii).¹

This accounting of the collection leaves out an important aspect of the work, namely that as part of the enterprise, Tang Kristensen wrote short biographical notes about nearly all of the people to whom he talked, obsessively kept track of his travels, and tried to write down everything people told him. In later years, he indexed large parts of his collection, and wrote a four volume memoir, *Minder og Oplevelser* (1923-1928; hereafter abbreviated as MO), which acts almost as a Rosetta stone for navigating this vast material.² The real value of his collection lies in the possibility it offers for reconstructing his collecting trips, putting the stories he collected back into their original performance context, and linking them to people and places. By these means, it opens an unparalleled window into the day-to-day lives of late nineteenth century rural Danes and illuminates their appeal to folklore as a deep cultural resource for commenting on and understanding the changes in the social and physical environments that shaped their everyday experiences.

Tang Kristensen's collecting efforts spanned all of Denmark, reaching south into the contested provinces of Schleswig Holstein, north into the furthest reaches of Skagen, traversing the heaths of central Jutland, hopping across the islands of south central Denmark and reaching east to Sjælland and even Copenhagen. Despite the geographic range of his work, the vast majority of his collecting was focused on the central and northerly provinces of Jutland. Indeed, it would not be inaccurate to characterize his collection as primarily one of Jutlandic folklore. During the course of his collecting career, he made nearly two hundred multi-day field trips to different parts of the country; the first one of these was in 1871, the last one in 1916. Although he had collected riddles from schoolmates when he was a youngster in 1854 or

1855 (MO vol. 1, 162), his first real field experience collecting folklore came in 1867 when, at the urging of his mother, he collected ballads from “Gamle Maren” (Old Maren) Jonster Pedersdatter, his mother’s elderly neighbor in the central Jutland village of Søgaard, just south of Viborg (MO vol. 2, 41-42). By his own admission, this first foray into the field set him on the path to his lifelong engagement with folklore: “Dette Besøg i Brandstrup fik for Resten en stor Betydning for mig, da det gav det endelige Stød til, at jeg tog fat paa den Gjerning, jeg med nogen Grund kan kalde en Livsgjerning” [That visit in Brandstrup turned out to have great meaning for me, as it ultimately gave me the push to take hold of that endeavor that I can with good reason call my life’s work] (MO vol. 2, 41).

Tang Kristensen was not only a prolific collector, but also a prodigious publisher and editor of his collections. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of Tang Kristensen’s work is his involvement with the material from collection, through archiving, organizing, editing and publishing. His intense engagement with the materials not only allows one to trace his shifting attitudes toward folklore and the scholarly establishment in Copenhagen, but it also limits the number of hands (and variables) with which one must contend with in examining the chain from telling to collecting to publishing. Fortunately for later scholarship, Tang Kristensen was obsessive about accuracy and kept surprisingly detailed notes about his travels and the people he met even though the prevailing ideas about folklore at the time did little to encourage this type of attention to individuals. He was greatly influenced by Svend Grundtvig’s ideas about recording all of the variants of a given expression, and took this approach to its logical conclusion: every folkloric utterance was of significant value, and every individual could make a contribution to tradition. This comprehensive approach, so

evident in his field diaries, is also evident in his published collections.

Tang Kristensen's first publication was a forty-page pamphlet of folk ballads entitled *Jydske Folkeviser, Toner, Sagn og Æventyr* (Jutlandic Folkballads, Melodies, Legends and Folktales), which he published in 1868 using his own funds. This book was followed that same year by a second, equally slim volume, simply entitled *Jydske Folkeviser og Toner* (Jutlandic Folk Ballads and Melodies).³ Although he continued to finance many of his publications himself throughout his life, he fairly quickly began receiving subventions from various societies, foundations and the Danish parliament; even though he never made much money from his publications, he was able to publish seventy-nine volumes of folklore (E. Tang Kristensen and J. Tang Kristensen 1943, 100-103). The most important and substantial of these collections are *Jydske Folkeminder* (Jutlandic Folklore, 13 volumes, 1871-1897), *Skattegraveren* (The Treasure Hunter, 12 volumes and supplement, 1884-1890), *Danske Ordsprog og Mundheld* (Danish Proverbs and Sayings, 1890), *Danske sagn* (Danish Legends, 7 volumes, 1892-1901, with an expanded index added as an eighth volume to an edition published in 1980), *Gamle folks fortællinger om det jyske almueliv* (Old People's Stories about Jutlandic Peasant Life, 6 volumes, 1891-1894, 6 supplementary volumes, 1900-1902), *Kuriøse Overhøringer i Skole og Kirke* (Curious Examinations in School and Church, 2 volumes, 1892-1899), *Molbo- og Aggerbohistorier* (Molbo and Aggerbo Stories, 2 volumes, 1892-1903), *Fra Bindestue og Kølle* (From the Knitting Room and Malt House, 2 volumes 1896-1897), *Gamle Raad for Sygdomme hos Mennesket* (Old Advice for Human Illness, 1922), *Gamle Kildevæld* (Old Wellsprings, 1927) and *Danske sagn, ny række* (Danish Legends, New Series, 7 volumes, 1928-1939). The last five volumes of this last work were edited and

published posthumously by his son Johannes. Not included in these collections are the substantial numbers of ballad variants that Grundtvig included in *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*. Collectively, these volumes constitute the most comprehensive overview of late nineteenth century Danish folklore.

Childhood

By all accounts, Tang Kristensen had a challenging—if not downright unhappy—childhood.⁴ He was born on January 24, 1843 in Nørre-Bjært, a small village northeast of Kolding. His father, Anders Christensen Skaderis (1811-1846), was a schoolmaster, and his mother, Ane Persine Sand (1813-1891) was the daughter of a deacon, Christen Nielsen Sand (1773-1847). Although both sides of the family were peasant families, the Sand family was slightly better situated than the Skaderis family, who were quite poor (Rockwell 1982, 1-15). Throughout his life, Tang Kristensen held his father's family in much higher regard than his mother's family, and at times felt that his mother's side of the family was condescending toward him. His identification with his father's family doubtlessly informed his interest in the poorest of the poor throughout his life.

The first few years of Tang Kristensen's life were uneventful—he lived with his parents in a small house allotted the schoolteacher, and in 1846, Evald was joined by a younger brother Christen. But soon after Christen's birth, his father became ill and died. Several biographers have noted that the early death of his father coupled to a deep dislike of his stepfather who came into his life several years later probably played a role in his interest in Danish peasant culture—his interest in his father's family, which was of poor

peasant stock, was intensified by his disdain for his stepfather and his resentment of his mother's decision to remarry (Rockwell 1982; Woel 1929). In his memoirs, Tang Kristensen explores at considerable length his great resentment of his mother, the unpleasantness of his early childhood, the brutality of his stepfather and his increasing disappointment over the loss of his father whom he came to idolize. This idolization likely increased his deepening fascination with peasant culture; by recovering peasant culture Tang Kristensen was, in part, able to recover his lost father.

Even the circumstances of his birth—akin to the difficult births and childhoods of many fairy tale heroes—have been presented as formative. Tang Kristensen writes about his birth,

Det var sikkert en meget besværlig Barselfærd for min Moder, da hun har fortalt, at Jordemoderen ikke kunde gjøre det ud, og der blev da sendt Bud til Kolding efter en Læge. Endelig gik Fødselen for sig, men vel som Følge af Vanskelighederne var mine Fødder kom til at vende galt, de sad nemlig med Tærne ud til hver sin Side, men ind imod hinanden. Men Lægen tog uden videre ved og drejede dem om, saadan som de skulde sidde, og at han maaske drejede dem en Smule for langt ud, kan jeg ikke betegne som nogen Skavank hos mig. Min Moder har altid siden omtalt den Læge med den største Højagtelse, men hans Navn har jeg glemt. At min Fader var glad over, at det gik saa godt, behøver jeg vel næppe at sige. Om min Fødsel har min Moder siden skrevet: Det var 3 haarde Dage

for mig, dem mindes jeg hvert Aar med Glæde og Tak til min himmelske Fader, fordi han bevarede baade Liv og Helbred for os begge (MO vol. 1, 79).

[It was without doubt a difficult birth for my mother, since she told me that the midwife couldn't deliver her, and so they sent to Kolding for a doctor. Finally the birth was completed, but probably as a result of the difficulties my feet were turned wrong, my toes didn't point out to each their side, but rather in towards each other. But the doctor didn't hesitate and he grabbed hold of my feet and turned them the way they were supposed to be, and if he turned them too far, I can't see that that is a problem I have. Since then, my mother always talked about the doctor with the greatest amount of respect, but I've forgotten his name. I don't need to mention that my father was happy that things turned out so well. My mother later wrote about my birth: It was a hard three days for me, and I remember them each year with joy and thanks to my heavenly father, because he saved both life and health for both of us.]

When his father died on Michaelmas (September 29), 1846, the family returned to his mother's childhood village. In the meantime, Tang Kristensen's maternal grandfather had become a widower (1845). It was neither surprising nor unusual that his mother offered to return home to care for him (MO vol. 1, 81-82). The journey across the heath, from the eastern part of Jutland near Kolding to a fjord near

Ringkøbing in the west during the cold dark days of early November was difficult, particularly on the four-month-old Christen; ultimately, he died from the journey. Since his grandfather did not want children in the house, young Evald was first sent to live with his mother's sister in Rindum and, once that proved untenable, to her brother's family in nearby Brandby. So, within five months, Tang Kristensen had lost both his father and brother, was separated from his mother, and been forced to move three times.

In October of that year, Tang Kristensen got a respite as his grandfather died, and he was able to move back to his mother who had inherited a small house slightly further south in Kloster. He describes this house in idyllic terms:

Gamle Sand døde som fortalt 12. Oktober samme Aar, og efter at have været i Landsforvisning næppe et Aar kunde jeg da endelig komme hjem til min Moder igjen, nu lysnede det op for mig en kort Tid, skjøndt jeg maa sige, at jeg havde det godt den Sommer i Bandsby. Men jeg var dog mellem fremmede. Fra Degneboligen, som min Moder nu maatte forlade, flyttede hun om i det Enkesæde, som hendes Fader i sin Tid havde anskaffet sig for sin eventuelle Enke, men som hun ikke havde faaet Brug for, da hun var død først. Dette Hus laa i Kloster et lille bitte Stykke syd for Kirken, og der hørte en lille Jordlod til af udmærket god Beskaffenhed. Der kunde holdes en god Ko, og Bygningen var god. Det var nemlig et Vinkelhus med en lille Have ved Østreenden, og deri fandtes et stort Pæretræ foruden nogle Buske. Jeg var nu henad 5 Aar og befandt mig

som i Himmerig, da jeg kom hjem til hende i dette Hus, som jeg kan huske lige saa tydelig. Fra Indgangsdøren paa søndre Side kom man ind i en lille forgang, og til højre var Døren ind til Stuen, der var ret rummelig. Der var kun det samme Værelse, og i det nord-østlige Hjørne stod Sengen, hvor jeg laa ved min Moder om Natten. Om Dagen legede jeg med en hel Del andre Børn, hvoraf der var nok i Kloster, og saadan tilbragte jeg nogle lykkelige Maaneder og min 5. Fødselsdag, 24. Januar 1848. Jeg husker saa tydelig, at jeg endnu sov, da min Moder stod op, og da jeg vaagnede, kom hun og ønskede mig til Lykke og overrakte mig en Bog som Gave, den første jeg nogensinde har faaet. Jeg gemmer den endnu som en Helligdom, da den jo lagde Grunden til det store Bibliotek, jeg senere har erhvervet mig. Bogen var "Fr. Frølund's Exempelsamling", altsaa en Læsebog for Børn og ikke en ABC, men snarere bestemt for større Børn. Det er da Bevis nok paa, at jeg allerede den Gang kunde læse temmelig godt. Grunden til, at hun kjøbte denne Bog, var vel nærmest, at jeg forud havde hos hendes Broder læst i samme Mands ABC. Det var meget morsomt for mig at læse i denne Bog, da den indeholder nogle Fortællinger og det var ogsaa et morsomt Liv, jeg tilbragte der i Kloster (MO vol. 1, 84-85).

[As mentioned, Old Sand died on October 12th of that same year, and after having been banished for just about a year, I could finally

come home to my mother again, and now things brightened for me for a short while, although I must say that I did have a nice summer in Bandsby. But I was among strangers. From the parish clerk's residence, which my mother now had to leave, she moved over to the widow's residence which her father had acquired in his day for his eventual widow, but which hadn't been used as his wife had died before him. That house was in Kloster a little bit to the south of the church, and there was a small plot of excellent land attached to it. One could keep a good cow, and the building was good. It was a little "angle" house with a small garden on its eastern side, where a big pear tree stood along with some bushes. I was now just about five years old, and I felt like I was in heaven when I came home to her in that house, which I can remember quite clearly. From the entry on the south side one came into a little foyer and on the right there was a door into the main room, which was quite spacious. There was only the one room and in the northeast corner was the bed where I slept with my mother at night. During the day I played with a whole bunch of other children, who were also there in Kloster and in that way I spent several happy months and my fifth birthday, January 24, 1848. I remember so well that I was still asleep when my mother woke up and wished me happy birthday and gave me a book as a gift, the first I ever received. I still keep it as a treasure, as it laid the foundation for the very

large library I have amassed since then. The book was “Miss Frølund’s Reader,” a reader for children and not an ABC book, but rather intended for older children. That is evidence enough that I could already read quite well by that time. The reason she bought me that book was that I had already read an ABC when I was with her brother. It was a lot of fun to read that book, since it included several stories, and it was also a fun life I had there in Kloster.]

This memory of his birthday stands in striking contrast to his description of Christmas in his childhood:

[M]en jeg har aldrig kunnet forstaa, hvordan det kan være, at Grundtvig kunde finde paa at skrive i Sangen "Kirkeklokke, ej til Hovedstæder" følgende Strofe: Mens som Barn paa Landet jeg var hjemme / Julemorgen var mit Himmerig, og ment, at andre kunde trøstigt synge det samme. Jeg kan i alt Fald ikke synge den Sang med Sandhed, for jeg har aldrig mærket som Barn, at Julemorgen var noget Himmerig (MO vol. 1, 169).

[But I could never understand how Grundtvig could write in the song, “Churchbells, not for cities” the following strophe: “While I was a child I was at home in the country/Christmas morning was my heaven,” and believed that others could cheerfully sing along. I certainly couldn’t truthfully sing that song since I never

as a child experienced Christmas morning as
any kind of heaven.]

In this short commentary on his childhood, one finds the interesting contrast between the Romantic and idyllic projection of rural Christmas that was presented in the literary world and the far harsher reality of lived experience. This contrast between Romantic notions and the truth of peasant life and culture became a constant divide that Tang Kristensen had to span later in his professional life, attempting on the one hand to attract both customers and collaborators who adhered to these Romantic notions and on the other hand to present his own experiences and those of his informants in the most truthful manner possible.

Tang Kristensen's idyll in the house in Kloster was interrupted when his mother decided to remarry. For the rest of his life, he harbored a great deal of resentment toward his mother not only because of the decision, but also because of the brutal nature of the man she married.⁵ In March 1849, Hans Peter Hansen Schuster, who was also a schoolteacher, became his stepfather. Schuster had been named to a teacher's post in Ø, slightly west of Randers. Tang Kristensen's account of his mother's wedding drips with bitterness and includes his own cynical speculations as to why the much younger Schuster would marry his mother (MO vol. 1, 86-87). Schuster was an alcoholic, and Tang Kristensen soon found himself the object of Schuster's explosive temper:

Min Rumpe har mangfoldige Gange siddet i
det blodige Kjød, saa jeg næsten ikke kunde
taale at sidde paa den i mange Dage, og det
hjalp ikke det mindste, at jeg bad og bønfuldt
om at blive fri, han kjendte ikke til at lade
Naade gaa for Ret, og han hørte ikke op,

inden han blev kjed af det eller træt af det (MO vol. 1, 170-171).

[My bottom has many a time been reduced to a bloody pulp, so bad that I could almost not bear to sit on it for many days, and it didn't help that I pleaded and pleaded for him to stop, he knew no mercy, and he didn't stop until he got bored or tired of beating me.]

Evald also was forced to shoulder a heavy burden around the small farm that was part of the teacher's compensation:

Om Sommeren skulde jeg meget tidlig op om Morgen, og det var virkelig alt for tidlig, men jeg véd godt, at mange andre Børn maa dele den selvsamme Skjæbne. Jeg skulde jo op og trække Kreaturerne ud. Min Moder kaldte paa mig, naar hun gik ud at malke, og dersom jeg ikke stod op, saa fik jeg Bank, det vidste jeg, derfor maatte jeg af al Magt bekjæmpe min Søvnighed. Men utallige Gange var jeg nærvæd at forbande min ulykkelige Skjæbne og den Ubarmhæjrtighed, der udvistes imod mig. Saa hjalp min Moder mig gjerne Køerne ud i Gaarden og koblede dem sammen, og saa skulde jeg selv gjøre Resten. Hun gav mig jo Besked om, hvor de skulde sættes og i hvilken Orden, men for Resten vidste jeg i Regelen helt god Besked om dette. Naar jeg saa kom tilbage fra den Morgentur, blev jeg stilt an ved Vuggen, skulde trække mine Søsken i Klæder og passe dem, indtil det blev Skoletid. Min Tid gik overhovedet hvert Aar om

Sommeren med dette dobbelte Arbejde: Børnepasning og Kreaturpasning (MO vol. 1, 153-154).

[During the summer, I had to get up very early in the morning, in fact far too early, but I know that many other children shared that same fate. I had to get up and take the cows out. My mother called me when she went out to milk and, if I didn't get up, I'd get beaten, I knew that, and for that reason I had to use all my strength to fight my sleepiness. But countless times I was about to curse my unfortunate fate and the lack of mercy that was shown me. Then my mother would help me bring the cows out into the farm courtyard and link them together and then I could do the rest. She would tell me where they were supposed to go and in what order, but I knew that well enough already. When I came back from the morning walk, I was stationed over by the crib; I was to get my siblings dressed and take care of them until it was school time. Every summer my life was filled with double work: childcare and cow care.]

Despite his protestations, these difficult experiences on the farm probably served him well in later life, attuning him to the challenges that many of his informants faced as they grew up on equally poor smallholdings.

As if sharing his mother with Schuster was not enough, he was soon joined by two stepbrothers (1850 and 1853) and a step-sister (1855). Although he was kept busy caring for his half brothers and half sister, and equally busy

caring for their small herd of cows, Tang Kristensen from an early age had academic aspirations. He was an early reader and an eager learner and during the three years they lived at Ø—a trying period in the young boy's life—a local teacher named Albech visited and awakened Tang Kristensen's interest in arithmetic:

En stor Fornøjelse for mig var det de enkelte Gange, Lærer Albech i Vejrum kom for at besøge os. Han var en Mand, der forstod sig paa at tale med Børn, og han vilde have med mig at gjøre. Derfor har jeg ogsaa altid holdt meget af ham, har besøgt ham mange Gange som vogsen, først i Vejrum, siden i Aarhus, hvor han flyttede til, da han blev pensioneret, og sidst i Viborg, da han kom der. Han er nu død, gammel og yderst affældig var han, men jeg ærer hans Minde, han har altid været min særlig gode Ven og var en Hædersmand i alle Maader. Det er ham, der i min Barndom der i Ø gav mig Smag for Regning. Han satte mig morsomme Regnestykker for, og han lærte mig at lægge et Stykke Papir sammen til mange forskellige Figurer (MO vol. 1, 93).

[It was a real treat for me the few times that Teacher Albech from Vejrum came to visit us. He was a man who understood how to talk to children, and he wanted to interact with me. That is why I have always like him, and I have visited him many times as a grown-up, first in Vejrum and later in Aarhus where he moved when he retired, and later in Viborg when he moved there. He is dead now, he was very old

and very decrepit at the end, but I honor his memory, he was always my very good friend and he was a gentleman in all respects. It was he who, in my childhood in Ø, gave me a taste for arithmetic. He'd give me amusing problems and he showed me how to make many different shapes out of a piece of paper.]

This is one of the very few positive memories he has of the time in Ø. The family moved to Brandstrup, south of Viborg, in 1852 when Schuster received a better position. Interestingly, this was the same teacher's post that Tang Kristensen himself held from 1884 to 1888.

Despite the family's deep poverty, Tang Kristensen was not paralyzed by it, and found several opportunities to step up his own education in Brandstrup. His description of his school days in his father's classroom is, not surprisingly, less than flattering:

Nu turde det være paa Tiden at fortælle lidt om Skolen, og hvad der er af nogen Interesse fra min Skoletid. Jeg nar dog egentlig ikke meget derom at meddele, da den ene Dag gik som den anden. Naar man tager Hensyn til, at min Fader fuldstændig var af den gamle Skole som Lærer og aldrig indlod sig paa at fortælle noget som helst for Børnene, hverken af Bibelhistorien eller Danmarkshistorien, og sikkert ikke kjendte et eneste Æventyr, saa forstaar man jo vel, at det ikke gik særdeles livligt til i Skolen i hans Tid (MO vol. 1, 154).

[Now it is about time to tell a little bit about the school and the few interesting things from

my schooldays. I don't have much to say about it since the one day was pretty much like the next. When you consider that my father was an old-fashioned teacher and never as much as once told any kind of stories to the children, neither Bible stories nor stories about Denmark's history, and probably didn't know a single fairy tale, then you can understand that it wasn't really lively in school during his time.]

Notwithstanding the academic backwardness of his stepfather's school—and essentially all of the rural schools in Denmark at the time—Tang Kristensen's time there was not entirely wasted since it was in this small rural school that he got his start collecting folklore:

Ved en almindelig Foraars-Examen, der jo afholdtes i April, gjorde jeg mit første Forsøg paa at samle Folkeminder... Jeg havde hørt Børnene fremsige nogle morsomme Gaader, som deres Forældre eller Bedsteforældre eller andre gamle Mennesker havde lært dem... saa gav jeg mig til at spørge dem ud om, hvad de kunde huske at meddele mig af saadanne Gaader. Den ene fremsagde saa én Gaade, og den anden en anden, og jeg skrev op og fik paa den Maade en helt pæn lille Samling skrevet op den Dag... Denne lille Samling gjemte jeg saa i al den Tid, jeg var hjemme, men da jeg saa kom bort fra Hjemmet, blev den liggende og forsvandt, saa jeg har aldrig set den siden (MO vol. 1, 162-163).

[During a regular spring examination that was held in April I made my first attempts at collecting folklore... I had heard the children telling some really fun riddles that their parents or grandparents or other old people had taught them... so I started to ask them what they could remember of these riddles to tell me. So the one told a riddle, and then another told a different one, and I wrote them down and in that way got a very nice little collection written up that day... I kept that little collection the entire time I was at home but when I moved away from home, it was left behind and disappeared and I haven't seen it since.]

The competitive nature of folklore performance comes through clearly in this short fieldwork account, and mirrors his later fieldwork, particularly with the two storytellers Mikkel Hansen and Jens Bæk in Lille Tåning.

Fortunately, Tang Kristensen's educational experiences in Brandstrup were not limited solely to school. The local minister, Pastor Glahn, soon learned of the young boy's intelligence and eagerness for learning, and invited him to join the Confirmation class, even though he was only nine years old. When Glahn was replaced the following year by Pastor Halvorsen, who was more interested in teaching than ministering, Tang Kristensen discovered a whole new world of educational opportunities (Rockwell 1982, 38; MO vol. 1, 159-160). Under the private tutelage of Halvorsen, Tang Kristensen was soon immersed in German, French, natural history, geography and other subjects not part of the regular school curriculum (MO vol. 1, 160-161), and aspired to lift himself out of the peasant class by becoming a physician. His

aspirations were cut short by his far less ambitious stepfather, and the economic realities of being a teacher's son. After his confirmation in 1857, he was bundled off to Lyngby to stay with his stepfather's father, and to prepare for entry into one of the few remaining teacher colleges in Denmark in the eastern Jutlandic town of Lyngby, halfway between Randers and Grenaa.

Despite the frequent disappointments that life in Brandstrup held for the young Tang Kristensen, the region left a lasting impression on him. Rockwell proposes that "this old fashioned village, where people still wore the homespun linsey-woolsey and kept up old customs dating from the Middle Ages and before, was surely Tang Kristensen's "model" in his internalised picture of the Danish peasant village—the basic assumption which underlies all his work" (Rockwell 1982, 36). Indeed, Tang Kristensen dedicates an entire chapter in the first volume of *Minder og Oplevelser* describing "Naturen og Folket i Brandstrup i min Barndom" [The nature and the people in Brandstrup in my childhood] (MO vol. 1, 108-145), offering detailed descriptions of both everyday life, customs and habits, as well as unusual topographical features. It is particularly interesting to note that, although he identified himself as a West Jutlander throughout his life, his formative experiences in Brandstrup which is essentially a central Jutlandic village, played a central role in his conceptualization of Jutlandic culture. It throughout his life, also acted as a starting point for many of his collecting trips during an extremely productive period of his life (1884-1888).

Tang Kristensen describes his life with his stepfather's father as relatively comfortable, and as a period of significant academic growth (MO vol. 1, 174-176). However, after being accepted to the teacher's college, Tang Kristensen remarks that he remembers little about his time there: "Fra min

Seminarietid, der altsaa begyndte efter Sommerferien 1858, er der nu ikke meget at fortælle, da jeg kun kan huske saare lidet derom. For mig var det nu ogsaa et meget ensformigt Liv” [From my time at the teacher’s college, which began after summer vacation 1858, there is not much to relate since I can remember very little about that time. For me it was a very monotonous life] (MO vol. 1, 178). Part of the problem was, of course, that as a sixteen year old, he was quite a bit younger than the rest of the students at the college. During his first year at the college, he was at the top of his class, but by the end of his time there, he graduated with less than perfect scores; nevertheless his scores were quite high, and he was offered an assistant teaching position in Husby, despite his relatively young age of eighteen.

Life as a Teacher

The first few years of Tang Kristensen’s life as a rural teacher were uneventful. Husby was a very small village along the northwest coast of Jutland, not too far from Ringkøbing, Rindum and Kloster, where he had lived as a child. Because of this, he was quite accustomed to the landscape and the local culture. Work at the school was challenging, as there were fifty students in the upper class and thirty in the lower class. School supplies were nearly non-existent and he had but two math exercise books for the entire school (MO vol. 1, 222). During school vacations, he often returned to his mother’s home in Brandstrup, and by his second year at Husby, he had begun looking for a more substantial and independent teaching position. By this time, he had also begun keeping very close track of his money and expenditures, an obsession that runs as a leitmotif throughout his memoirs. Unfortunately, he had not begun his interest in

folklore collecting, although he did collect a single ballad, “Tid at tie, Tid at tale” [Time to be Quiet, Time to Speak] from an elderly woman in Bjærg.

In April of 1863, Tang Kristensen received a teaching position in Helstrup, a small town southwest of Randers.⁶ The previous Christmas, he had met Frederikke Duedahl, a first cousin on his father’s side and the two had fallen in love.⁷ Even though his earnings were quite meager, he notes, “Jeg kom da efterhaanden til at finde mig helt godt i Forholdene der i Helstrup, og jeg brugte ikke meget til Husholdningen. Da jeg holdt Regnskab over mit Forbrug, viste det sig, at jeg kunde leve gennemsnitlig af 1 Mark (35 Øre) om Dagen” [After a while I came to find the situation there in Helstrup to be quite good, and I did not use much for my upkeep. When I did my accounts, it turned out that could live on average for one mark (thirty-five øre) a day] (MO vol. 1, 266), echoing again his increasing obsession with frugal living.

Even though he was very poor, Tang Kristensen enjoyed living in Helstrup, summing up his experiences there and the people he met as follows:

Idet jeg nu afslutter Skildringen af mit Liv i Helstrup, kan jeg ikke tilbageholde en lille Udtalelse, som det ligefrem glæder mig at komme frem med. Jeg har i mit lange Liv ikke nogen Sinde, i hvor jeg har været, truffet saa velvilligt et Folkefærd som Helstrupboerne i det hele taget, og jeg har da heller aldrig levet saa lykkeligt et Liv, kan jeg godt sige, som i de tre Aar, jeg tilbragte der (MO vol. 1, 300).

[Now that I am ending my description of my life in Helstrup, I can’t help but include one

little observation that it makes me very happy to include. In my long life, I have never met, regardless of where I have been, better people than the Helstrup people, and I have never lived so happy a life than those three years I lived there.]

During his time in Helstrup, Tang Kristensen made many good friends, among them Christian Borch, who had been brought to the parish as a *kapellan*, an assistant minister. Borch became not only a close friend but also a mentor, and it was through him that Tang Kristensen began focusing on music. In his memoirs, he writes,

[Borch] havde en Bog, som han af og til spillede og sang lidt af for os... Bogen var: A. P. Berggreens "Danske Folkemelodier". Jeg laante den af ham en Tid og fik nu travlt med at skrive disse Melodier af... Efterhaanden fik jeg alle disse Melodier afskrevet og har dem da endnu... Jeg laante ogsaa andre Bøger af Borch, og han var mig i det hele til megen Nytte i min Udvikling. Jeg havde god Tid i Helstrup til at sysle med min videre Uddannelse, da Selskabslivet der nede ikke optog mig, og jeg havde sat mig for, at jeg vilde lære at synge ordentlig og at spille taalelig paa min Fiolin... Alt saadant gav mig ikke alene Øvelse i at lære Versfødder og Metrum at kjende, men og at faa Øre for, hvilke Melodier der var gode at synge, og hvilke der var kunstlede og svære. Da jeg nu havde faaet al den Masse af danske Folkemelodier at arbejde med og tilegne mig,

saa fik jeg ogsaa Øret opladt for det hjemlige i vore egne Melodier, og særlig dette var mig til uberegnelig Nytte i mit Fremtidsarbejde. Det skulde ikke vare længe, inden jeg skulde faa Nytte deraf, meget større Nytte, end jeg den Gang drømte om. Men jeg maa tilbage til mine Øvelser med Fiolin og Koraler, der havde til Hensigt at gjøre mig dygtig nok til at tage Examen i de to Fag, jeg endnu manglede Karakter i... Eftersom jeg tydelig skjønnede, at det hastede for mig med at faa de Karakterer, ti uden dem kunde jeg intet ordentligt Embede søge eller tænke paa at faa, saa vilde jeg nu prøve det, og søgte da om Tilladelse til at gaa op i disse Fag ved Dimissions-Examen i Lyngby i Sommeren 1864 (MO vol. 1, 276-277).

[Borch had a book that he played out of every now and then and he sang for us... The book was A. P. Berggreen's "Danish Folk Melodies." I borrowed it from him for a while and got busy copying these melodies out... After a while I managed to transcribe all of the melodies and I still have them... I borrowed other books from Borch as well and he was all in all very helpful in my development. I had a good deal of time to work on my education in Helstrup since I wasn't involved in the social life there, and I had decided that I would learn how to sing well and to play tolerably well on my violin... All of this gave me a great deal of practice in learning versification and meter, as well as an ear for which melodies were good

for singing, and which ones were difficult. Since I'd also acquired this large group of Danish folk melodies to work with and to make my own, I developed an ear for the local in our own melodies and this turned out to be of invaluable assistance in my future work. It wouldn't be long before I had use for that knowledge, indeed greater use than I'd ever dreamed of. But back to my practice with the violin and singing, the goal of which was to make me good enough to take exams in those two subjects, since I still didn't have a grade in either one... It had become apparent that I quickly needed to get those grades since without them I couldn't get a reasonable job, so I decided to take the exams for these two subjects with the graduation exam in Lyngby during the summer of 1864.]

He passed the music exam, albeit barely, that summer, and thus became eligible for teaching positions that also included church singing. He was eager to increase his income since Frederikke was in need of money and because the two hoped to marry. Yet, because of the war (1864) and his own lack of experience, he was unable to secure a new position. Finally, in 1865, he managed to secure a position in Gjellerup, a small village half way between Ringkøbing and Silkeborg. This position offered enough compensation that he could finally marry Frederikke.

Tang Kristensen stayed in Gjellerup for nearly ten years (1866-1876). His first order of business was to get married, and his friend from Helstrup, Pastor Borch, offered to perform the ceremony. He married Frederikke in May of 1866, and they began their life together in Gjellerup.⁸

Unfortunately, the idyllic life that he and his wife had imagined for themselves came quickly crashing to an end. Frederikke was quite sick during their first summer together and, as her pregnancy progressed through the summer, she became even weaker.⁹ When Tang Kristensen was called to military service in October, her condition worsened and, on November second, she died while giving birth to a boy who also died soon after birth.¹⁰ Several places in his memoirs, he mentions how influential this loss was on his later life:

Nu gaar jeg da til at fortælle om noget, der kom til at faa den mest gennemgribende Betydning for mit Fremtidsliv, og som jeg aldrig senere har kunnet frigjøre mig for Indtrykket af, hvad jeg da forøvrigt heller ikke har villet. Men dette danner da Indledningen til den første virkelig store og dybe Sorg, jeg har oplevet, og som end ydermere gav min Karakter sit tungsindige Præg (MO vol. 1, 247).

Dette skete d. 2den November, og dette blev en stor Mærkedag i mit Liv, en Dag, hvis Minde jeg aldrig forvinder, en Dag saa bitter, at mit Hjærte endnu bløder ved at tænke derpaa, og endnu har jeg mange søvnløse Timer ved at tænke paa hin skjæbnsvangre 2den November (MO vol. 2, 23).

[Now I am going to recount something that had the most sweeping importance for my future. I could never free myself from the impression it left on me nor did I ever want to. But this serves as an introduction to the first truly great and deep sorrow I have

experienced and also gave my personality its melancholy air... It happened the second of November and that will always be an important day in my life, a day whose memory I will never forget, a day so bitter that my heart still bleeds to think about it, and I still have many sleepless hours thinking about that fateful November second.]

There can be little doubt that he began his folklore collecting in part to get his mind off of this tragic loss and the difficulties he had with his small farming endeavor during the spring of 1867.¹¹

Tang Kristensen began collecting folklore during a visit to his mother's house over the Christmas holidays in 1867. Unlike many other collectors of the time, he had not been inspired directly by Grundtvig's appeals for people to collect from 1843 or 1854, as these had come far too early to catch his attention, nor did the first volumes of *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, which had already begun to appear, motivate him. Indeed, in one of his first letters to Grundtvig, he mentions that he had never seen Grundtvig's *Gamle danske Minder 1-3*, nor had access to *DgF*, which, he informed Grundtvig, was essentially unknown in rural Jutland because of its high cost (Rockwell 1982, 72). Instead, his motivations were closely linked to his interest in folk music and a need for an undertaking that he could control. In his personal life, his wife and son had died, he was having great difficulty finding hired serving girls to work for him, and the work at the school was overwhelming. Recording ballads provided an anchor amidst this emotional and economic tumult.

It is worth quoting at length his first experiences with collecting as he recounts them in *Minder og Oplevelser*:

Min Moder sagde til mig kort efter mit Komme, at hun syntes, jeg skulde gaa over til Søgaard og høre paa gamle Marens Viser. Nu paa sine ældgamle Dage havde hun faaet saadan Lyst til at synge de Viser, hun havde lært i sine unge Dage. Hun gik jo stærkt i Barndom nu, men hun kunde alligevel huske Viserne. Særlig kunde min Moder huske Visen om en Jøde, der gik til Hellesland, den havde gamle Maren nylig sunget for hende. Jeg gik da derover og tog Papir med for at skrive op, hvad jeg hørte. Maren laa i Sengen, men hun var meget snaksom og villig, og jeg skrev nu op alt, hvad hun kunde mindes. Hukommelsen svigtede jo noget, men jeg var alligevel glad ved, hvad jeg fik. Som Følge af, at jeg allerede havde et ikke ringe Kjendskab til vore Folkeviser, kunde jeg meget godt skjønne, hvad der var godt, og hvad der var mindre godt, men jeg satte mig jo for at skrive ogsaa de Viser, der havde lidt mindre Betydning, da de ogsaa kunde hjælpe til at give et Billede af, hvad saadant et gammelt Menneske sad inde med. Den første Vise, jeg optegnede, blev altsaa den om Jøden, der jo ikke hører til de gamle. Men da den blev No. 1, vilde jeg alligevel have den med i mit første trykte Vischæfte. Da jeg nogle Dage efter kom til Lyngby og fortalte om, hvad jeg havde skrevet op, sagde den gamle Hans Schuster, at den Vise kjendte han ogsaa, men hans Melodi var en anden. Jeg skrev saa den op med det samme, for det interesserede mig fra første Begyndelse i høj Grad at faa Melodierne

tegnet op ogsaa. Gamle Maren havde nu ikke længere nogen rigtig Tone i Livet, hun fremsagde Texten i en halvt syngende Tone, men hun var ellers let at komme afsted med og vilde meget gjerne tilsige mig alt, hvad hun vidste. Da jeg kom til Brandstrup fra den Udflugt, sang min Moder mig det Par Vers, hun kunde, af Per Svinedrengs Vise og saa Remsen om Hønen paa Kreja, samt: En Bondemand var haardt belagt. Nu havde jeg faaet Blod paa Tand, som man siger. Jeg vidste nok, at den gamle Sidsel Sællænder i Gjellerup kunde synge gamle Viser, men jeg havde aldrig været hos hende om det, og jeg havde da ogsaa hidtil haft saa meget andet at tænke paa og saa meget Bryderi i mange Maader, saa megen Sorg i Sindet og saa mange tunge Tanker, at jeg umulig hidtil havde kunnet faa Lejlighed til at tage fat paa dette. Men nu vilde jeg dog se i det nye Aar at faa gjort noget ved den Sag, der virkelig havde min varmeste Interesse. Jeg følte saa klart, at her var noget, der i høj Grad laa for mig, og jeg gik jo heller ikke uforberedt til den Gjerning (MO vol. 2, 41-42).

[My mother said to me shortly after I arrived that she thought I should go over to Søgaard and listen to old Maren's ballads. Now in her very advanced old age she really wanted to sing all of the ballads she had learned in her youth. She had reverted greatly to childhood but she could still remember the ballads. In particular, my mother remembered the ballad

of a Jew who went to Hellesland, old Maren had sung that one for her. I went over there and took some paper to write down what I heard. Maren lay in bed but she was talkative and willing, and I wrote down everything she could remember. Her memory failed her a bit, but I was nevertheless happy with what I got. As a result of my having a not too bad acquaintance with our folk ballads, I could quite readily discern what was good and what wasn't so good, but I also decided to write down those ballads that were less important as well, since that could help produce a picture of what an old person like her possessed. The first ballad I recorded turned out to be the one about the Jew, but it isn't one of the old ones. But since it was the first one, I wanted to include it in my first printed collection of ballads. When I came to Lyngby several days later and reported what I had written down, old Hans Schuster said that he knew that ballad too, but his melody was a different one. I wrote that one down immediately since it interested me from the very start to get the melodies recorded as well. Old Maren didn't really have a tune left in her body, she recited the text in a half-singing tone, but she was really easy to get started and was eager to tell me everything she knew. When I returned to Brandstrup from that little trip, my mother sang to me a couple of verses that she knew of Per Svinedreng's ballad and the rhyme about the Hen on Kreja, as well as: En Bondemand var haard belagt (A Farmer

was hard pressed). Now I'd gotten a taste of blood as one says. I knew that the old Sidsel Sællander in Gjellerup could sing some ballads, but I'd never visited her to ask about that. Up until then I'd had so many other things to think about and so many troubles in so many ways, so much sorrow and so many heavy thoughts that there was no way that I could have started up with that. But now I decided to try to do something about it in the New Year since I was very interested in it. I felt so clearly that here was something that really was for me and I didn't undertake this endeavor unprepared either.]

Although written retrospectively, this short sketch of his first collecting experiences reveals both the enthusiasm that gripped him in this enterprise, and his compulsive desire to collect more.

Once he started collecting, there was no turning back. When he returned home from Brandstrup, he began collecting ballads from people recommended to him throughout the district. This reliance on local knowledge became a hallmark of his collecting. His first forays into the field also brought him face to face with the crushing poverty that was still common throughout much of Jutland. Despite his own humble origins, he was always surprised at the extraordinary conditions that his informants endured in many of the shacks that he visited. Although he was at times downright queasy at some of the sights (and smells) he encountered, he never hesitated when there was something worth collecting (Tangherlini 2002). One of his best and earliest ballad singers was also one of the very poorest:

Nu bestemte jeg mig til at opsøge Sidsel Sællænder, som flere anbefalede mig. Hun skulde have en aldeles udmærket Hukommelse og skulde kunne mange gamle Viser. Det lille Hus, hun boede i, laa for sig selv noget fra Vejen... Det var et elendigt, helt faldefærdigt Hus, og jeg havde saa godt som aldrig før set saadan en Rønne. Der var en Smule Have rundt omkring, men den kunde ikke rumme ret mange Køkkenurter. Man kom først ind i et lille bitte Tørvehus, der tillige var Forstue, og saa til venstre ind i en lille bitte Stue med to smaa Døre paa den modsatte Side. Den ene førte ud til et lille bitte Køkken, og den anden ind til et lille bitte Sovekammer, hvor der stod en Seng og noget, der skulde forestille en Kakkellovn.... Sidsel var en ret høj Skikkelse, noget knoklet og med et karakteristisk Ansigt. Hun var ikke vanskelig at komme i Tale, og da jeg først havde vundet hendes Fortrolighed, blev vi de bedste Venner af Verden. Hun elskede de gamle Viser, var et poetisk Gemyt og kunde, naar hun sang, gaa helt op i det. Det var altsaa ligefrem en Nydelse for mig at sidde og høre hende synge. Stemmen var endnu helt kraftig, og hun kunde meget godt fastholde Tonen. Uøvet, som jeg endnu var i at sætte Toner op, var jeg hende meget taknemmelig for hendes store Udholdenhed. Hun blev aldrig træt af at synge eller viste nogen Utaalmodighed, saa jeg jo maatte være særdeles glad for den Skole, jeg kom til at gaa i der i det lille faldefærdige Hus... Jeg sad der jo mange Aftener i Februar og

Marts, og hendes gamle Minder levede op i hende igjen (MO vol. 2, 49-51).

[Now I decided to visit Sidsel Sællander whom many had recommended to me. She was supposed to have a remarkable memory and was supposed to know many old ballads. The little house she lived in lay all alone a bit off the road... It was a terrible broken-down house, and I'd never seen such a hovel before. There was a small garden around it but there wasn't much space for many kitchen herbs. One first entered a small sod hut that was a bit of a foyer and to the left one went into a tiny little room with two small doors on the opposite wall. The one went out to a tiny little kitchen and the other into a tiny little bedroom where there was a bed and something that was supposed to be a wood burning stove... Sidsel was very tall, a bit bony with a characteristic face. She wasn't hard to get to talking and when I'd gained her trust we became the best of friends in the world. She loved the old ballads, had a poetic temperament, and would get completely into it when she sang. It was a sheer delight for me to sit there and listen to her sing. Her voice was still strong and she could keep a tune. Unpracticed as I was at writing down the notes I am very grateful for her incredible perseverance. She never got tired of singing or showed the least impatience so I am quite happy about the little school that I attended there in that little broken-down house... I sat

there many evenings in February and March
and her old memories came back to life in
her.]

By April of 1868, Tang Kristensen had managed to collect a reasonable number of ballads, and he sent fair copy of these to his old friend Pastor Borch. Borch encouraged Tang Kristensen to send them to Grundtvig in Copenhagen, as Borch was far more attuned than Tang Kristensen to the academic world (MO vol. 2, 52).

Tang Kristensen, however, had decided to publish the ballads himself, and through an intermediary was able to find a printer in Copenhagen who would take on the work (MO vol. 2, 52).¹² The first volume appeared in June of 1868, and he sold it on a commission basis through a bookseller in Herning. After publishing his second short volume of ballads, he realized that his original plan to publish five or six small volumes would be far too costly, since essentially no one bought copies of these two small works.¹³ At the same time, his personal finances had suffered greatly because of the drought of 1867-1868 that had had a disastrous impact on Scandinavian farming. In his memoirs, he explains that he had read the market for books of folklore wrong, believing that the folk high schools along with Grundtvig's earlier appeals to the Danish populace would have awakened sufficient interest in folklore to sustain a small production of folkloric texts. He finally decided to take Borch's advice and, in February 1869, sent a copy of his first small volume of ballads to Grundtvig (MO vol. 2, 52-53).¹⁴ This decision to contact Grundtvig had an enormous impact on Tang Kristensen's work for the next fourteen years.

The First Collecting Period: Patronage and Svend Grundtvig

In his autobiographical writings, Tang Kristensen recognizes the importance that Svend Grundtvig had for his development as a folklore collector. Without Grundtvig's connections in Copenhagen and his encouragement, it is unlikely that Tang Kristensen would have been able to find the funds to buy out his teaching during the winter and early spring when it was easiest to collect. Similarly, without Grundtvig's intervention with private funds and government ministries, it is equally unlikely that Tang Kristensen's early publications would ever have seen the light of day. Nevertheless, their fourteen year relationship was at times a rocky one and, by the time of Grundtvig's sudden and unexpected death in 1883, the relationship between the two was strained, fractured by conflicting ideas of intellectual property rights.

The first few years of Grundtvig's patronage were positive, and it was clear that both parties got a great deal out of the interaction: Grundtvig got a nearly limitless supply of ballad variants to fill out the ever expanding pages of *DgF*, while Tang Kristensen got financial support and access to the literary and academic establishment. The patronage started almost immediately after Tang Kristensen sent his first collection of ballads. After a few weeks, during which he regretted his decision, he received an enthusiastic and generous letter from Grundtvig. Over the course of the next two years, Grundtvig arranged for a more substantive edition of Tang Kristensen's collected ballads to be edited and published with subvention from *Samfundet til det danske Litteraturs Fremme* (Society for the Advancement of Danish Literature). This book, *Jydske Folkeviser og Toner* (Jutlandic Folk Ballads and Melodies, 1871), became the first volume of his thirteen volume *Jydske Folkeminder, især fra Hammerum Herred* (Jutlandic Folklore, Particularly from Hammerum County).

The relationship with Grundtvig became contentious fairly early on, as Grundtvig fashioned himself the main editor, collector and expert in regards to Danish folklore, and made it clear to Tang Kristensen that he considered him one of many collectors who were helping him in assembling a national treasure.¹⁵ In a long afterword to JFm I, Grundtvig nearly claims the work as his own, mentioning his own work with ballads since 1844, and the one hundred and seventy people who had contributed collections to that work (JFm I, 357). At the same time as he expresses amazement at the collecting feats of Tang Kristensen, he also aligns the collection with the theoretical premises of *DgF* and concludes with a common national Romantic sentiment, namely a call for support for Tang Kristensen's work so that the last remnants of the ancient Danish culture can be saved from oblivion (JFm I, 378-379).

If his relationship with Grundtvig was one that vacillated between highs and lows, Tang Kristensen's relationship with A. P. Berggreen was marked by outright hostility. Grundtvig and many others considered Berggreen to be the leading scholar of Danish folk music, and Grundtvig insisted that he vet Tang Kristensen's melodies before they were published. Berggreen was dismissive of Tang Kristensen's recordings, and opined that they must have been written incorrectly, as his recordings "stred imod ethvert musikalsk System" [are contrary to every single musical system] (MO vol. 2, 87). Since Tang Kristensen was confident that his recordings were correct, and since Grundtvig did not forbid him from including the melodies, *Jydske Folkeviser og Toner* (1871) includes ninety-four melodies and eight variant melodies or secondary melodies. In his introduction, Tang Kristensen ironically thanks Berggreen for his assistance, and includes Berggreen's evaluation: "Han har udtalt, at der iblandt dem alle kun var fire gode Folkemelodier, hvorimod den største

Flerhed af de andre ere maadelige, og i deres Helhed kunne de betegnes som ubetydelige” [He has said that among all of them there were only four good folk melodies, whereas the vast majority of the others were mediocre and, in their entirety, could be labeled insignificant] (JFm I, x). At the very end, the volume also includes a “statement” by Berggreen, which he had withheld until the rest of the book had been printed; in that fashion, Berggreen guaranteed himself the last word, at least for the time being (Rockwell 1982, 104):

Melodierne i det Hele taget forekom mig altfor ubetydelige, og dernæst ogsaa tvivlede jeg paa Rigtigheden af deres Optegnelse. Jeg meente tillige, at Samleren var bedst tjent med at give et saa reent Billede af sin smukke Virksomhed som muligt, uden at dette forstyrredes ved Tilføielsen af de mange karakterløse Melodier, hvis Trykningen desuden vilde fordyre Arbeidets Udgivelse betydeligt... Iblandt Melodierne var der ganske rigtigt, som Hr. Kr. Bemærker, kun fire, som jeg fandt tiltalende, og disse vil man finde optagne i sidste Bind af mine Folkesange (JFm I, 380).

[The melodies seemed to me to be far too unimportant and I also doubted whether they had been recorded correctly. I also felt that the collector was best served by giving as clear a picture of his beautiful work as possible without disturbing it through the addition of the many characterless melodies, the inclusion of which would increase significantly the cost of printing... As Mr. Kristensen notes there

were only four of the melodies that I found worthwhile, and one can find these recorded in the last volume of my *Folksongs*.]

It is interesting to note that, like Grundtvig, Berggreen refers to Tang Kristensen as “the collector,” and indicates that his work already included the four melodies he found acceptable—a reflection of the loose sense of intellectual property rights that the Copenhagen academic establishment had towards the work of their provincial collaborators. The differences in judgment concerning the melodies might be attributable to the tension between Berggreen’s aesthetic desire to “normalize” the melodies according to musical convention, and Tang Kristensen’s desire to present his recordings in as ethnographically accurate a manner as possible. Although Tang Kristensen was generally dismissive of Berggreen’s criticism, it must have had some effect, since he included melodies only in JFm I, II and IV, as well as *100 gamle danske Skjæmteviser* (One Hundred Old Danish Jocular Ballads) (Woel 1929, 17). Fortunately, he continued collecting melodies, and scholars soon recognized the value of these “unnormalized” recordings (Woel 1929, 54).

Despite the initial tension between Tang Kristensen and Grundtvig, the two soon realized that their relationship could be mutually beneficial: Tang Kristensen could use Grundtvig’s contacts in Copenhagen to secure funding to buy out his teaching, while Grundtvig was guaranteed a steady stream of variants for *DgF*. The first subvention Tang Kristensen received for collecting came in 1871. Grundtvig had applied on behalf of Tang Kristensen to the *Kongelige nordiske Oldskriftselskab* (Royal Society of Nordic Antiquaries) for 100 rixdollars, so that he could hire a substitute and “i et Par Maaneder ganske ofre Dem til Samlingen af gamle Folkeminder” [for a few months, dedicate yourself to the

collection of the old folklore] (MO vol. 2, 91). The respected archaeologist Jens J. A. Worsaae opposed the proposal, but the treasurer of the society, F. S. Bang, was so in favor of it that he offered to pay for it himself out of his own pocket (MO vol. 2, 91). Tang Kristensen was so overjoyed by this news that he traveled to Copenhagen to meet Grundtvig in person for the first time. It was also during this visit that he confronted Berggreen, but with little success. He also met Worsaae who accompanied him on a site-seeing trip to Rosenborg castle (MO vol. 2, 83). When he returned home, he began collecting legends, mentioning in a letter to Grundtvig that “[i] denne Sommer (1871) begyndte jeg saa paa en tredje Samling Sagn, som passende kunde kaldes "Bangs Haandskrift", da jeg har udset den til at danne Begyndelsen til, hvad der paa min Vinterrejse kan komme med” [That summer (1871) I began a third collection of legends, which could reasonably be called “Bang’s manuscript,” as I have decided to use it as a start for my winter trip] (MO II 92). The small stipend put considerable wind in his sails, as he also mentions that, during this same summer, he began making fair copies of his earlier collections and developing an index:

Jeg havde ogsaa faaet begyndt paa en Renskrift af alt, hvad jeg hidtil havde samlet, altsammen imellem hinanden, men holdt snart op dermed, da dette viste sig at være upraktisk. Siden har jeg holdt hver Ting for sig, og noget senere kom jeg i Tanker om, at det var det bedste at skrive hvert enkelt Sagn (eller Vise, Æventyr o. s. v.) op paa hver sit Stykke Papir. Paa denne Maade kunde der findes en bedre og nemmere Ordning og lettere ske Indskud af Varianter, samt bedre samles, hvad der

hørte sammen. Dette havde jeg ikke tilstrækkeligt Øje for i Førstningen, men da tænkte jeg jo heller ikke, at jeg skulde faa saa store Masser samlet (MO vol. 2, 92).

[I also began making a fair copy of everything I had collected to date, everything put together, but stopped fairly quickly as it turned out to be impractical. Since then I've kept things separated, and a bit later I realized that it was best to write each individual legend (or ballad, fairy tale, etc.) on a separate piece of paper. In that manner, one could develop a better and easier classification, and make it easier to insert variants, and more easily gather the things that belonged together. I didn't appreciate that enough in the beginning but then again I didn't think I was going to collect such a huge amount.]

His decision to spend time ordering his materials was a very fortunate development. As he himself notes, the collection grew during the next three decades to such an extraordinary size that without these rudimentary finding aids, it would be nearly impossible to navigate.

The years from 1867 through 1876 constitute the first period of Tang Kristensen's collecting.¹⁶ Although he collected a great deal of material up through 1871, by his own admission the majority of this collecting was done close to his home, primarily in Hammerum Herred.¹⁷ The area was marked by considerable poverty given the low quality of the soil (large parts of the area were reclaimed heath). In the decades prior to the promulgation of the constitution in 1849, and the general move away from the manorial system, people

had come together in knitting rooms during the long winter months. While they sat knitting (knit goods were an important source for barter, secondary income and clothes), people would tell stories and sing songs. Because the knitting rooms had long since disappeared, Tang Kristensen generally sought out older people who could remember what had happened at these events; this fieldwork tactic indirectly led to an intensification of the Romantic nationalist philosophy of “the older the better.” In regards to these knitting rooms, Tang Kristensen writes,

Nu var der jo Vinterafternerne, der meget bedre egnede sig til at opfriske det gamle, end Sommerens travle Dage. Det var jo ogsaa kun om Vinteren, Bindestuerne var blevne holdt. De var allerede den Gang gaaede af Brug, men mange kunde fortælle om, hvordan det var gaaet til i dem, og de havde ogsaa selv været med. Jeg kunde meget let faa en Beskrivelse af dem, og hvad der var blevet fortalt i dem og sunget i dem, var endnu hos mange i ret frisk Minde... Man samlede ikke i Bindestuerne inden efter November, naar Kreaturerne var bundne ind, og det vigtigste Markarbejde var blevet udført, samt efter at Tjenestetyendet rundt omkring var flyttet til dets nye Tjenester. I Bindestuerne deltog forøvrigt baade gamle og unge (MO vol. 2, 64).

[Now the winter evenings began which were much better suited to reviving the old things as opposed to the busy days of summer. It was only during the winter that the knitting

rooms were held. By the time [I was collecting], they had already gone out of fashion, but many people could tell stories about what happened in them, and they had also participated themselves. I could very easily get descriptions of them, and find out what stories were told and what was sung, these memories were still quite fresh... One wouldn't gather in knitting rooms until after November when the animals were hitched up inside and the most important work in the fields had been completed, and the hired hands had moved on to their new jobs as well. Both young and old participated in the knitting rooms.]

Indeed, he considered the knitting rooms an important locus for creating community, and mentions an attempt at trying to capture a weeklong performance of one such knitting room:

Jeg forsøgte en Gang paa at give et lille Billede af, hvad der saadan kunde fortælles og synges i en Bindestue i Gjellerup By en hel Uge igjennem, men dette Forsøg blev aldrig trykt og ligger hen endnu i samme Tilstand. Det var naturligvis ikke alene Viser og Æventyr og Sagn, der dannede Aftenens Underholdning, men der fortæltes ogsaa mange virkelige Begivenheder fra det daglige Liv, og man var den Gang en hel Del nøjsom med Hensyn til, hvad der gaves til Bedste, men var dog tillige anlagt for at more sig over virkelig vittige Indfald og over at give hinanden Gaader at gjætte og at fortælle smaa Skjæmtesagn, særlig

om Præster og Degne. Men der mentes dog aldrig noget ondt med sligt, om end det kunde være grovkornet og snærtende nok. Man morede sig blot, og da alting gik saa naturligt til, saa toges der ikke Anstød af ligefrem Tale, om den end i mere forfinede Øren nu om Dage vil lyde som grov Snak. Børn kunde meget godt sidde og høre paa dette, uden at der udsaaedes nogen Besmittelse i deres Sind, eller der blev taget Forargelse deraf (MO vol. 2, 65).

[I tried once to give a little picture of what would be told and sung at a knitting room in Gjellerup during an entire week, but that attempt was never printed and is still sitting here in the same state. Naturally, it wasn't only ballads and fairy tales and legends that comprised an evening's entertainment, a lot of stories about real events from daily life, and people were at the time quite modest concerning what was worth telling, but they were also ready to amuse themselves with stories about witty repartees and tell each other riddles to guess and tell small comical legends particularly about ministers and parish clerks. But no one meant anything bad with these things, even though they could be quite coarse and biting. One simply had a good time and since everything proceeded so naturally no one was offended by talk alone even though in today's finer ears it would sound like coarse talk. Children could certainly sit and listen to that without their

minds being infected or anyone taking offence.]

In this brief description, one glimpses Tang Kristensen's lifelong frustration with fundamentalist Christians in his reference to finer ears—the so-called Inner Mission and other overly pietistic individuals—who often disrupted his collecting endeavors, either directly or indirectly through their condemnation of folk belief as superstition and their disdain for the coarse language of the peasants.

Once Tang Kristensen began receiving stipends for his collecting trips, he was able to increase dramatically his geographic range. This shift away from collecting primarily in his immediate neighborhood took some time to realize. Indeed, in regards to his first funded fieldwork period—a “trip” that actually spanned several forays into the field, from October 1871 through March 1872—he writes:

Altsaa begyndte jeg paa mine Ture d. 23de Oktober og blev ved at fortsætte dem med smaa Afbrydelser til lidt hen i Marts, endskjøndt Poulsen allerede rejste 1ste Februar. Men den sidste Maanedes Tid brugte jeg altsaa kun Aftenerne og kom kun ud i den nærmeste Omegn. Paa hele Rejsen vovede jeg mig i det hele taget ikke ret langt omkring. Grunden var nærmest den, at jeg ikke kunde løsrive mig fra Hjemmet ret længe af let forklarlige Grunde, Grete og jeg tænkte jo paa snart at gifte os, og jeg vilde jo gjerne jævnlig hjem for at se til hende (MO vol. 2, 106).

[I started my trips on the twenty-third of October and continued with them with small

interruptions a little way into March, even though Poulsen [the substitute teacher] had already left on the first day of February. But during the last month, I only used the evenings and only got to places in the area closest by. On the whole trip I didn't go too far afield. The reason was pretty much that I couldn't tear myself away from home for too long since Grete and I were thinking of getting married and I wanted to get home regularly to see her.]

At the end of the first and most intense part of this trip, he printed a short announcement in the Herning newspaper, thanking his many informants, but also castigating the director of Rind poorhouse for being less than helpful.¹⁸ As his field collection trips became longer—and because the poorhouse director sued him for liable—Tang Kristensen quickly abandoned this practice of publishing public notices to thank informants. Nevertheless, the motivating factor of seeing one's name in print continued to be one of Tang Kristensen's fieldwork strategies, and lies at the basis of the folklore journal, *Skattegraveren*. If people knew that he would print their names, they would be more likely to tell stories to him.

With Grundtvig's patronage, Tang Kristensen also began studying Old Norse and Danish in Copenhagen during his summer holidays (MO vol. 2, 185). These summer courses allowed him to become more a part of the university environment, and develop contacts with the academic elite, funding agencies, and ministries. The courses probably also attenuated the resentment he had built up over his aborted aspirations for becoming a physician; at least now he was studying at a fairly advanced level. Perhaps more importantly,

the courses gave him a philological background that helped him in his collection, particularly his developing interest in Jutlandic dialects. This interest coupled to his increasing fieldwork competence allowed Henning Feilberg to use Tang Kristensen's collections as the basis for his *Bidrag til en Ordbog over jyske Almuesmål* (Dictionary of the Jutlandic Peasant Dialect, Feilberg 1886-1914). Eventually, Tang Kristensen's relationship with Feilberg, which had started on a positive note, soured over questions of intellectual property rights and the philosophical underpinnings of the folkloric enterprise.

Tang Kristensen's first externally funded collecting trip in 1871 was followed by several other similarly financed trips but not immediately. Despite the success of his collecting trips in 1871 and 1872, he was unable to find funding for a winter collecting trip in 1872-1873; unwilling to shoulder the financial burden of hiring his own substitute, he limited his collecting that year to the local area, collecting mostly in the evening at local farms and houses (MO vol. 2, 142-143). Although he had managed to collect some material, he felt the "udbytte" [yield] could have been substantially greater. Consequently, he sent a note to Grundtvig in early 1873 asking about a government grant of two hundred rixdollars (MO vol. 2, 147). Grundtvig immediately replied, saying that if he did not receive the grant, he would personally fund a trip for one hundred rixdollars (MO vol. 2, 147). When Tang Kristensen received a one hundred rixdollar grant, Grundtvig proposed that he accept the additional one hundred as a private contribution. This led to several collecting trips, during the fall and winter months of 1873 and into March 1874. Nearly simultaneously, Tang Kristensen received a subvention from the *Jyske histories-topografiske Selskab* (The Society for Jutlandic History and Chorography) for publication of JFm 2, *Gamle Jyske Folkeviser* (Old Jutlandic Folk Ballads, 1876) (MO vol. 2, 148). In regards to accepting

the money from Grundtvig, Tang Kristensen justified it later on:

Gr. ogsaa ret vel kunde staa sig ved at give mig disse Penge som et Slags Forskud. Han havde jo i Tidens Løb ikke saa ringe et Udbytte endog i pekuniær Henseende af min Samlervirksomhed. Baade fik han et godt Honorar for hvert Ark af Danmarks gamle Folkeviser, hvor mine Viseopskrifter kom til at fylde ikke saa lidt, og dernæst blev der efter hans Død betalt en ikke ringe Sum for hans efterladte Samlinger, hvoraf mit indsamlede Stof jo udgjorde en Del, især paa Æventyrenes Omraade (MO vol. 2, 148-149).

[Grundtvig could certainly afford to give me this money as a kind of an advance. Over time he had received a not insubstantial return—pecuniary as well—on my collecting efforts. He received a nice royalty for each page of *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* where my ballad recordings took up quite a bit of space and, after his death, his estate received a substantial sum for his collected papers, a significant part of which was comprised of my collected material, particularly in the area of fairy tales.]

Using his own accounting, he considered his collecting trips prior to the New Year as funded by the ministry, and after the New Year as funded by Grundtvig (MO vol. 2, 150).

The trips were extremely difficult, in part because of the weather, and in part because of the poor condition of the roads. Describing the trips in the fall of 1873, he mentions:

Det var rigtig nok nogle lange Fodture, da der fra Ørre var mindst 2 1/2 Mil til mit Hjem. Efteraaret var saa regnfuldt, og Vejene var saa opblødte, at mine Støvler altid var vaade, og jeg led meget ved at sidde i de simple Huse og fryse Fødderne. Det satte sig ligefrem for Brystet af mig. En Aftenstund æltede jeg saadan i Sølen næsten til Knæene, at jeg fik min ene Fod forsprængt og næsten ikke kunde gaa i flere Dage (MO vol. 2, 153).

[Those were certainly some long walking trips, since from Ørre to my house was at least fifteen miles. The autumn was so rainy and the roads so soft that my boots were always wet and I suffered a great deal sitting in those simple houses with freezing feet. It was really hard on me. One evening I sank in the mud nearly to my knees and I sprained my foot so that I couldn't walk for many days.]

Summarizing this brutally ambitious series of trips, he writes:

Nej, denne sidste Rejse var virkelig stræng med de uhyre lange Fodture, og som jeg nu her sidder og skriver dette, kan jeg virkelig ikke begribe, hvordan jeg holdt det ud. Det, jeg havde opskrevet den Vinter, udgjorde over 224 meget tæt beskrevne Ark, og der var samlet i 27 Sogne og hos 111 Personer 196 Viser, 429 Æventyr og 31 Sagn foruden en Del Remser m. m. (MO vol. 2, 184)

[No, that last trip was really hard with those unbelievably long walking trips and, as I sit here writing this, I really cannot understand how I managed to persevere. What I collected that winter consisted of more than two hundred twenty-four very tightly written pages, collected in twenty-seven parishes from one hundred eleven people: one hundred ninety-six ballads, four hundred twenty-nine fairy tales and thirty-one legends along with a number of rhymes and the like.]

This type of extreme collecting became a hallmark of Tang Kristensen's enterprise. Not only did he walk long distances along horrible roads in equally miserable weather, but he sought out the poorest of the poor in their dreadful houses and shacks, and spent countless hours in failing light listening to them tell and sing (Christiansen 2009). He even describes falling asleep while collecting: "En enkelt Gang skrev jeg endog et Par Sætninger helt i Søvn, men de blev jo da ogsaa helt forvirrede. Pennen løb hen ad Papiret, og jeg sov, og meningsløst blev det" [A single time I actually wrote several sentences while I was completely asleep but they turned out utterly confused. The pen ran across the page, and it wound up being meaningless] (MO vol. 2, 160). Other times he describes the extraordinary filth he encountered in informants' homes, noting in a letter to Grundtvig, "Forøvrigt er det et grændseløst Svineri, Smaafolkene lever i her oppe paa Heden" [People up here on the heath live in filth without end] (MO vol. 2, 162). The more one reads of Tang Kristensen's descriptions of his fieldtrips, the clearer it becomes that he revels in this hardship, later on mocking those who had neither the stamina nor the ethnographic prowess to keep up, Axel Olrik among them.

Once again in 1874, he received a stipend for fieldwork collection from the ministry, this time for 200 rixdollars, and he set off on a collecting trip in November of that year. In the meantime, he had managed to copy nearly four hundred legends in faircopy, which he intended to publish as his first legend collection. It appeared as JFm 3, entitled *Jyske Folkesagn* (Jutlandic Folk Legends) two years later (1876). During the next two years, his fieldtrips became increasingly long, and he strayed further and further from home. He had by this point begun writing in small school notebooks of about thirty-two pages, a much better solution than the loose pieces of random paper he had used up until then.¹⁹

Although he was enthusiastic about collecting and almost unbelieving of his good fortune in securing both publication subventions and traveling stipends, the demands of daily and professional life as well as a growing family took a toll on him and his time. After the successful collecting trips of 1873 and 1874, he had to reign himself in during the early months of 1875, not only because his wife was expecting their second child, but also because he was suffering from painful bouts of arthritis. His summer trip to Copenhagen to take a second semester of Old Norse was productive, largely because of a meeting with Christian Barnekow, another music scholar, who was far more enthusiastic about Tang Kristensen's melodies than Berggreen had been (MO vol. 2, 218). Tang Kristensen applied for another collecting stipend and was fortunate to receive it yet again. This time, however, he was unable to find a substitute teacher and, he notes bitterly in his memoirs, "jeg kom altsaa *ikke ud at rejse i Vinteren 1875-1876*" [*I did not get to travel during the winter 1875-1876*] (MO vol. 2, 223, italics in original).

Because of the limited amount of fieldwork he was able to carry out, Tang Kristensen considered the years from 1877 to 1883 as barren years, noting in his memoirs, "Jeg vil nu

kortelig omtale, hvad jeg fik samlet i disse golde Aar fra 1877 til 1883. Jeg kalder dem golde, fordi jeg ikke gjorde nogle længere Indsamlingsrejser og altsaa heller ikke kunde faa synderlig samlet jeg havde jo blot mine Ferier til min Raadighed og knap nok dem, da Familielivet lagde ret stærkt Beslag paa mig” [I now want to summarize in brief what I managed to collect during these barren years from 1877 to 1883. I call them barren because I didn’t take any longer collecting trips and otherwise couldn’t collect much since I only had my vacation days available and not even them since family life made significant demands of me] (MO vol. 2, 349). He could easily add 1876 into the mix, as he took no real collecting trips that year and did essentially no collecting.

Tang Kristensen was not completely idle, as he had gotten engaged to another cousin on his father’s side, Ane Margrete “Grete” Risum, in 1871 and married her in January 1872. They soon started a family, with a daughter Frederikke born in 1873, a son Olaf born in 1875, another daughter Laura born in 1876, twins Nanna and Sigyn born in 1878, another daughter Astrid born in 1880, and a son Frode born in 1883.²⁰ By 1875, Tang Kristensen realized that teaching, running his small farm, raising a family, as well as collecting, organizing and publishing folklore was not feasible given the hours in the day. His somewhat odd solution was to apply for a less lucrative teaching position, one that did not include a smallholding thereby eliminating farming (and the income that came from farming) from his list of responsibilities. By 1876, he had found and accepted a more modest teaching position in Faarup. The transition was not smooth, and he soon found himself involved in a task as equally time-consuming as running a smallholding: local politics.

A Brief Hiatus

When Tang Kristensen moved to Faarup, his intention was to do more folklore collecting, not less. By that point, he had already begun to develop his philosophy of collecting, noting in a letter to Grundtvig, “Præster og Lærere har jeg liden eller ingen Nytte af, bortset fra, at de kan give mig Nattely. Jeg maa tit opsøge Bærmen i Folket for at bruge et Kraftudtryk, og dér er den sværeste Side ved hele min nuværende Virksomhed, den at kunne vinde saadannes Fortrolighed, og dog kunne holde dem tre Skridt fra Livet” [I have no use for ministers and teachers aside from the fact that they can give me lodgings. I often have to visit the dregs of society to use a strong expression, and that is the hardest part of my current work, to win these people’s trust and yet keep them at arm’s length] (MO vol. 2, 113). This remark, however, downplayed the important role that teachers, ministers—and the local institutional and organizational structures—played in his collecting enterprise. Indeed, in later years, his first contacts in almost every town that he visited were either ministers or teachers. As a teacher, he was deeply implicated in local administrative structures, and finely attuned to local politics. While Faarup turned out not to be a panacea for his collecting, he did gain invaluable administrative experience and became—albeit not until several years had passed—far more aware of the challenges that individuals faced as the economic base of the country shifted radically toward industrialization and the cities.

Several years after Tang Kristensen arrived in Faarup, the chairman of the parish council, Pastor Lassen, died. A supplementary election was held, Tang Kristensen was elected to the council and, since they also needed a new chairman, he was selected. His term began in July 1878, and ran for four and a half years, until New Year 1883. In 1881,

he was also named the parish *ligsynsmand*, or coroner. In some ways, he was on his way to becoming a *sognekonge* [parish king], holding several of the most important local offices. Although Tang Kristensen is remarkably economical in addressing the election in his memoirs, his earlier efforts that brought a cooperative to Gjellerup likely informed the council's decision (MO vol. 2, 229-230; MO vol. 2, 295). Nørr, in his discussion of the administrative roles of ministers and teachers in nineteenth century Denmark describes in exceptional detail the significant role both of these figures played in rural life (Nørr 1981 and 1994). In particular, he describes the tension between the local parish councils on the one hand, and the competing interests of the schoolteacher and the minister on the other hand (Nørr 1994, 69-96). Tang Kristensen's rapid rise to the chairmanship of the parish council, succeeding a minister who had controlled the position for many years, stands as a testament to the roiled waters of local control.

Tang Kristensen had a far more open approach to parish business than his predecessor. Rather than ruling in a typically autocratic fashion—a holdover from pre-constitution Denmark—he embraced transparency and coalition building. While his descriptions of his work on the council are one-sided, coming as they do from his memoirs, they reflect two things: his understanding of the need to create at least the illusion of consensus, and his extraordinary attention to detail. He writes,

Jeg satte mig snart ind i Sagerne og kan med Sandhed udtale, at jeg klarede Sagerne godt. De andre Medlemmer arbejdede jeg godt sammen med, og de erklærede, at jeg gav dem et godt Indblik i Sagerne. Det var ikke slet saadan som i Lassens Tid, for han afgjorde det

meste paa egen Haand og havde kun Sogneraadet samlet, naar der forelaa meget vigtige Sager, som han ikke selv kunde klare. Saadan bar jeg mig ikke ad, jeg satte alle de enkelte Medlemmer ind i alle Sagerne, og det var de glade ved, de sagde ligefrem, at det var først nu, de rigtig fik Forstand paa, hvordan de kommunale Sager styredes. Som Bevis paa de andre Medlemmers Tilfredshed med Samarbejdet med mig, skillerede de sammen, da jeg gik ud af Sogneraadet efter de 4 1/2 Aars Forløb og gav mig et Stueur med Inskription...Vi havde i min Tid mange vanskelige Fattigsager for, men jeg klarede dem godt allesammen (MO vol. 2, 295).

[I soon oriented myself to the affairs and can honestly say that I did a good job with them. I worked well with the other members and they stated that I gave them good insight into the affairs. It wasn't at all as it had been during Lassen's time, since he made most of the decisions himself and only called the parish council together when there were very important affairs that he couldn't handle himself. I didn't act like that, I informed all of the individual members about the issues, and they were happy about that, they said that right out, and it was first now that they really understood how the local affairs were run. As evidence of the other members' satisfaction with their work with me, after my four and a half years on the parish council, they all pitched in and gave me a clock with an

inscription... During my time on the council we had many difficult poverty assistance cases before us, but I handled all of them well.]

Indeed, the most important duty of the parish councils at the time—apart from choosing schoolteachers—was control of the poverty assistance programs. Although he approached these cases with the same closed fist that he approached nearly all fiscal matters, he later realized that he had been far too concerned with proper behavior than with assisting those who had stumbled. He writes,

Jeg maa dog bebrejde mig selv, at jeg saa vel meget paa at spare paa Kommunens Penge, jeg var vel nøjeregnende, og med Hensyn til Omsorgen for Sognets fattige kunde jeg og burde jeg have været noget mere flot, der var virkelig ingen Grund til at knibe saa stærkt (MO vol. 2, 296).

[I must reproach myself that I focused intently on saving the county's money, and I was perhaps a bit close-fisted, and in regards to care for the parish's poor, I could have and should have been more magnanimous, there really was no reason to squeeze so tightly.]

His retrospective comments criticizing his harsh treatment of the poor reflect several decades of wandering the countryside and meeting people from all walks of life—from the wealthiest manor lords on down to the poorest of the paupers. Since he was collecting folklore, and trying to talk to everyone he met, he soon came to realize that even the poorest of the poor—or perhaps especially the poorest of the

poor—had something to say and should be listened to. At the very least, they should be respected as individuals; this respect for the individual set Tang Kristensen's folklore collecting quite apart from the philosophy that governed the work of people like Grundtvig, who had little interest in the individuals behind the traditions they studied.

Tang Kristensen's largest regret, however, was the amount of time that he spent on these local political matters. He notes,

Det værste var, at alle disse kommunale Sager tog alt for megen tid for mig, saa jeg fik meget lidt udrettet paa Folkemindernes Omraade. Jeg havde dog paa mange Maader Udbytte af at sætte mig ind i de mange offentlige Forhold, idet jeg ikke alene blev en Del lovkyndig, men ogsaa fik mig øvet i at faa Overblik over den kommunale Styrelse (MO vol. 2, 295-296).

[The worst thing was that all of these local affairs took far too much time and I consequently accomplished very little in the field of folklore. But in many ways I got quite a bit out of learning about the public conditions, since I not only learned a bit more about the law, but also developed an overview of local government.]

Importantly, he recognizes the benefit derived from understanding first hand the complexities of local government and politics.

Although Tang Kristensen insists that he was apolitical throughout his life—a claim echoed by others—one can certainly trace a certain ideological slant throughout his

memoirs. He clearly subscribes to some of the central tenets of the emerging *Venstre* party, such as the need for local solutions to local problems—this is perhaps clearest in his work with the poverty assistance question in Faarup. Even though he tempers these sentiments later on, his disgust with his fellow teachers at a large national gathering in Copenhagen underscores that he would be an unlikely member of more progressive, union oriented parties, despite his very close association with Jeppe Aakjær who became one of the leading literary voices of the progressive left. Tang Kristensen's propensity for endorsing fiscally and socially conservative policies is somewhat paradoxical, given that he worked largely among the very poor, and was himself a solid member of the cotter class. Nevertheless, his own aspirations coupled to his close connection to the academic elite in Copenhagen, likely informed this more conservative bias.

He discusses only briefly his political thoughts near the end of his memoirs, writing:

Man har mange Gange spurgt mig om mit politiske Standpunkt, og dertil har jeg altid svaret, at jeg aldrig har været Politiker og kun lidt politisk interesseret, da jeg stadig har anset Politik, naar den rigtig griber et Menneske, for at være ødelæggende overfor det bedste og fineste i hans Sjæleliv. De drevne Politikere har efter min Erfaring tit saa godt som ikke Interesse for andet. At der gives enkelte hæderlige Undtagelser, vil jeg dog indrømme. Politik kan blive en Sjælesygdom. Venstrepartiet fik jeg nogen Afsmag for, da jeg lærte P. Nielsen i Hammerum at kjende. Søren Kjær i Helstrup interesserede mig noget mere, men han var ogsaa mere naturlig

begavet. Jeg tog ikke saa sjælden hen til Vælgermøder og overværede altid Valghandlingerne... til at være med. Det var en ren Nydelse at høre ham, men jeg syntes dog, han var vel grov i sine Udtalelser. Derimod syntes jeg bedre om A. Holck, der blev valgt i 1884. Da jeg var i Brandstrup i 1887, fik jeg Sæde i Valgstyrelsen og førte Valgprotokollen samt udfærdigede Søren Kjærs Valgbrev, da han nu igjen kom ind, og paa mit Forslag valgtes H. Rendtorff paa Vindum-Overgaard til at lede Valghandlingen. Jeg rejste ogsaa til Skjoldelev at høre Søren Kjær, da han i 1892 fik Harald Jensen til Modstander og blev valgt (MO vol. 4, 121-122).

[People have often asked me about my politics, and I've always answered that I've never been a politician and never had much interest in politics, since I've always considered politics, when it really gets hold of a person, to be destructive of the best and finest aspects of his soul. Driven politicians have, in my experience, no other interests than politics. I will admit that there are certain honest exceptions. Politics can be a sickness of the soul. I got a bad taste in my mouth with the *Venstre* party when I got to know P. Nielsen in Hammerum. Søren Kjær from Helstrup was a bit more interesting to me, but he was also more naturally gifted. I often went to election meetings and always stayed for the polls... to participate. It was a sheer delight to

listen to him, although I thought he was a bit coarse in his speech. In contrast, I liked A. Holck more who was elected in 1884. When I was in Brandstrup in 1887, I got a seat on the election committee and was in charge of the election protocol, as well as completing Søren Kjær's election letter when he was elected and, on my suggestion, H. Rendtorff from Vindum-Overgaard was elected to lead the polls. In 1892, I traveled over to Skjoldelev to listen to Søren Kjær when he was running against Harald Jensen and was elected.]

While dismissing national politics almost out of hand, his focus on the plight of his poor informants, coupled to his own developing ideas on local administration as well as school politics temper his dismissive stance. Politically, Tang Kristensen did, in effect, what many people do today—he paid scant attention to the national scene, except when it influenced his ability to get government grants, and instead focused intensely on the local. On the local level, he wedded fiscal conservatism with a moral obligation to help the poor and support education. Like most people, his political thoughts were a work in progress, constantly shifting under the pressures of personal experience and social and economic developments.

During the years that Tang Kristensen served on the parish council, his relationship with Grundtvig soured even more, to the point that it broke off entirely for several years (MO vol. 2, 314). A particular sore point between the two was Tang Kristensen's fairy tale collections—Grundtvig wanted to have access to them while Tang Kristensen was worried that Grundtvig would publish them as his own (MO vol. 2, 314-315). His fears were not groundless, despite

Grundtvig's protestations, since one of his fairy tales, "Troldens Datter" [The Troll's Daughter], did appear in Grundtvig's second collection of fairy tales (MO vol. 2, 353; Grundtvig 1881, 24-37). Another sore point was that Tang Kristensen had managed to secure a substantial subvention of four hundred crowns from the ministry for a volume of legends (MO vol. 2, 305). Grundtvig clearly felt that Tang Kristensen was no longer playing by his patron-benefactor ground rules, while Tang Kristensen, buoyed by his own collecting success and armed with a greater degree of administrative know-how felt that Grundtvig was playing too much of the gatekeeper. By the time of Grundtvig's sudden death in 1883, the rift between the two was still there, although a personal meeting and several letters had assuaged the very worst feelings between them.

The Second Collecting Period: Individuals and Tradition

Grundtvig's death breathed new life into Tang Kristensen's folkloric endeavors. He had already begun looking for a more appropriate teaching position, since the conditions in Faarup were impossible given his large family, and the enormous administrative burden he bore. In April 1883, he started getting hints that his collecting might become a line item in the national budget; by August of that year—a month or so after Grundtvig's death—he got word that he had been granted a publication subvention. Starting in 1885, he received an annual government stipend of five hundred crowns, later raised to eight hundred crowns, so that he could concentrate exclusively on folklore (MO vol. 3, 17). The foundations for this stipend had been laid not by Grundtvig, but rather by N. J. Termansen, a member of parliament that Tang Kristensen had met at the unveiling of a

Blicher monument on the eleventh of October that year (MO vol. 2, 341-342).²¹

Later that same year, Tang Kristensen, along with Svend's brother F. L. Grundtvig, lay the groundwork for the folklore journal, *Skattegraveren*. In his memoirs he writes,

Jeg havde i længere Tid gaaet svanger med en Tanke, der nu saa ud til at kunne blive til Virkelighed, nu, da S. Gr. var død. Jeg vilde jo paa ingen Maade træde frem for Offentligheden med denne Tanke, saa længe han var levende, for jeg frygtede jo meget for, at han ikke syntes om den, og efter hvad der var forefaldet imellem os, og efter hvad jeg kjendte til ham, kunde jeg ikke tro andet, end at han vilde anse et saadant Skridt som et Indgreb paa hans Enemærker, og jeg vilde da ikke saare ham alt for meget. Men selve Sagen var meget for mig. Da jeg ikke ret kunde have Haab om selv snart at komme ud paa større Indsamling, og da jeg tydelig indsaa, at jeg ikke kunde omspænde hele Omraadet ganske alene, fordi jeg jo ikke kunde tage mere end nogle enkelte Sogne under Bearbejdelse ad Gangen, saa tænkte jeg mig, om man ikke kunde faa Mænd og Kvinder over hele Landet til at hjælpe sig, om just ikke slet saadan som Gr. havde gjort det, saa dog ved at faa Folk over alt til at være Deltagere; men saa skulde det være paa den Maade, at hvad der samledes af nogen Værdi, strags eller snarest mulig skulde trykkes, for at Folk kunde faa deres Optegnelser at se paa Tryk. Jeg vilde da foreslaa Udgivelsen af et Fjortendagsskrift,

der udelukkende skulde indeholde Folkeminder og ikke Afhandlinger derom (MO II 354-355).

[I had gone for quite a long time pregnant with an idea and now that Svend Grundtvig was dead it appeared that it could come to fruition. I in no way wanted to go public with this idea as long as he was alive because I was quite afraid that he wouldn't like it and, after what had happened between us and considering what I knew about him, I couldn't believe other than that he would consider such a step as an attack on his territory and I didn't want to hurt him too much. But it was a big deal for me. Since I didn't have much hope of taking a big collecting trip any time soon, and since I could clearly see that I couldn't cover the entire area alone since I could only handle a couple of parishes at a time, I wondered if I couldn't find men and women across the whole country who would want to help out although not in the way Grundtvig had done it, but rather getting people to be participants; the idea was to immediately publish—or at least publish as soon as possible—anything that was collected that had worth, so people could see their collections in print. I wanted to suggest the publication of a biweekly journal that would exclusively consist of folklore and not articles about folklore.]

The strong control that Grundtvig exerted over folklore endeavors in general, and Tang Kristensen's own work in particular, is immediately apparent in these comments. What sets this idea for a journal apart from Grundtvig's position is the popularist approach. Grundtvig envisioned his own work in grand terms calling it "a gift to the nation" and was always cognizant of his own important (or self-important) role in this enterprise. In contrast, Tang Kristensen envisioned the journal as a popular endeavor, one that allowed anyone to contribute. He had little use for "expert" pronouncements or evaluations. As part of the publicity machine for the journal, Tang Kristensen set off on a long lecture tour, visiting more than twenty folk high schools (MO II 357-360). Not only did he want to get the word out, but he also wanted to get it out in a way that would harness the enthusiasm for local culture that was blossoming at the time. As part of this endeavor, he also enlisted the help of several prominent teachers, authors, members of parliament, professors and other scholars interested in folklore, among them Henning Feilberg.

Tang Kristensen had met Feilberg back in 1873, when the two struck up a correspondence—Feilberg had written to Tang Kristensen to ask about building customs (MO vol. 2, 406). By 1877, Feilberg had begun working on his dictionary of Jutlandic dialect. In his memoirs, Tang Kristensen is quite harsh in his assessment of Feilberg, writing,

Han [kunde] ikke give mig Bidrag til mine Samlinger, og det var egentlig kun faa Smaating som Byremser og Smaarim, jeg modtog fra ham. Derimod vilde han gjerne have noget fra mig, og alle hans Breve er fulde af Spørgsmaal, som jeg skulde besvare... Da "Foreningen for Indsamling af Folkeminder" var startet i 1883, og Styrelsen var valgt, blev

F. jo valgt til Formand, og saaledes fik vi ikke saa lidt med hinanden at gjøre paa det Omraade. Han sammenkaldte til vore Møder, men viste sig ikke der meget fremtrædende og var altid saare medgjørlig. Efter at Foreningen havde standset sin Virksomhed, hvilket han ikke kunde eller vilde hindre, vedblev vi dog stadig at skifte Breve, og jeg har da liggende det store Antal af 269 Breve og Brevkort fra ham. Da han var flyttet til Askov, hørte jeg dog meget sjældnere fra ham, og det sidste Brev er dateret d. 3dje Febr. 1911 (MO vol. 2, 407 and 410).

[He couldn't give me any contributions to my collections, and it was only a few small things like town rhymes and other small rhymes that I got from him. On the other hand, he certainly wanted something from me and all of his letters are filled with questions that I was supposed to answer... When the "Society for the Collection of Folklore" was started in 1883, and the leadership had been elected, Feilberg was elected as the chairman, and in that manner we wound up having quite a bit to do with each other. He convened our meetings but didn't take the lead much and was always quite accommodating. After the society had ceased its work, which he neither could nor wanted to hinder, we continued to exchange letters, and I have two hundred sixty-nine letters and postcards from him. After he moved to Askov, I heard less from

him and the last letter is dated the third of February, 1911.]

In some ways, this relationship was the opposite of Tang Kristensen's relationship with Grundtvig; Feilberg came to him looking for expertise and assistance, and the relationship between the two was generally clear.

Despite the air of collaboration between the two, Tang Kristensen was ultimately dismissive of Feilberg. He found the early questions simplistic and bothersome, and he found Feilberg's later work to be quite divorced from the everyday culture he purported to describe. In a letter to Hans Ellekilde soon before he died, Tang Kristensen wrote:

Min Kone har kikket lidt i Deres Brev, og hun siger, at der staar noget om "gamle Venner". Den har jeg saa godt som ingen af, ialt Fald ikke i Kjøbenhavn. Professor H. V. Rasmussen og hans Søn var mine sande Venner, men de er for længst døde. H. F. Feilberg var ikke min sande Ven, skjøndt jeg en lang Tid troede det om ham, men jeg blev smertelig skuffet, da jeg overgav Manuskriptet til mine Folkegaader i hans Haand og 14 Dage efter fik det hele ulæst tilbage og uden mindste Løfte om Hjælp. Sandt Venskab imod mig ytrer sig særlig i, at *man gjør en Del for at hjælpe mig med at faa det, jeg har samlet, udgivet og trykt*, men i den Henseende har "Dansk Folkemindesamling" slet intet gjort (Letter to Hans Ellekilde, March 3, 1929).

[My wife has looked a bit through your letters and she says there's something about "old

friends.” I have none of those, at least not in Copenhagen. Professor H. V. Rasmussen and his son were my true friends, but they are long dead. H. F. Feilberg was not my true friend, even though I thought he was for a long time, but I was deeply disappointed after I gave him the manuscript of my folk riddles and fourteen days later received it back unread without the slightest promise of help. True friendship toward me is expressed by doing something to get the things I have collected published and printed, but in that context the Danish Folklore Archives has done nothing.]

Tang Kristensen’s bitterness over his relationships with the elite is not without reason—Grundtvig attempted to steal his work, and Feilberg stood idly by while others with more political clout undermined his efforts. By the end of his memoirs, he notes, “Mit Forhold til og Samarbejde med H. F. Feilberg og Axel Olrik havde altid været godt og blev ved at være det. Mit Brevskifte med disse to Mænd har jeg ikke talt videre om; men vil senere komme til at fortælle noget, da jeg mere udførligt vil sige noget derom” [My relationship with and collaboration with H. F. Feilberg and Axel Olrik has always been good and continues to be so. I have never discussed my correspondence with these two men; but I will tell a bit about it later since I want to say more about it] (MO III 509).

In 1884, making use of his deeper understanding of local politics, Tang Kristensen was able to maneuver into a much better teaching position—the one that his stepfather had recently vacated in Brandstrup. Free from the yoke of administrative duties in Faarup, and out from the under the shadow of Grundtvig, he was ready to embark on the most

productive collecting and publishing period of his life. While his collecting had been going well up through the mid 1870s, and while he at times thought he had collected all there was left to collect, a quick look at his field manuscripts makes clear the sheer volume of work he accomplished after he moved to Brandstrup. From 1871 until 1883, he had filled eighty-eight small essay books; in the years after Grundtvig's death and the move from Faarup, he filled nearly two hundred and forty-seven—a three-fold increase!

One of Tang Kristensen's main publication endeavors in his first six years in Brandstrup was publication of *Skattegraveren*. Both the journal and the society that had been established to publish it were an initial success. But, by 1889, problems with the printer, and shrinking membership rolls led the other members of the society's board of directors to conclude that it should be disbanded. A new journal, *Dania*, would take the place of *Skattegraveren*, and Tang Kristensen would be allowed to publish the remaining collections that had already been readied for printing as an addendum (*Efterslæt*) to the journal. Rather than publishing "raw" folklore collections—something that Tang Kristensen saw as the most valuable service one could provide—the new journal would be aligned with the scholarly aspirations of the largely *folkehøjskole* [folk high school] teacher membership.²² Feilberg's tacit consent in the dissolution of the society lay at the root of Tang Kristensen's embittered stance toward him. But the journal had in some ways, after its twelve semi-annual issues, served its most important tasks: it had garnered a degree of visibility for Tang Kristensen and his collecting, and it had supplied him with the infrastructure of a large network of contacts throughout Jutland.

One of the most notable contributors to *Skattegraveren* was a young aspiring poet named Jeppe Jensen. Jensen, who changed his name to Aakjær, soon became one of the leading

progressive voices in turn of the century Danish literature (Tangherlini 1999a). His works made clever use of folk motifs and Jutlandic dialects, in many ways supplanting his forerunner Steen Steensen Blicher. Many of his earliest experiences with folklore came through the tutelage of Tang Kristensen, who had encouraged his collecting through *Skattegraveren* even though Aakjær was only seventeen years old at the time. Many years later, Aakjær asked Tang Kristensen for the return of his manuscripts—a strange echo of the constant squabbles between Tang Kristensen and Grundtvig. But the manuscripts were gone—when *Skattegraveren* was dissolved, Tang Kristensen had been forced to send all of the manuscripts to Kristoffer Nyrop for use in *Dania*. Nyrop, it turned out, had little interest in the manuscripts and eventually destroyed or lost them (MO vol. 2, 363-364; MO vol. 4, 423; Rockwell 1982, 189).

Up until 1883, Tang Kristensen had only managed to publish eight volumes of folklore, including his first two short volumes of folksongs. During his time in Brandstrup, along with publishing *Skattegraveren*, he was able to publish an additional four volumes of *Jyske Folkeminder*, as well as two chorographical works—one discussing the heath (1887) and the other about Vindt mill. This latter work was a commissioned piece of work and he had only two weeks to prepare the manuscript (MO vol. 3, 96). Despite his newfound energy, Tang Kristensen still felt that the teaching was encroaching unduly into his collecting. At the same time, he was under constant stress from family obligations and crises. Indeed, reading through his memoirs, a parent recognizes the constant companion of childhood diseases and more threatening illnesses, unexpected obligations, and the other constant worries of parenthood. Added to this stress was his constant look-out for potential substitutes.

Despite these hindrances, his time in Brandstrup was still quite productive, and he managed to squeeze in fourteen or so major collecting trips during that time. As he himself was ready to acknowledge, the significant expansion of the railways during the previous decade had made his ability to reach different parts of the country much easier—this became even more significant after he left Brandstrup. His increasing reputation, along with the public relations work he undertook in concert with *Skattegraveren* put him more and more in the orbit of the academic and literary circles of Copenhagen. In his memoirs, he recounts an interesting evening in Copenhagen where he had been invited to the student association's opening banquet in October, 1887:

Jeg skulde altsaa hen i Studenterforeningen igjen for at overvære Rusgildet. Men jeg havde jo ingen Forestilling om, hvad der skulde gaa for sig ved dette, og jeg var meget spændt paa, hvad jeg nu skulde komme til at opleve. Til den bestemte Tid gav jeg jo Møde der nede og blev ført ind i den forreste Stue, hvor der allerede var kommet nogle enkelte Gjæster. Lidt efter var saa til Stede alle dem, der var indbudt, kunde jeg skjønnne. Henrik Ibsen fra Norge var ogsaa med, og jeg blev forestillet for ham og talte et Par Ord med ham, men han var i det hele ikke meget talende og sagde uhyre lidt hele Aftenen. Vilhelm Bergsøe kom ogsaa og Holger Drachmann og flere andre kjendte Personer. Saa blev Døren til Salen lukket op, og vi blev ført til Bords (MO vol. 3, 127-128).

[I was supposed to go to the Student Association again to participate in the Rusgilde (drinking banquet). But I had no idea what was supposed to happen and I was very excited about what I was going to experience. I met up at the appointed time and was brought into the first room where several guests had already arrived. A little later I realized that everyone who had been invited had come. Henrik Ibsen from Norway was also there and I was introduced to him and spoke a few words with him, but he wasn't very talkative and said very little the whole evening. Vilhelm Bergsøe was also there as was Holger Drachmann and several other known personages. Then the room to the main hall was opened and we were seated.]

Although he plays ignorant, it is unlikely that Tang Kristensen was unaware of the impact Ibsen's *A Doll House* (1879) had had on the literary world.²³ During his time in Brandstrup, Tang Kristensen also met Bjørstjerne Bjørnson, Norway's "national poet," and Edvard Brandes, the influential editor of the newspaper *Politiken* and brother to the most important Danish literary theorist, Georg Brandes, who had supported his requests for support in parliament (MO vol. 3, 18).²⁴

Among the more important collecting trips of his Brandstrup period was one that he took with the photographer N. Jepsen in 1887; the trip was not important because of the collecting, but because it awakened in Tang Kristensen the idea of photographing his informants, something he did eight years later over the course of five fieldtrips with another photographer, Peter Olsen (MO vol. 3, 116-118). The very last fieldtrip he took while he still lived in

Brandstrup was with Axel Olrik. The two had already interacted professionally in the context of *Skattegraveren*, and Olrik was eager to learn about fieldwork from the reigning master. Describing their foray into the field together, Tang Kristensen writes:

Det morede mig at se, hvor ivrig Axel Olrik var efter at faa skrevet op, hvad Maren sang, og det samme var Tilfældet hos Niels Kristian. Han fortalte, og baade Olrik og jeg skrev op. Det kneb for ham med at forstaa dem, kunde jeg nok mærke, og han var heller ikke saa hurtig til at skrive, saa det blev vist ikke saa godt, som det burde være, men ivrig var han, og han arbejdede saa hurtig han kunde... Jeg havde nemlig bestemt, at vi nu skulde over til Jens Kristensen i Ersted. Men der tog jeg jo ikke ret i Betænkning, at det vilde blive en temmelig lang Fodtur for Olrik at foretage paa én Dag, og det varede ikke saa grumme længe, inden han blev træt, og hans Fødder ømme. (MO vol. 3, 181-182).

[It amused me to see how eager Axel Olrik was to write down what Maren sang, and it was the same over at Niels Kristian's place. He told and both Olrik and I wrote it down. I could see that he had a hard time understanding them and he wasn't that fast at writing, so it probably didn't turn out as good as it should have, but he was eager and he worked as fast as he could... I had decided that we should go over to visit Jens Kristensen in Ersted. But I didn't think about

how long a walk that would be for Olrik to do in one day, and it wasn't too long before he got tired and his feet got sore.]

Although he is amused by the Copenhagen academic's inability to keep up, he respects him for trying—something that Grundtvig never did.

Despite his successes in Brandstrup, Tang Kristensen ultimately decided that the position there was untenable and, as he had finally managed to secure a promise for long-term government support, he decided to move to the station town of Hadsten in eastern Jutland. Unlike many of his other houses that were in relatively isolated rural parts of central Jutland, the house in Hadsten was large and just across the street from the railroad station—a perfect situation for Tang Kristensen's large family and his many trips (MO III 203). Hadsten ushered in a remarkably productive period for Tang Kristensen. Despite the fact that his children were frequently sick—with his daughter Sigyn contracting tuberculosis—and his wife was overworked and in failing health, during the nine years they lived in Hadsten he was able to log forty-six major collecting trips, as well as five trips to photograph his informants. By this stage in his career, he had moved well beyond the original premises of Grundtvig's work, and he was now focusing on the productive dialectic between the individual and tradition.

His time in Hadsten was also remarkably productive in terms of publication. While there, he completed his three volume collection of fairy tales under the auspices of the *Folkemindesamfund*, added the final five volumes to the series *Jyske Folkeminder*, and published several of his most important collections, including the first six “main” volumes of *Gamle folks fortællinger om det jyske almueliv*, and the first five volumes of *Danske sagn*. In addition, he published his major collection

of Danish proverbs (1890), a large collection of children's games and rhymes (1896), and the first volumes of his two two-volume collections of jocular tales, *Molbo- og Aggerbohistorier* (1892) and *Kuriose Overhøringer* (1892). At Christmas 1897, he received a letter from the leading figures in Nordic folklore congratulating him on thirty years of collecting, and affirming the significant impact that his work was having on the field (MO vol. 3, 150).

As his children got older and started to leave home, Tang Kristensen decided to find a home for his retirement. Soon, he settled on an undeveloped area outside of Vejle, where a speculator had decided to develop a small neighborhood, Mølholm. Tang Kristensen commissioned the building of a house and he moved there in 1897. Soon after he moved in to "Mindebo," as he named the house, he received a visit from William A. Craigie, who had learned of Tang Kristensen's work through *Skattegraveren*, which he had by some unusual twist managed to purchase in Edinburgh.²⁵ The visit was a bit of a disaster, the Craigies being far too picky for Tang Kristensen and his family (MO vol. 4, 143-144). In 1898, Tang Kristensen received word from Copenhagen that he had been knighted, a *Ridder af Dannebrogordenen*, and he went for his royal audience in July when he was in Copenhagen studying (MO vol. 3, 156). By that time, his wife Grete was quite sick, and it was also clear that his daughter Sigyn was going to die from her tuberculosis.

Despite the personal tragedy of Sigyn's death in early 1899, and Grete's death in 1900, Tang Kristensen continued energetically with his work. Indeed, over the next nineteen years, he made another one hundred and ten collecting trips, the last in 1916 (MO IV 428-429). The one big blow to his productivity came to his publication enterprise with the loss of his government publication subvention in 1903. By then, he had managed to complete *Danske Sagn*, as well as the

supplementary volumes to *Jyske Almueliv*. He also completed his two smaller collections, *Molbo- og Aggerbobistorier* and *Kuriøse Overhøringer*, along with several volumes of fairy tales. Despite a visit to the ministry, he was unable to convince the minister of culture to reinstate the subvention, and he did not begin publishing again for another ten years (Rockwell 1982, 291).

In 1905, Tang Kristensen married for the third and last time. His new wife, Marie Jensen Huus, had actually been one of his students when he was a teacher in Gjellerup. Now, many years later, she was a friendly neighbor and, after several years of courtship, they married. A year later, they had a son, Johannes Evald Tang Kristensen, who later became the guardian of his father's papers and his bibliographer. Although Tang Kristensen was now advanced in age, he was still active. In 1913, he began publishing again, and continued effectively up to his death. His field collecting trips became less grueling, but even during the last decade of his active collecting, he managed to squeeze in forty-eight trips.

The most important of these trips were likely the ones he took with Hans Grüner-Nielsen in 1907. The advent of recording technology was of great interest to Tang Kristensen for several reasons—while he was eager to record the songs of his ballad singers for posterity, he was also eager to get the songs onto cylinders to prove a point that had been festering for thirty-five years. If he could bring recordings of his informants' songs to the public and to music experts, his contention that his original written recordings were accurate could be proved, and Berggreen's criticism could be shown to be wrong once and for all! As Rockwell notes, "Unfortunately the proofs he wanted from the mechanical reproduction of the singer's notes were not forthcoming, as the incorrectness which Berggreen had accused him of incorporating in his recording of the melodies was now supposed to be a series of

mistakes on the part of the singer” (Rockwell 1982, 303). Nearly fifteen years later, he recorded some additional singers, this time with the Australian composer, Percy Grainger, whom he had also met through correspondence.²⁶ By then, however, his active collecting had essentially come to an end, and he was busy completing his memoirs, the last pages of which he wrote in August 1928, not long before his death, April 9, 1929.

Notes

¹ Counting these records is a fuzzy endeavor, as the classification of various expressions into genre categories, as well as deciding when a story starts and ends, is not straight forward. These metrics, accordingly, are only a very loose gauge of the comprehensiveness of Tang Kristensen’s collection. Tang Kristensen himself broke many of his field recordings into small story snippets, and subsequent publications have taken his lead. This work seeks to address this problem, by presenting the stories in the order they were told, and allowing the reader an opportunity to study the original manuscript recordings. In this manner, one can decide whether to break stories out, or leave them in the flow of performance.

² I say “almost” because *Minder og Oplevelser* is anything but short, and is written in a remarkably affectless manner. Since there is no overarching organization other than straight forward chronology, one easily gets lost in the minutia of Tang Kristensen’s daily life. Following standard practice in Danish folklore, this work is referred to by the abbreviation MO throughout this book.

³ This second title was more accurate than the first, as the first volume included only ballads and melodies. These two volumes, which sold very poorly, were bound together and added to the front of *Jydske Folkeviser og Toner, samlede af Folkemunde, især i Hammerum Herred* (1871) the first volume of his thirteen volume, *Jydske Folkeminder*. Fortunately, the ballads in the first two pamphlets were numbered consecutively.

⁴ Rockwell provides a very long and at times psychologically based examination of Tang Kristensen's childhood (1982, 23-62). Thorkild Knudsen also presents a largely psychological portrait of Tang Kristensen in a relatively short biographical sketch (1971, 243-257). A list of biographical works about Tang Kristensen, largely in Danish, can be found in J. Kristensen (1943, 124-126). This list includes reference to Cai Woel's sympathetic portrait of Tang Kristensen (1929). Boberg also includes a short section dedicated to Tang Kristensen (1953, 179-184).

⁵ Rockwell proposes a Freudian interpretation of Tang Kristensen's enduring bitterness both toward his mother and Schuster, his stepfather (1982, 24-28).

⁶ Tang Kristensen provides an excellent description of Helstrup and its school in his memoirs (MO vol. 1, 253-255)

⁷ First cousin marriage was not unusual in late nineteenth century Denmark, particularly among the peasant class.

⁸ Tang Kristensen provides a long, and somewhat amusing, account of all the difficulties he and Frederikke encountered as they tried to get married (MO vol. 2, 12-15).

⁹ She may have become pregnant during a visit to Tang Kristensen in Helstrup in February 1866, although this seems unlikely given the description of this visit in his memoirs (MO vol. 1, 296-297). It is more likely that the child was born prematurely (MO vol. 2, 24).

¹⁰ The description of the birth is quite detailed, and it is clear that Tang Kristensen suffered greatly over this loss (MO vol. 2, 23-25).

¹¹ Rockwell mentions that in one of his unpublished biographies, of which there are several archived at *Dansk Folkemindesamling* under the title “Levnedsløb” (1929/142), Tang Kristensen acknowledges that his folklore collecting became a bulwark against his loneliness and sorrow (Rockwell 1982, 65-66).

¹² Tang Kristensen found this printer through his mailman, who suggested someone who printed *Indre Missionstidende*, a journal of the fundamentalist Inner Mission. Tang Kristensen, who was quite opposed to the Inner Mission most of his life, had little problem with this, and was more interested in hearing if the printer could print musical notes (MO vol. 2, 52).

¹³ In a letter to Grundtvig dated March 12, 1869, he notes that only three copies of his ballad book had been sold through the bookseller in Herning (Rockwell 1982, 66).

¹⁴ All of the correspondence between Tang Kristensen and Grundtvig is archived at *Dansk Folkemindesamling*, as 1929/144 and DFS 17, D (Rockwell 1982, 68; *Dansk Folkemindesamling* 2008).

¹⁵ Rockwell provides an excellent overview of the first two years of correspondence between the two (1982, 78-93). Although the condescension drips off of every letter written from Grundtvig, Tang Kristensen also pushes back forcibly throughout much of the correspondence.

¹⁶ One could extend this period through 1883 but, as he himself remarks, the years between 1877-1883 were not terribly productive for him in the context of folklore collecting (MO vol. 2, 349).

¹⁷ Indeed, the intense localization of his early collecting informs the title of *Jyske Folkeminder*, the full title of which is *Jyske Folkeminder, især fra Hammerum Herred*. It is not until the sixth volume of the series, which was published in 1883, that he drops “især fra Hammerum Herred” from the series title.

¹⁸ MO vol. 2, 112-113

¹⁹ He started using these notebooks in 1871. The very first person included in these books is Ivar Pedersen from Lind, from whom he collected in April of that year (MO vol. 2, 62). Iver was already one of Tang Kristensen’s best ballad informants, having sung numerous ballads for him in 1869 (MO vol. 4, 416b). Eventually, he filled 335 of these small booklets, which have been bound together in 32 volumes.

²⁰ He had one more son, Johannes Evald born in 1906, with his third wife Marie.

²¹ Steen Steensen Blicher (October 11, 1782 – March 26, 1848) was a Danish Lutheran minister and author. He was particularly known for his stories about everyday life among the Danish peasantry. Tang Kristensen had worked on a book about Blicher (1882), and it was through this work that he originally came into contact with Termansen.

²² *Dania* managed to stay active for 10 years, from 1890-1903. It was then replaced by *Danske Studier*, with Axel Olrik as the first editor. About this succession, Tang Kristensen notes with some bitterness in his memoirs, “At ‘Dania’ ikke kunde holde sig ret længe, var selvsagt, og det maatte saa afløses af et med en anden Titel, som er blevet endnu lærdere og kjedeligere og saa godt som helt skyder forbi den Opgave, jeg har tænkt mig. Enhver kan nok gætte, hvad det er for et Tidsskrift, jeg her tænker paa” [That ‘Dania’ could not last very long is obvious, and it had to be replaced by a journal with another title, which has become even more learned and boring, and completely misses the mark of the task I had set

for it. Everyone can guess which journal I am talking about here” (MO vol. 2, 365).

²³ It is of course fully possible that Tang Kristensen had little knowledge of Ibsen. Recounting a visit to a teacher in Mellerup, he writes, “Jeg fulgte saa med ind til Eleverne, der var samlede, og saa begyndte Knudsen at læse op. Det var noget af Henrik Ibsen, men jeg husker ikke, hvad det var, det handlede da om ægteskabelige Forviklinger” [I then accompanied him in to the students who had gathered, and then Knudsen began to read aloud. It was something by Henrik Ibsen but I don’t remember what it was, it was about marital complications.] (MO vol. 3, 124).

²⁴ He describes his meeting with Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson in an uncharacteristically amusing and satirical way in his memoirs (MO vol. 3, 146).

²⁵ Craigie included several of Tang Kristensen’s legends in his book *Scandinavian Folklore* (1896).

²⁶ Rockwell uncovered an intriguing letter from Grainger to his friend Roger Quilter, dated August 30, 1922. Grainger describes his visit to Tang Kristensen, and mentions his amazement at Tang Kristensen’s fast and accurate note taking. He also mentions that most of Tang Kristensen’s income (at the time 1800 crowns) was going to “a sanatorium where he has a poor daughter out of her mind” (Rockwell 1982, 320). Since Tang Kristensen provides an overview of what his children are doing and where they are living at the very end of his memoirs in 1929, but does not mention Nanna, one can only imagine that this must be her (MO vol. 4, 437-438). Indeed, his last mention of Nanna in his memoirs concerns a minor operation she has in 1912 (MO vol. 4, 407).

4

Folklore Genres

Genre was among the main concerns of the earliest Danish folklorists, starting with Anders Sørensen Vedel and his 1591 collection of Danish ballads. The term genre was not in use at that time, but Vedel had at least a general idea of the types of songs that interested him. The classificatory zeal that has marked a great deal of folkloric work up through the twentieth century received its initial impetus from the natural sciences, and taxonomical work of the Swede, Carl Linnæus (Carl von Linné 1707-1778). Linnæus's work on classification of organisms (Linné 1758) also appealed to literary scholars including those who became, during the last decades of the eighteenth century and up through the nineteenth century, interested in the traditional expressive culture of the peasantry.

Concerning literary genre study, Robert Allen mentions that, "for most of its 2,000 years, genre study has been primarily nominological and typological in function. That is to say, it has taken as its principal task the division of the world of literature into types and the naming of those types -- much as the botanist divides the realm of flora into varieties of plants" (Allen 1989, 44). The same applies to the study of folklore where genre classifications became not only an overarching organizational principle for folklore collections, but also a system for focusing collecting efforts. The earliest

Danish collections were all genre-based—accordingly, one finds collections of ballads (Syv and Vedel), proverbs (Petersen), myths (Saxo and Grundtvig) and legends (Thiele) from the very beginnings of the folkloric enterprise in Denmark.

Despite this early emphasis on genre-based collection and publication, the definitions—or at very least the characterizations—of revognized genres are fluid at best. In part, the confusion concerning genres stems from a well-known phenomenon in folklore, namely the distinction between etic (or scholarly) and emic (or popular) categories (Dundes 1962). In short, the terms that scholars use to classify the types of expressive culture can diverge from the terms that are used by non-scholars. So, for example, a farmer in northern Jutland may refer to all of the stories he tells simply as *historier* [stories], whereas a collector or scholar might use a specific term, such as legend or *sagn* to make the individual category more specific. Similarly, terms that are used by scholars might have different meanings in colloquial use. So, for example, that same farmer might refer to a lullaby as a ballad, or *vise*, while the collector might reserve the term ballad for describing narrative songs. To add a final layer of confusion, the use of terms—both emically and etically—changes over time. What was meant by a legend (*sagn*) in scholarly or popular expression in the early nineteenth century may be quite different from what is meant by that same term today.

Ballads and Folksongs

In the introduction to the ninth volume of *Nordisk Kultur* (Nordic Culture), Knut Liestøl provided a one line definition of the folk ballad: “Med folkevise er det her ment den episk-

lyriske ballade frå millomalderen” [The term *folkevis* (folk ballad) here is taken to mean the epic-lyric ballad from the middle ages] (Brøndum-Nielsen, Liestøl et. al. 1931, 3). Liestøl had inherited his limited view of the folk ballad from Grundtvig’s *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, and it reflected the driving Romantic nationalist motivation behind the large ballad collecting projects in Scandinavia through much of the nineteenth century. The definition is unnecessarily narrow, and excludes a significant number of the songs that Tang Kristensen collected and classified as ballads. It also reflects the prevailing scholarly sentiment that the older something was (or was purported to be), the more valuable it was. This approach obscures the wide range of sung expression that was common in rural nineteenth century Denmark, and ignores the important role that singing played for many people, whether they be singers themselves, or just listeners. Finally, this characterization of the ballad genre as a predominantly medieval genre skewed scholarship toward the search for “original forms.”

The vast majority of scholarship on narrative songs—or ballads—in Denmark has focused on the historical dimension of these songs. Generally ballads consist of a series of rhymed verses, sung to a melody that is repeated for each verse. The verses of a ballad are often set off from each other by a chorus or refrain that is repeated at set intervals during the singing of the song, most frequently after each verse. Whereas the verse carries the main story line of the ballad’s narrative, the chorus usually makes an evaluative comment about the fate of the story’s characters, or about their actions. Songs that did not tell a story and songs that related recent events in the manner of broadsides were frequently ignored or discounted by Danish ballad scholars as being “young” or of no historical value. Fortunately, Tang Kristensen did not make these types of value judgments on the songs that his

informants sang for him. Although Svend Grundtvig frequently rejected portions of Tang Kristensen's collections on the grounds that they were not old enough or did not conform to his incipient view of the genre, Tang Kristensen published many of these songs in his own later collections, providing a broader view of the folk song traditions of Denmark.

The main theoretical approach taken toward Danish ballad is reflected in the twelve volume encyclopedic work, *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* (Grundtvig et al. 1966-1976).¹ The majority of *DgF* is concerned with the collation of Danish ballad variants and exhaustive documentation of historical attestations of particular ballads and ballad types throughout Europe. The study of particular word forms plays a small, yet important role, in the determination of a ballad's "age," and reflects the largely philological basis for much of this historical scholarship. Unlike more contemporary approaches to the study of folk song and folk music, the approach taken in *DgF* pays scant attention to music, and is for the most part a study of ballad texts. This approach angered Tang Kristensen who, early in his collecting, had spent a great deal of time producing accurate written recordings of melodies. Grundtvig discarded these recordings after his musical consultant, A. P. Berggreen, evaluated the melodies as incorrect and of little merit.²

One of the main trends in Danish ballad and folk song scholarship derived from the early typological inclinations of the earliest scholars. Accordingly, a great deal of time was spent on developing subgenres. Liestøl provided an overview of each of the major subdivisions based on the divisions present in *DgF*: *Kampeviser*, or heroic ballads in volume one, *Trylleviser*, or magical ballads in volume two, *Historiskeviser*, or historical ballads in volume three, *Riddervis*, or knightly ballads in volumes four through seven, *Romanviser*, or the

romance ballads, and finally later, lyrical ballads, both in volumes eight and nine (Brøndum-Nielsen, Liestøl et. al. 1931). These two later volumes were actually conceived of initially as subordinate to the overarching, and very large, category of knightly ballads. To this elaborate list one can add *Skamteviser*, or jocular ballads, a collection of which Tang Kristensen published in 1901.

One of the most significant developments in the study of narrative song, their transmission, variability and their composition came from scholars studying epic traditions in southern Europe. The early Danish collections of ballads were inspired by Romantic nationalist sentiment and a desire to recover the lost vestiges of a rapidly disappearing indigenous folk poetic tradition. Although many literary elites and scholars had turned away from the classical world and toward the local, the underlying thought that local traditions could emulate the grand classical traditions of Homer's epics lingered just below the surface. In some cases, such as in Finland, these aspirations actually broke through that surface. In the 1930s, two Harvard-based scholars, Milman Parry and Albert Lord, traveled to Bosnia to record Serbo-Croatian epics (Lord 1964). The goal of their research was to form an understanding of how epics were composed, learned and performed. The resulting theory, "the oral formulaic theory," proposed that singers of tales did not memorize their songs word for word, but rather made use of formula—a series of words that fit a set metrical pattern and express a single idea—as they recomposed their songs during performance (Lord 1964). In the years since the emergence of the oral formulaic theory, scholars have applied it to a vast range of expressive genres including the ballad. Ballads, because of their relatively short length (compared to epic songs which can run to many thousands of lines), may not be the best material for this type of study. Work, such as David Rubin's

(1995) on the cognitive psychology of ballads, with his emphasis on cue-item discriminability, may be more productive in understanding memory and composition in relatively short, rhymed and sung genres.

Composition has always been one of the main questions in regards to the folk ballad (Harris 1991). One of the most debated theories, espoused earliest and most eloquently by Charles Kittredge, proposed that ballads were communally composed where the performer and audience effectively fused into a single composer (Child, Sargent and Kittredge 1904, xvii). Ballad scholars in the Faeroes coupled the idea of collective composition to the chain dance, recognizing the close connection between collective singing and collective dancing (Luihn 1980). The theory, which has significant appeal to students of performance theory, suggests that the dance that accompanies the singing produces a state that is conducive to the collective composition of the ballads. Since the dance is integral to the ballad, the ballad cannot be composed without the participation of singers and dancers alike. The underlying idea, which is correct, proposes that every ballad performance is a unique event. It also follows that, as long as people keep dancing, more ballads should be composed; this notion of a constant stream of newly composed ballads along traditional lines never sat well with more historically minded scholars, who were more interested in the history of set texts than the performance context of ballad singing.

Although most Danish folk ballad scholarship has focused almost exclusively on categorization and the historical dating of variants, several other productive avenues for the understanding of folk ballad in late nineteenth century Denmark have been explored. An appreciation of the geographic distribution of folk ballads by *DgF* type is hinted at throughout *DgF*; while this has not been realized in any

cartographic manner, continued work on the Tang Kristensen collection should eventually allow for a fairly accurate mapping of all of the ballad variants that he collected from his numerous informants. Another worthwhile approach, again hinted at in *DgF* but not brought to fruition in any meaningful way, is to explore the relationship between ballad narrative and other genres of folk narrative; in particular, there is a strong relationship between *trylleviser* (magical ballads) and fairy tales. Similarly, motifs that occur in ballads, such as kidnapping and murder, are also fairly common in legends. Finally, the study of ballads in the context of an individual's larger folklore repertoire, an approach predicated on the study of folklore repertoire and pioneered by Nordic folklorists such as Tillhagen (1959), Pentikäinen (1971 and 1978), Koudal (1984), Holbek (1987) and Kaivola-Bregenhøj (1996) is made possible by the materials presented in this publication. This type of repertoire-based study should reveal aspects of the interplay of genres in repertoire and the reasons why individuals choose one genre over another for expressing a particular idea. The latter issue is related to Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi's work on the multi-conduit hypothesis of folklore transmission (1975).

Folktales and Fairytales

Folktale, and its sub-genre the fairy tale, is perhaps the best known of all folk narrative genres. Folktale covers a wide range of expressions. Perhaps the easiest way to define the genre would be to simply point Hans-Jörg Uther's *The Types of International Folktales. A Classification and Bibliography, Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson* (2004; abbreviated as "the Aarne-Thompson-Uther [ATU] index") and say that anything indexed there counts as a folktale. But such an

approach would neither be helpful nor particularly informative. Folktales are fictional narratives that usually unfold in an unspecified place with unspecified characters; in many of these tales, magic is commonplace, and not unexpected. In an overview of the study of folktale in Scandinavia, von Sydow writes, “sagan [vill] I första rummet roa sina åhörare med sitt lustiga eller underbara innehåll utan att fråga efter, om det är sant eller ej. Den nämner därför i regel varken ort- eller personnamn. Blott händelsen i och för sig bryr den sig om. Detta medför också lätt en olikhet i stil: medan sägnen är kort och ofta helt torrt relaterande, söker sagan göra sin framställning så saftig och livlig som möjligt” [The fairy tale wants in the first instance to entertain its listeners with its amusing or wondrous contents without asking whether it is true or not. Therefore it usually mentions neither place nor person names. It only concerns itself with the plot. This also results in a difference in style: while the legend is short and often recounted in an utterly dry fashion, the fairy tale tries to make its representation as juicy and lively as possible] (Sydow 1931, 199). This very general characterization of the genre applies well to Tang Kristensen’s collection of folktales. At the same time, it raises the issue of the gray areas that separate the boundaries between genres. Like Jacob Grimm before him, von Sydow appealed to a contrastive strategy in describing the folktale, opposing it to the legend (cf. Grimm 1816-1818).

In Danish, folktales are referred to as *eventyr*, a word that derives from the Latin *adventura*, the same root as that of the English word adventure. Although Grundtvig proposed early on a classification scheme for the Danish folktales based, not surprisingly, in large part on Tang Kristensen’s collections, the system was incomplete (Lunding 1910). Fortunately, most scholarly interest in folktales has moved away from the early twentieth century fascination with classification and typology,

a fascination best exemplified by the ATU index and Stith Thompson's motif index (Uther 2004; Thompson 1932).

Two main structuralist approaches to the study of folk narrative developed during the middle part of the twentieth century. The first, often referred to as syntagmatic structuralism, was developed by the Russian formalist, Vladimir Propp (1895-1970). Basing his study on a collection of Siberian fairy tales by his countryman Alexander Afanasyev (1826-1871), Propp proposed in 1928 a "grammar" of the fairy tale (Propp 1928). The general approach was to break the fairy tale—those tales catalogued between numbers 300 and 749 in ATU, and ending in a wedding—into its smallest constituent elements which he labeled "functions." He then presented four rules concerning these functions: "(1) Functions of character serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled... (2) The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited... (3) The sequence of functions is always identical... (4) All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure" (Propp 1968, 21-23). As he moved through the Afanasyev corpus, Propp refined the approach, and explained the thirty-one functions that described all the fairy tale characters and action. Not surprisingly, the implications of these rules are quite far reaching. Although his work was originally published in Russian in 1928, it did not receive much critical attention in the rest of Europe and North America until it appeared in English translation in 1958, as *The Morphology of the Folktale*. When it did appear, it inspired many scholars, including the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and the American folklorist Alan Dundes.

Dundes, in his work on the morphology of the North American Indian folktales, effectively built on the morphology proposed by Propp (Dundes 1964). By expanding on the term "motifeme," first proposed by

Kenneth Pike (1954), and recognizing its equivalence to Propp's function, Dundes constructed an interpretive framework that allows one to go beyond the simple mapping of functions as they appear in a folktale. Although all folktales may be a single type in terms of their structure, significant variation exists in the way functions (or motifemes) are filled and by whom. Building on linguistic theory, and Pike's precedent, Dundes labeled the observed phenomena that filled a motifemic slot *allomotifs* (Dundes 1980[1964], 59). The range of allomotifs available for any motifemic slot is conditioned by several factors, including tradition dominants (Eskeröd 1947, 81), a narrator's own tendencies, as reflected in his or her repertoire, and audience expectations and response. Studying the range of possible allomotifs for any given motifemic slot within a tradition group or area can provide a deeper understanding of variation and the psychological, social, political and narrative forces that lead to such variation.

Claude Lévi-Strauss's structural approach to anthropology and mythology were no doubt influenced by Propp's syntagmatic structuralist approach as well. His approach to the study of myth is generally referred to as paradigmatic structuralism. In this approach, variants of myths from a target culture are coded according to binary oppositions. Such an approach led Lévi-Strauss to conclude, for example, that Zuni Indian myths focused on the mediation between life and death. For him, "mythical thought always works from the awareness of oppositions towards their progressive mediation" (Lévi-Strauss 1958a, 62). Yet, as Dundes pointed out, Lévi-Strauss's paradigmatic structuralism is "certainly not easily intelligible and very probably not easily verified" (Dundes 1964(1980), 47). Nevertheless, Lévi-Strauss's admonition that cultural expressions need to be studied in context is well

worth heeding, and it informs a repertoire-centered approach to the study of folk narrative.

Perhaps the most important theoretical and analytical contribution yet made to the study of folktales came from the Danish scholar, Bengt Holbek (1933-1992) in his book *Interpretation of Fairy Tales* (1987). His work was predicated on Tang Kristensen's collections, and his analytical model combined the best of Propp and Dundes, incorporating a strong psychoanalytical dimension along with the underlying structural analysis of the tales. Holbek's remarkably clear model was based on a graphical representation of the five "moves" that constitute the fairy tale. He proposed that four main types of fairy tales exist—active and passive masculine and feminine tales—and that all the types emphasize the mediation of three main oppositions: male and female, high status and low status, and young and adult. The manner in which these oppositions are mediated reveals a great deal about the psychosocial tensions that animate peasant life at the end of nineteenth century Denmark.

With his graphical representation, Holbek reconciled in a single model the seemingly irreconcilable theoretical positions of varying structuralist schools without falling prey to an overly reductionist methodology. His graphing of fairy tale variants—each one tied closely to the person who told the tale—produced a consistent method for addressing the narrative choices made by the tale teller while relating those choices back to both the fairy tale tradition as a whole, and the storyteller's repertoire and biography. Ultimately, Holbek proposed that Danish folktales—and fairy tales in particular—represented an expression of wishful thinking. He situated these stories as predominantly an expression of the lower classes and, although many of the events allude to interactions and alliances with the upper classes, the stories

are more about domestic tensions and family politics than any evaluation of interaction between the classes.

Legend

One of the earliest collections of Danish folklore that was neither ballad nor proverb was Just Matthias Thiele's collection of Danish legends, *Danske Folkesagn* (1818-1823). As Per Skar notes, "Thiele's model was the Grimm brother's groundbreaking work 'Deutsche Sagen' of 1816-1818" (Skar 1968, 7). In the introduction to that work, Jacob Grimm gave voice to the contrast between legend and folktale, proposing that, "Das Märchen ist poetischer, die Sage historischer" [The fairy tale is more poetic, the legend more historical] (Grimm 1816, v). This contrastive definition informed the understanding of legend through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even Tang Kristensen made little attempt to provide a definition of the genre—his definition is implicit rather than explicit, and can only be derived by looking at what he includes in his various collections of "Jyske folkesagn" (Jutlandic folk legends) and "Danske sagn" (Danish legends).

Like many of his contemporaries, Tang Kristensen was more concerned with subgenres or subcategories of legend, than with any clear demarcation of the legend genre itself. In the foreword to his first collection of legends, *Jyske folkesagn* (JFm 3, 1876), he provides an overview of his initial classification scheme, which he refined in later editions:

Min ordning af Sagnene er saa som saa, og jeg
føler Trang til at belyse den lidt. De om
Bjærgfolkene staa forrest som de værdfuldeste
og aandrigeste, da de nærmest pege tilbage paa

selve Gudesagnene. Eller er der gjort tydelige Overgange fra det ene Æmne til det andet, hvor saadanne vilde byde sig frem. De forskjellige Slags overnaturlige Væsener, der nævnes i de første Afdelinger, holdes i Sagnfortællingen ikke klart ude fra hverandre; ja det er hartad, som man kørte i Ring... Titelen til 3die Afdeling: Sagn om Personer og Steder, er noget svævende, men jeg fandt ikke noget bedre til at betegne de historier... 4de og 5te Afd. indeslutter Sagnene om de fredløse Sjæle og de levendes Bestræbelser for at blive dem kvit....5te Afd. skiller sig væsentlig fra 6te. I denne optræder nok kloge Folk saa vel som i hin; men de ere traadte i Forbindelse med den Slemme og udrette deres Kunster ved hans Hjælp... Sagn om Skatte knytte sig især til Varsler, endskjønt de og kunde have været stillede i 1ste Afd., da det mesten Dels er Bjærgfolk, der ruge over disse... Om Ulve, Pest o. lign. fortælles til sidst, da saadant kan betragtes som Efterslæt (JFm 3, ix-x).

[My organization of the legends is what it is and I feel a need to explain it a bit. The ones about the hidden folk (mound dwellers) are at the beginning as the most valuable and the most spiritual as they nearly point back to the legends of the gods. Otherwise there are clear divisions from one subject to the next, wherever they stand out. The various kinds of supernatural beings that are mentioned in the first sections are not clearly separated in the legends; yes it is as if one was going round in

circles... The title of the third section: legends about people and places, is a bit fluid but I couldn't figure out anything better to describe those stories... the fourth and fifth sections comprise legends about souls that have no peace and the efforts of the living to be rid of them... the fifth section is quite different from the sixth section. Cunning folk appear in this latter section as well but here they have made a pact with the Devil and practice their arts with his help... Legends about treasure are linked in particular to portents, even though they could have been included in the first section, since it is mostly hidden folk who brood over these... Stories about wolves, the plague and the like are told last since they can be considered as an appendix.]

As in his later collections, in this first volume of legends he focused predominantly on a theme-based classificatory scheme, foreshadowing Reidar Christiansen's much later index of "migratory" legends (1992 [1958]). By the time Tang Kristensen published his major collection of Danish legends, *Danske Sagn* (1892-1901), his classificatory scheme had become quite elaborate but was still based on this initial classification. In *Danske Sagn*, he broke the legends into thirty final categories, with several higher level groupings.³ One of the main problems with the system is that it is idiosyncratic, and does not correspond with other classification systems. To make matters worse, Tang Kristensen did not follow it in other works, such as his earlier *Gamle folks fortællinger om det jyske almueliv*. The other main problem with the system is that stories can only have one classifier attached to them—accordingly, if a story includes, for example, a revenant, a

named minister and a folk healer, Tang Kristensen is confronted by a classificatory problem: should the story appear in volume five, with the majority of stories about revenants, in volume four, with the majority of stories about named ministers, or in volume six, with the stories about folk healers? He appears to have made his decisions regarding this classificatory puzzle appear on an *ad hoc* basis.⁴

As folklore collections—and particularly collections of legends—grew ever larger, the Swedish folklorist von Sydow became deeply interested in the emerging folklore genre system. One of his major contributions to the study of legend was the distinction between *fabulate* and *memorate*, a distinction that was refined by Pentikäinen (1968b) but ultimately shown to be untenable by Dégh and Vázsonyi (Dégh and Vázsonyi 1974; see also Tangherlini 1994, 12). In an overview of the legend genre, von Sydow mentioned the difficulty of characterizing the genre and of classifying legend texts, contrasting it to the relative ease of both tasks for folktales: “Av de båda orienterande översikterna ‘Om folkets sägner’ och ‘Om folksagorna’ har sålunda den förra måst åtskilligt överskrida det på förhand beräknade utrymmet, emedan ingen vetenskapligt tillfredsställande utredning om sägnen, des olika arter, dess uppkomst och livsbetingelser m.m. förut funnits att tillgå” [Of the two introductory overviews, “Concerning folk legends” and “Concerning the fairy tale,” the first has exceeded considerably the prearranged limits, largely because no satisfactory scientific description of the legend exists including its various types, its origin and how it develops and changes etc.](von Sydow 1931, 93). As a main distinction between the two genres, he wrote, “[man] räknar till sagans område den mera medvetna diktning, som berättas främst i underhållande syfte utan tanke på om dess innehåll är sant eller ej. Till sägnen räknar man däremot sådana berättelser, som tagits på allvar såsom nyttig eller intressant

kunskab” [One considers in the realm of the fairy tale the more consciously poetic, which is told first and foremost with a view toward entertaining with little consideration of whether it is true or not. In contrast, one considers in the realm of the legend stories that are taken seriously as important or interesting knowledge] (von Sydow 1931, 96).

He went on to provide an ontology for these stories that are told as true. First, he divided them into historical and mythological legends, even though he admitted that “I ett vetenskapligt tillfredsställande ordningssystem är sålunda en indelning... knappast lämplig, men innan en bättre indelning kommer til stånd... kan man använda de båda rubrikerna vid en grov fördelning av materialet” [In a scientifically satisfactory classification system such a division is... hardly appropriate, but no better division comes to light... and so one can use both of these rubrics as part of a rough division of the material] (von Sydow 1931, 97). He explored other possible major divisions, including the well-known “place legends” and “migratory legends,” but also recognized the near impossibility of assigning legends to either one or the other category. Instead, he proposed another possible series of categories, all of which generally accrued to the main category of “historical legends”: *minnessägnar*, *ättasagor*, *upphovssägnar* and *vittnessägnar*. Unfortunately, as he himself concluded, these categories were inadequate for any classificatory system, and only helped to highlight some of the aspects of the genre itself (von Sydow 1931, 111).

Other general classifications, such as that proposed by Hans Ellekilde in his edition of Svend Grundtvig’s *Danske Folkesagn, 1839-1883*, offered far less precision than von Sydow’s scheme (Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948). Ellekilde, for example, relied on very general categories, with a main division between “local legends,” and “personal legends,” the former placing main emphasis on the location

of the events described in the legend, and the latter placing main emphasis on the people described in the legend (Grundtvig and Ellekilde 1944-1948, 61). Again, even a simple scheme such as this failed because of the “boundary problem” that Dégh and Vázsonyi explored in the context of the memorate/fabulate discussion. Part of the problem lies, of course, with the “elasticity” of the legend genre—stories expand and contract, spill over into other stories, and sometimes shift genre during the telling. Tang Kristensen hinted at his frustration at classifying stories early on, noting “Om en Tid mod haaber jeg at kunne udgive endnu en lille Sagnsamling, hvori de ‘Æventyrlige Sagn,’ der staa som Overgangsled imellem Sagn og Æventyr, ville finde deres Plads” [I hope at one point to be able to publish a small legend collection where the “Fairy tale legends,” which act as a cross-over genre between legend and fairy tale, will find their place] (JFm 3, viii).

Ultimately, none of these classificatory systems works, falling victim as they all do to the single text-single classifier problem. What is intriguing about all the classification work on legends is that none of the scholars actually state what it was he was trying to classify. Von Sydow comes closest with his characterization of legends as stories that are related to local belief and are concerned with interesting or worthwhile information.

Although the legend genre resists definition, it is possible to provide a concise characterization of stories that are considered to be legends. In an earlier work, I have proposed that legend typically is “a traditional, (mono)episodic, highly ecotypified, localized and historicized narrative of past events, told as believable in a conversational mode...legend is a symbolic representation of folk belief and reflects the collective experiences and values of the group to whose tradition it belongs” (Tangherlini 1994, 22).⁵ Such a

characterization provides a basis both for genre distinction and for understanding the types of issues people might address through the telling of legends.

The analysis of legend can proceed from an exploration both of the interrelated processes of ecotypification, localization (the process by which stories are attached to local places and people), and historicization (the process by which stories are embedded in time) and of the negotiation of cultural ideology (beliefs, norms, and values) expressed in individual legends. Borrowing a term from botany, von Sydow proposed the idea of the “oikotype” (ecotype) to describe what happens to a story or a story motif when it moves from one cultural environment to another. One of the most common changes is that characters are altered to align with the tradition-dominant characters of the new cultural area. If a story about a goblin, for example, moves into a cultural area where goblins are unknown, then the goblin figure might be changed into another, locally recognized figure such as an elf. Understanding ecotypification can help one understand variation in stories both across national and linguistic boundaries—helping explain, for example, the differences in the conception of hidden people in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Similarly, examining aspects of localization and historicization can help identify the degree to which a storyteller wants to keep the story at a physical or temporal distance.

One of the most powerful tools for the consideration of cultural ideology and its expression in folk legend is a structural model proposed by William Labov and Joshua Waletzky (Labov and Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972). The approach was further refined by Teun van Dijk (1980) and adapted for the study of legend by William Nicolaisen (1987). In this model, the events in a story are mapped according to three main structural categories, and three ancillary categories

(printed in italics here): *Abstract*, Orientation, Complicating Action, *Evaluation*, Resolution, and *Coda*. Legends frequently deal with someone's perception of outside threat, and provide examples of strategies to deal with that threat. The success or failure of the strategy represents an ideological endorsement or rejection of that strategy on the part of the storyteller.⁶

In the abstract of a legend, the storyteller provides a brief overview of the story—"did I tell you about the time Pastor Larsen conjured a ghost?" Frequently, these abstracts are not included in written archives, and Tang Kristensen's collection is no different. Consequently, it is difficult to assess how often they were part of the performances he recorded. The orientation sets up the story, situating it historically, placing it in the local environment, and identifying the members of the community. The selection of "community" is an important element—either the community is seen as coterminous with the community of the storyteller and his or her audience, or the community is presented as different, either because of historical distance, geographic remove, or cultural difference. In most cases, however, legends focus on a representation of "us"—that is, the teller and the audience recognize in the legend's actants people who are or could be members of their community. The most extreme example of this identification of storytellers with their story actants occurs in first person narratives.

The complicating action—"what happened" in the words of Labov and Waletzky—is the event that makes the story worth reporting. Labov (1997) wrote of a threshold of reportability; if the "what happened" does not rise above this threshold, the chances that the story will be told, remembered and repeated drop precipitously (see also Robinson 1981, 59; van Dijk 1975). The "what happened" in legend is most frequently presented as a form of threat by an "outsider" to the community "insiders." Exploring the types of threats, and

what is threatened, is one of the theoretically richest areas of legend study. In Danish legends, the threats are usually to the physical, spiritual, or economic well-being of the community. The forms that threats can assume are myriad. In Danish legend tradition, threats are either supernatural or natural, and come either from outside or inside the community. In either case, there is a large gray area—what Victor Turner would label a “liminal” space, betwixt and between the otherwise well-defined boundaries (Turner 1969). In many cases, legends explore whether something belongs to one category or the other.

Turner’s concept of liminality is particularly powerful in relation to the understanding of legend. The complicating action often occurs in a liminal space—one that teeters on the boundaries of human controlled space and uncontrolled, or wild, space. Understanding how space is coded—inside, outside, and in between—in these stories provides significant insight into shifting interpretations among members of the tradition community during a time of rapid change in both the physical and manmade environments. Similarly, understanding each particular threat—both its form and its relationship to the environment—as well as considering the various implications of that threat to the storyteller and their audience in the context(s) of their everyday lives allows one to integrate the analysis of legend with the analysis of social, political, economic and cultural change. As such, legend provides an important window into changing conceptions of community.

Most supernatural threats (which may not turn out to be threatening afterall, as in the case of legends of the mound dwellers’ baking for example (Tangherlini 1998a)) belong to the outside or nonhuman realm: they come from trolls, giants, mound dwellers, elves, merfolk, and *nisser*. Most of these creatures also belong to the “outside” environment—those

physical areas that exist beyond the boundaries of the village or the farm and its out buildings: forests, heaths, swamps, streams, lakes and oceans. Some of them inhabit the liminal space between the “outside” and the “inside,” dwelling in arable land, as in the case of the mound dwellers. Others, as in the case of the *nisse* (house spirit), inhabit the same physical space as community members. Some supernatural beings, such as revenants and witches originally belonged to the inside human realm but, because of their actions—dying and subsequently haunting in the case of revenants, and making a pact with the devil in the case of witches—have allied themselves with the threatening, outside realm. Witches, of course, are a particularly problematic category, since they are so hard to identify. Consequently many of the stories explore whether or not someone is in fact a witch (Tangherlini 2000).

Most non-supernatural threats originate in the human realm: they come from thieves, robbers, and murderers to name but three, all of whom are humans and one-time community members. Interestingly, many of these threateners come from outside of the threatened community. Thieves frequently live in underground lairs hidden in the forest, while robbers and murderers either strike while a person is away from home, or appear as wanderers asking for assistance before striking their blow. Occasionally, community members are overcome by greed and, through their actions, reveal themselves to be menaces both to the economic and physical well-being of the community.

In the structural model, the complicating action also includes the response of the “insiders” to the event. Often, they are simply baffled. In these cases, the story emerges as an opportunity for the storyteller and the listeners to negotiate a suitable explanation for understanding the event. In other words, they fit the event into a conceptual category that is accepted within the tradition group. Lauri Honko

(1962, 1964) proposed that this type of negotiation—and subsequent retellings of the story with the derived explanation—serves as a model for the creation and perpetuation of belief stories, a proposed subcategory of legend.

In many more cases, the “insiders” decide on a course of action to countermand the threat. Michel de Certeau (1985, 23) proposed that stories thus comprise, “repertoires of schemes of action... mementos [that] teach the tactics possible within a given system.” Stories allow one to pose a problem and then explore in the relative safety of narrative the possible outcomes of a proposed strategy for dealing with that problem. It is surprisingly fitting that the theme song of the movie comedy *Ghostbusters* asks the question, “When ghosts appear in the neighborhood, who ya’ gonna call?”, acknowledging that the response to a threat is a strategic one—call the wrong person, and the strategy is likely to fail (Tangherlini 1998a). The long term outcome of the success or failure of a particular strategy is occasionally deferred to the story’s *coda*, the “what finally happened” ending that may or may not appear in a legend.

The exploration of strategies and their outcomes is a hallmark of legend telling—each complicating action requires the “insiders” to decide on some form of counteraction. The counteraction can have a series of possible outcomes—positive, negative and ambiguous. The outcome is reported in the “resolution” in the structural model of the legend. The storyteller has a great deal of latitude in reporting the outcome of the encounter and, in so doing, can offer an ideological evaluation of the efficacy of a particular strategy. So, for instance, if a local minister fails in his efforts to conjure down a particularly resilient revenant, and a folk healer has to step in to save the farm, one can interpret the story in the context of the shifting power dynamics of late

nineteenth century Denmark, where the previously unchallenged role of the Lutheran minister as the spiritual protector of the community was in flux.

This analytical method has significant interpretive power when it is applied across a series of variants of a particular story or across the repertoire of a storyteller or group of storytellers. While it is certainly not the only way to understand legends, the structural map allows for a consideration of several issues in a consistent manner: who constitutes the inside community, what type of threat challenges the integrity of the community, how is that threat manifest, what strategies exist for dealing with that threat, and what are the outcomes of these strategies in dealing with the threat? The multiple forks in the decision tree governing a legend telling—many of which accrue to the storyteller as he or she moves from deciding to tell a story, to telling the story, to concluding the story—are closely related to the storyteller's current world view. Because a storyteller's world view often changes over time, it is not uncommon to find that a storyteller who endorsed one strategy at one time has changed that position at a later telling. Similarly, because these positions are constantly being negotiated as part of the give and take of everyday storytelling, one can encounter seemingly contradictory positions within a single person's repertoire. All of this simply confirms that the negotiation of cultural ideology—the norms, beliefs and values that inform so much of day-to-day interactions in a community—is a messy business, and one that is never complete.

Other Genres

Tang Kristensen's collections are not limited solely to the "big three" genres, ballad, folktale and legend. As noted,

many of the stories and songs he collected straddle the conventional genre boundaries so that in his collections one finds examples of “fairy tale-like legends,” jocular tales (*schwank*), jokes, riddles, proverbs, sayings, greetings and leave takings, recipes, prayers, cures, and curses. Some of these genres, such as riddles and proverbs, have been explored in significant detail by folklorists (Mieder 2003; Taylor 1951), whereas others have received scant attention. Because these expressions make up only a small proportion of the five main repertoires considered here, I do not explore them in detail. Nevertheless, these expressions form a key part of the storytellers’ repertoires and should not be disregarded—they offer important insight into the thoughts and views of the individual.

Tang Kristensen’s collections—and the repertoires presented here—also include detailed descriptions of everyday life, farming practices, life cycle and calendrical festivals. Tang Kristensen had no real way to categorize these descriptions, and eventually settled for publishing them under the rubric of *Gamle folkes fortællinger om det jyske almueliv*. He had no shortage of material, and eventually published twelve large volumes in this series with an additional third series still in manuscript form at the Danish Folklore Archives (1929/102). These stories, some of which could easily have been published in the *Danske sagn* series, provide rich background material for understanding past agricultural practices and late nineteenth century daily life. In this way, they provide equally rich material for understanding the context in which the other stories are told.

One of the major faults with Tang Kristensen’s desire to publish stories according to the genre classifications that held sway at the time is that, in so doing, all the connections between stories that develop during the telling disappear. If one reads through a storyteller’s repertoire, one often finds a

close relationship between the descriptions of daily life printed in *Jyske almueliv* and those in *Danske sagn*. These descriptions also intersect with those in the folktales printed in Tang Kristensen's various folktale collections, as well as with the contents of the ballads included in his and Grundtvig's ballad collections. These connections are lost, however, when the stories are broken up and parsed out into the published collections. The intersections among genres—and the close connections among all the accounts in an informant's repertoire—can best be seen when one reads a person's entire repertoire. This sort of re-contextualization is one of the main reasons I present the repertoires as I have done here.

Notes

¹ *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* is referred to by its abbreviation DgF throughout.

² A greater appreciation of the relationship between folk song texts and the melodies to which they were sung informs more recent Danish scholarship, particularly that of Jens Henrik Koudal (1984).

³ These categories and subcategories are included in the index of stories available from the Danish Folklore Nexus. Go to the "Topic and Index Navigator" tab on the home page and select the "ETK indices" accordion.

⁴ Fortunately, this problem can be solved in the digital realm—although Tang Kristensen's classifications are available for all of the stories included in this work, other classifications of the same stories are also available in the Danish Folklore Nexus. For access to these classification schemes, go to the "Topic and Index Navigator" tab on the

home page. One can then select from a variety of indices to the collection.

⁵ Borrowing a term from botany, von Sydow uses the idea of “oikotype” or “ecotype” to describe what happens to a story or a story motif when it moves from one cultural environment to another. One of the most common changes in stories is that characters are changed to align with the tradition dominant characters in the new cultural area—if a story about a goblin moves into a cultural area where goblins are not known, the goblin figure might be changed into another locally recognized figure, such as an elf.

⁶ As part of the metadata accompanying stories accessible from the Danish Folklore Nexus, I have provided a coding of the legends as positively, negatively or ambiguously resolved. The reader can decide on the usefulness of this evaluative metadata.

5

Mapping Folklore

The earliest folklorists were keenly aware of the power that visual representations have as analytical tools. Julius and Kaarle Krohn's methodology for the study of folklore variants, originally predicated on the study of oral narrative, but later adapted for most forms of folkloric expression, required the use of geographical representations—maps—as a means for understanding not only the distribution of variant forms, but also for tracing the development and spread of those forms. The method, often referred to as the “Historic-Geographic Method,” ultimately proved untenable, focused as it was on the discovery of *urformen* (original forms) and a fairly simplistic—or at least unrealistic—model of stasis, change, transmission and distribution.¹ Nevertheless, this “Finnish” method recognized the profound impact on thinking that the map can have as a means for understanding places related to memory, recollection and performance.

The method was codified by Antti Aarne in *Leitfaden der vergleichenden Märchenforschung* (Manual for Comparative Folktale Research) (1913; Chesnutt 1993, 236) and later presented in *Die folkloristische arbeitsmethode* (Folklore Methodology) (Krohn 1926) as a how-to guide for implementing the method in the study of a folk expression and its variants. Alternately labeled “the comparative method,” the “cartographic method,” the “historic-geographic method,”

and the “Finnish method,” the adaptation of this method as the defining approach in folkloristics resulted in a large series of studies, many published in FF Communications (FFC). In its early years, FFC became a *de facto* factory for the dissemination of these results. Apart from Aarne’s numerous monographs on various folktale types, the most impressive of these comparative studies in the first quarter of the twentieth century include Walter Anderson’s *Kaiser und Abt* (Emperor and Abbot), considered among the most important application of the method to the study of jocular tales (1923); Waldemar Liungman’s study of the princess in the earthmound (1925), one of the more thorough applications of the method; and Reidar Christiansen’s study of the two travelers (1916). The method also led to the development of many of the standard reference works for the comparative study of tales, including the tale type index, the motif index and the catalog of the migratory legends (Uther 2004; Thompson 1955-1958; Christiansen 1958). In more recent years, scholars such as Christine Goldberg have attempted to rehabilitate the method (1993; 1997). It is interesting to note that the number of actual maps included in these studies is small, in part because of the difficulty and costs associated with producing hand-drawn maps, but also because of the limited amount of data, and the limited types of maps—largely point distribution maps—that the method required. Nevertheless, there are several important concepts from the historic geographic method that still are applicable in our attempts to understand traditional expression and the processes by which traditions are created, circulate and change. Without too much trouble, these concepts can be incorporated into a more considered and a more wide ranging appreciation of the roles that history and geography play in conditioning traditional expression. This wider understanding,

in turn, can inform decisions regarding what to map, and how to analyze the resulting maps.

Although the original historic geographic method focused entirely on texts, and made scant mention of the collectors, the tradition participants, and the local social and economic forces that shaped the collections, a new historic geographic method needs to consider each of these as part of the folkloric process. Indeed, it is incumbent on contemporary folklorists to extend the appreciation of historical and environmental forces that influence the development of tradition to include factors that are not considered in the original method. The visual representation of the interconnectedness of each of these relationships through maps as well as through what Franco Moretti labels graphs and trees provides a more accurate representation of the complex relationships that result in a folklore recording than the simple maps of the earlier Finnish method (Moretti 2005).

In central Europe and the Nordic countries, a cartographic approach to folklore and folklife studies emphasizing regional variation and local social contexts began to find adherents as early as the the 1920s (Sanderson 1971, 90). The idea of mapping folklore was already conceived in 1857 by Wilhelm Riehl, but it was not until the early decades of the twentieth century that it gained intellectual traction among folklorists (Wiegmann and Cotter 1968, 188). Instead, mapping was largely claimed by dialectologists and, with the Krohns, researchers engaged in the study of the historical development of expressive culture.

In Scandinavia, Sigurd Erixson's work with the *Nordiska Museet* and his close collaboration with Åke Campbell led to the production of the *Atlas över svensk folkkultur: materiell och social kultur* (Atlas of Swedish Folk Culture: Material and Social Culture, 1957). This comprehensive ethnographic atlas describing the distribution of a broad range of distinct

cultural expressive forms documented across Sweden was inspired by similar projects in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Poland and other central European countries in the decades leading up to the Second World War. With these atlases as models, the Swedish atlas emphasized aspects of material culture and folk life rather than narrative traditions. Erixon, along with colleagues from Germany and Holland, was also deeply involved in early discussions about the production of an ambitious pan-European ethnological atlas, a project that has yet to reach fruition (Sarmela 2009, 17).

The German atlas was the most ambitious of the early atlases of folk culture. The effort was initiated by a young folklorist, Lutz Mackensen who, in the late nineteen twenties and early nineteen thirties, was a faculty member at the University of Greifswald. Although hired to teach German and Nordic philology, he soon became a key figure in establishing folklore at the university. He founded the folklore archive for Pomerania and, in his capacity of director of the archive, began the process of compiling material for what he envisioned would be a comprehensive *Atlas für Volkskunde* (Atlas of Folklore), describing the folk culture of Germany. He also initiated important contacts with colleagues in Sweden, and this collaboration doubtlessly influenced the development of the atlas of Swedish folk culture. Mackensen's project was interrupted by the war, with his co-editor Erich Röhr falling in battle in 1943, and his collaborator on the Pomeranian atlas, Karl Kaiser, falling in battle on the western front in 1940 (Boberg 1953, 65). Eventually Mackensen's early work led to the publication of a greatly abbreviated edition of the *Atlas der Deutschen Volkskunde* (Atlas of German Folklore) (Harmjanz and Röhr, 1937-1939). After the war, the atlas project evolved into a massive undertaking based on largely questionnaire-based data collection. Starting in the 1950s, volumes of this new

atlas, now edited by Matthias Zender, began appearing under the title *Atlas der Deutschen Volkskunde (II)* (1958-1982). This work on the cartographic representation of variation and distribution of folklore and folklife was echoed not only in the work of European scholars in the ensuing decades, but also in the work of American folklorists, such as Henry Glassie (1971).

Apart from Sweden, Finland was the only other Nordic country significantly involved in the folk atlas enterprise. Neither Denmark nor Norway ever produced a comprehensive atlas of folk culture, a fact attributable to the greater emphasis in those countries on folk narrative culture. Work on a Finnish folk cultural atlas began already in the late 1930s but, as with many of these major national undertakings, it was interrupted by the war. In 1945, Ragna Ahlbäck published *Kultur-geografiska kartor över Svenskfinland* (Cultural Geographic Maps of Swedish Finland), a project that focused specifically on the Swedish-speaking minority in western Finland (Sarmela 2009, 16). In the mid 1970s, Martti Sarmela took charge of the broader and more comprehensive *Finnish Folklore Atlas* (2009). This atlas was preceded in the mid 1970s by an atlas of Finnish material culture (Vuorela 1976). Whereas earlier atlases of folk culture were largely dependent on hand-drawn maps, and made little use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or statistical approaches to data representation, Sarmela's work has taken advantage of the technological advances of the past three decades. The *Finnish Folklore Atlas*, with its ninety-nine excellent maps stands as a natural bridge to the dynamic mapping of expressive folk culture. In this approach, multiple phenomena—historical maps, land use maps, satellite imagery, field collecting routes, biographical data of informants, and the distribution of folk expressive culture—can all be projected into a single mapping

environment allowing for sophisticated analysis and visualization of the data.

Since the mid 1990s, several technological developments have made it possible to reincorporate mapping and geography in the study of folklore: inexpensive computers have become increasingly powerful both in terms of computation and visual display; mapping software has become far more user friendly than it once was; and large scale digitization projects have made resources available for use across the internet. Consequently, connecting maps—the production of which had been largely a mechanical operation limited to highly trained cartographers—with large databases of historical data has become possible. This ability to connect large amounts of “attribute data” (e.g. stories or songs) to geo-referenced historical maps holds the promise of making the geographic visualization of historically collected data a potentially productive component of any folklore research.

The computational approach to the geographic visualization of historical data and the relationships encoded in that data is generally labeled historical Geographic Information Systems or historical GIS (Gregory and Ell 2007, 15). Historical GIS as a methodology for the study of historical data in the context of geography goes far beyond the cartographic representation of historical data. Anne Knowles emphasizes that “GIS allows familiar evidence to be re-examined... so that long-standing interpretations can be challenged” (Gregory and Ell 2007, 16). One of the main avenues for challenging earlier assumptions is through the visualization of the geographic relationships that exist in most historical collections of documents or cultural expressions. Several examples of historical GIS successfully challenging established ideas include Geoff Cunfer’s study of the causes of the Dust Bowl and Knowles’s exploration of “view sheds” at Gettysburg (Knowles et. al. 2008). In both cases,

researchers were able to couple historical accounts to historical maps, and use the tools of GIS to discover patterns and subsequently provide convincing arguments based on those patterns that have led to broad reassessments of historical events.

One of the main challenges of historical GIS is reconciling on the one hand imperfect databases that are replete with missing values and information that cannot be easily quantified with, on the other hand, an approach that is fundamentally based on the mathematics of graphs. Earth scientists, climatologists, geologists, demographers, urban planners and so on have used GIS for many years. Their databases tend to be very large, focus on easily quantifiable values, and incorporate measurements from remote sensing. Folklorists, historians and cultural geographers, on the other hand, tend to deal with data that is hard to quantify, is sparse, and often imprecise. Early claims about the role GIS would play in revolutionizing the study of cultural geography were met with equally hard pushback (Gregory and Ell 2007, 14).

The important criticism of GIS as “the very worst sort of positivism” stems in part from the overtly quantitative nature of GIS (Taylor 1990, 211; cited in Gregory and Ell 2007, 14). Complex historical data is reduced to points on a map, and various statistical applications are then applied to these points, providing seemingly very accurate visualizations of fundamentally fuzzy data. This criticism of the positivist tendency in GIS could also be applied to the earliest historic-geographic method in folklore. Although this early approach to mapping folklore did not make use of computers and statistics, it proposed that mapping variants of folk expression would make clear the geographic and, by extrapolation, historic origins of that expression. In essence, the early historic-geographic folklorists reduced their variant data to simple point data, and then proposed an essentially

positivist and reductionist view of similarity and folklore transmission. A contemporary application of mapping to folklore could easily fall prey to the positivist fallacy that the representations are an irrefutable “result” and not simply the starting point for further analysis. Recognizing the incomplete nature of the underlying data as well as the biases that exist within the data, such as Grundtvig’s instructions to collectors or Tang Kristensen’s own bias toward older people from central Jutland, are important steps toward recognizing the limitations of this approach.

Gregory and Ell offer an important refutation of the criticism of historical GIS as essentially positivist (2007). They note that the “quantitative nature of spatial data does not mean that spatial analysis is necessarily positivist. In many ways, it can be the reverse, as rather than trying to produce aggregate summaries of an entire study area, it allows us to explore how different parts of the map behave differently. Therefore, rather than searching for similarities, much of spatial analysis is concerned with how different places behave differently” (Gregory and Ell 2007, 161). This emphasis on how different parts of the map behave differently both across space and across time is a key goal of the GIS component of this study. Taylor, who launched the critique of GIS as a positivist enterprise, eventually conceded that GIS offers geographers the ability to “portray the world in a complexity and detail that their predecessors could hardly [have] imagined” (Taylor and Johnston 1995, 63; cited in Gregory and Ell 2007, 14). The role that historical GIS should play in the study of folklore will likely be a subject of continuing debate, while the abandonment of mapping in folklore precipitated by the failure of the underlying theoretical basis of the “Historical Geographic method” should be revisited. Hopefully, the maps and the analysis of those maps available

here will help the process of rehabilitating the role that maps and their analysis can play in folklore studies.

Historical GIS (and its application in folklore) is not limited solely to the display of historical data on historically accurate maps. An important goal of historical GIS is to couple a temporal dimension to the geographic representations of data. Unfortunately, combining temporal data with geographic data is not as easy as it might seem since plotting change over time can quickly become quite complex (Gregory and Ell 2007, 61-62). In this exploration of Tang Kristensen's folklore collection, a "snapshot" approach is used: rather than trying to present the flow of time as fluid, time is presented in slices. So, for example, fieldtrip routes cover only a fixed time frame, encompassing the start and end of any trip. Since fieldtrips can be displayed simultaneously, they allow one to visualize a certain "fiction" that compresses time. Other map layers that could be added, such as census data, would similarly present a "snapshot" view of time, freezing the population counts and the parish boundaries at a distinct moment; aggregating these across ten year intervals would present a similarly fictitious view of time as a geographic projection.

GIS allows one to treat the mapped data as a graph. Because the mathematics of graphs is well described, this approach allows one to calculate meaningful relationships between the nodes and edges that comprise the graph. Most GIS software allow one at the very least to calculate relationships between points on the map. These calculations can provide a basis for later analysis. As long as one exercises caution and does not fall prey to the positivist fallacy that these representations are anything more than a useful model on which to build analysis, these tools can be quite powerful. Oppenshaw, one of the leading proponents of the benefits of GIS, acknowledges that this approach "would not offer

complete scientific understanding but would instead only offer insights into patterns and associations found within the data” (Gregory and Ell 2007, 14; cf. Oppenshaw 1991). The use of mapping in this project aligns with these goals—the maps and mapping tools are intended to assist in pattern discovery and provide a rich visual representation of the underlying relationships between Tang Kristensen, his informants, their repertoires and the physical environment in which they lived and worked. At the same time, one has to be cautious that one does not get seduced by the maps. Gregory and Ell raise a yellow flag, noting that maps “have the ability to present deceptively simple patterns, either deliberately or through poor cartography, and they are often attractive products that appear to be meaningful, but tell us very little” (2007, 89). The study of folklore is not the study of maps—but maps can be useful in developing a more sophisticated understanding of the relationships between parts of the folkloric equation.

Despite the shortcomings that are inherent in GIS in general and historical GIS in particular, the application of historical GIS to folklore study has certain clear advantages over disregarding altogether geographic representations of the data and relationships in the data. Maps that represent both the endeavors of collectors and the political dimensions of their endeavors—dimensions that are often reflected in the landscape—help one understand the scope of the collecting and allow one to interrogate the ideology of that collecting. Exploring the scope of these collecting trips as they change over time may reflect changes in the underlying philosophy of collection—where do people at the time of collection perceive folklore to be most readily available? Similarly, the changes in the scope of these collecting trips may reflect changes not only in communication and transportation infrastructure but also in land use. Accordingly, connecting

maps of fieldtrip routes to maps that show shifting patterns of land use, demographic change, and infrastructure development afford more sophisticated views of folklore collection.

In this study, map layers are included that show all the collecting trips that Tang Kristensen took on which he visited any of the five main informants—Bitte Jens Kristensen, Jens Peter Petersen, (Ane) Margrete Jensdatter, Kirsten Marie Pedersen and Peder Johansen. The routes are close approximations of the routes traveled and not exact paths, as they are based on his travel descriptions in letters home and in *Minder og Oplevelser*, and the evidence about the order in which he visited informants as reflected in his field diaries. The actual roads that he chose to travel, or the portion of the routes that he traveled by rail as opposed to by carriage, have been guessed. In some cases, it has been possible to trace the route exactly, either because there is only one path between one location and another, or because he explicitly describes how he traveled; as the train system was developed, routes have been drawn for long distances that follow the tracks. In other cases, the routes have been “snapped” to the most likely path. Nevertheless, these routes are “fuzzy” and bring to the fore the need for caution discussed above.

This same type of “fuzziness” exists in many of the other map layers as well—while people are placed in the landscape with some precision, that precision is limited by the existing information. The historic base map layers are themselves an act of interpretation and approximation; simply projecting them into a mapping environment requires acknowledging the distortions inherent in projecting an area that exists on a sphere (the earth) onto a two dimensional representation.² Similarly, errors in this information can be introduced by faulty memory on the part of informants, faulty recording on Tang Kristensen’s part, faulty record-keeping on the part of

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census takers and church administrators, and faulty description on the part of local administrators and surveyors. As long as one approaches the material with the same caution that one brings to any historical source, the maps provide a reasonably good illustration of the relationships in the underlying data.

Plotting where people lived, where they worked, where they studied, where they went to church, where they were born and where they were buried is a surprisingly informative endeavor. Early folklore collectors and scholars paid scant attention to the people who actually created and perpetuated the folklore that otherwise so captivated their scholarly attention. Early on, Tang Kristensen became interested enough in his informants to note their names and where they lived. As his collecting expanded, he used these annotations to plan future visits—he was always eager to revisit prolific storytellers—and to further his own developing ideas of the distribution of folklore throughout Jutland. Eventually, he began augmenting his folkloric collections with ethnographic descriptions of everyday life throughout Jutland and this inevitably led to collecting short biographies from hundreds of his informants. By coupling Tang Kristensen's information with information from the national census and church book records, it is possible to develop a fairly in-depth biographical sketch of each of his storytellers. This sketch includes place of birth, place of death, and various residences at the ten-year intervals of the census. Accordingly, one can plot for these informants a map that reveals their physical mobility and, by correlating this with cadastral survey information—that includes taxation records for plots of land—as well as the occasional probate record, a general picture emerges of their economic status and its trajectory over the course of their life. Similarly, one can trace people's mobility in the context of shifting land use patterns and in the context of changes in the

general economy from one that was purely agricultural to one that was increasingly industrial.

In the realm of folklore, one of the main things that maps can show us is the connection between things—between people, between people and places, between people and stories, and between stories and places. The study of folklore is, at least implicitly, closely related to the study of social networks. Although there is not much explicit network information in Tang Kristensen's collection materials, there is a substantial amount of implicit material. Certainly, his descriptions of how he discovered storytellers—usually with the help of local teachers and ministers—describe one such network. Other networks—such as those defined by family relationships or occupational relationships—can also be inferred through the data. Maps help illustrate not only how people are connected but also how the physical environment influences those connections. Maps that show where informants lived and how they moved during the course of their lives are an important component of these social networks. Plotting these networks—the points showing where people lived, and the edges showing connections to other people—onto historical maps that were made at the time of the collection can help uncover phenomena related to the physical environment that may go unnoticed in more standard social network visualizations. These phenomena can include changes in land use practices; social or political institutions such as schools, associations and churches; transportation and communications infrastructure; and changes in class affiliations. For example, standard social network visualization might not reveal that a network stretches along the eastern coast of Jutland, closely following the railway lines. Similarly, a non geo-referenced social network map might not reveal that members of a network are

separated by great distance, or that a network is concentrated in a single parish.

Plotting the location where each folk expression was collected is a straightforward undertaking and this map necessarily intersects both the route maps and the informant maps described above. It is also the main type of map that one finds in the “Historical-Geographic” method. Ultimately, this type of map is of limited interest, unless it is combined with a series of other maps (or “map layers”). Fortunately, current mapping environments allow one to easily combine map layers to produce composite pictures of underlying data. As this information is stored in a database—a “geodatabase” in the parlance of geographic information systems (GIS)—one can limit the information displayed in each layer by structured queries. Whereas the early historic-geographic studies could only display one set of information at a time—the locations where a particular song that included a specific motif were collected for instance—a GIS environment allows for far greater complexity. For example, one can quickly refine the previous map to display locations limited by the gender of the informant and limited to a series of collecting trips.

Another productive series of maps are related to the folk expressions themselves. If the other types of maps described above are related to issues of collecting and tradition groups—the “external” life of tradition, this other series of maps is related to the “internal” life of tradition. The most important of these maps is one that plots story points: places mentioned in stories. Frequently, stories mention more than one place—in Tang Kristensen’s collection, some stories include six or seven place names. Because of this complexity, constructing even a simple map of places mentioned in a story can be an arduous task. This becomes even more difficult given the ambiguity of place names in nineteenth

century Denmark. Place names can also be personal names, spellings of place names change, places disappear and, since many of the places mentioned in stories are based on local knowledge, many do not appear in any standard place name lists (gazetteers). Consequently, automatic discovery and tagging of place names lacks the precision necessary to create accurate maps. Despite these difficulties, these maps offer a window into the conception of “place” as expressed by the storytellers.

Using detailed maps from the area that were made at the same time the story was told allows one to provide a visual representation of landscape features, both natural and man-made, that are reconfigured through the performance of those stories (Gunnell 2008). This approach allows for several important visualizations of the story. On the level of an individual story, one can easily access the places mentioned in the story, allowing one to see the place in relationship to landscape features—swamps or rivers for example—as well as the proximity of places to one another. If the Devil is challenged to a race, for example, it is interesting to see the “race course.” For a person well steeped in local knowledge, a map may be extraneous, but for later audiences it provides a much richer basis for understanding the story. One can similarly situate the “action” of the story in geographic relation to the storyteller—did the story take place in the immediate region, or did it take place at some distance? This “narrative distance” can inform a subsequent analysis of the story.

Story points can also be aggregated across an individual’s repertoire, or across other categories such as genre, motifs, informant gender, informant age, date of collection, or any other category—or combination of categories—available in the underlying database. Aggregating across an individual’s repertoire allows one to see all the places mentioned in the

person's repertoire, providing a visual representation of the storyteller's "narrative reach." Similarly, one can get a sense of whether the individual tends to situate action close to home, or at a distance. If one selects only for stories with negative resolutions, and then contrasts that with stories with positive resolutions, one can quickly get a sense of the difference—if any—in how "close" the informant chooses to situate these stories to where he or she lives. It is not difficult to calculate a mean distance from the places mentioned in an individual's repertoire (or a subset of those stories) to where the individual lives. This selection can be made even narrower by using limiting factors such as motifs (ghosts, witches, murder, and so on). Other types of aggregation and comparison of stories based on places mentioned are limited solely by the data available. One could, for example, look at a series of repertoires—perhaps those of individuals connected to each other in an explicit or implicit social network—and map the locations mentioned in their stories, again conditioned by aspects of the stories themselves.

Each of these map layers—those describing the field collecting trips, those describing the informants, and those describing the stories—can be projected on top of different base maps.³ This project makes use of a historical map series from the *Videnskabelige Selskab* (Danish Academy of Sciences) as the base map; these historical maps are available at two levels of resolution, and thereby provide a reasonable historical approximation of the relationship between towns, villages, farms and churches.⁴ Although they were drawn after the major land reforms of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they still predate Tang Kristensen's major collecting efforts by nearly fifty years.⁵ Switching between these base maps can in itself be an interesting exercise in understanding the significant shifts in spatial

organization and land use in Denmark since the mid nineteenth century.

Bringing all these maps together into one viewing environment and allowing one to plot one's own path of discovery through this interconnected thicket, is a big step toward achieving an ethnographically "thick" representation of folklore (Geertz 1973). The maps are not an end unto themselves. They provide a basis for asking additional questions that otherwise would be impossible to answer. As Gregory and Ell note, maps are "good at illustrating a story, but poor at telling it" (2007, 90). They further caution that there is a risk with GIS, "where slick graphics, clever technology and exciting presentation are emphasized at the expense of high-quality scholarship that attempts to describe and explain the geography of the research topic" (Gregory and Ell 2007, 105). Even though the accompanying maps are unavoidably exciting, the hope is that these maps augment the analysis of repertoires presented here, and offer a starting point for additional analysis of this material.

Ultimately, this "thick" approach to exploring folklore collections offers a more meaningful visualization of the geographic relationships that exist in any folklore collection. These relationships include that of the collector to an area of collection; the collector with his or her informants (and vice versa); the collector and the collected folklore; the informants and their folkloric repertoires; the informants and each other; the informants and the environment in which they live; the environment and the performed instantiations of the folklore; and the possible thematic or linguistic affinities between expressions in a single repertoire or across many repertoires. All of these relationships are interdependent. The approach described here, a new "Historic-Geographic" method, recognizes the historically situated component of the underlying relationships in a folklore corpus, and also

acknowledges the close relationship between place and folklore.

Notes

¹ The method has also been referred to as the “Cartographic Method,” recognizing the importance of drawing maps depicting the distribution of variants for this approach. Von Sydow, who was one of the most prominent critics of the method, explores some of the flaws in the underlying premises of the theory in his articles “Om traditionsspridning” [“On the spread of tradition”] (1932; translated and reprinted 1948b).

² Just because the data is distorted does not mean that it is without use—for example Mercator projections greatly distort our view of the earth, but are used frequently to understand geographic relationships or to find driving directions.

³ Unlike the vector data that forms the basis for the folklore specific layers, these base layers are georeferenced raster data. An excellent discussion of the differences between vector data and raster data can be found in Gregory and Ell (2007, 23-30).

⁴ The cadastral survey maps from the 1880s would be the ideal map set for this study, since they provide the most detail. Their resolution is so fine that at times the detail can obscure the big picture. These maps are not included here because of Danish copyright law; ideally, the cadastral survey maps could be accessed from the *Kort og Matrikelstyrelsens* own servers in Denmark. A project known as digdag (<http://didag.dk>) promises to make these maps available as a web service to

academic projects. Future updates to the Danish Folklore Nexus may be able to take advantage of this service.

⁵ Other base layer maps, such as a general outline of Denmark with and without contemporary infrastructure overlays, and satellite imagery (or a hybrid map) can be used as the base layer in the accompanying browser as well. These layers are accessed through ESRI (Earth Sciences Research Institute) servers or directly from the accompanying DVD.

6

Repertoire and the Individual

People are the most important part of any folklore study—they are the ones who create, perpetuate, learn, change, embrace, discard, invent, appropriate, memorize, forget, relearn and perform again and again the expressive culture that makes up the traditions of the groups to which they belong. Tradition, in this context, should be seen as anything that a member of a group decides is worth perpetuating. If a person can convince others in the group of the need to perpetuate the expression, then it becomes part of the group's active tradition; if not, then it becomes part of the individual's idiosyncratic expression. This continually negotiated process results in an ongoing tension between individuals and other people with whom they associate, either directly or indirectly. This productive dialectic between individual people on the one hand and tradition on the other hand is what animates folk culture. Despite the key role that individuals play in the folklore process, for the first century or so of the field's existence, these people behind the ballads, proverbs, myths, folktales, legends and other folk expressions that captured the imaginations of the earliest folklorists were at best ignored.

The earliest conceptions of folklore envisioned it as akin to a force of nature—a superorganic entity that essentially had a life of its own, entirely independent of the people who perpetuated it.¹ Olrik's "laws" of folk poetic composition (1908) stand as one of the most recognizable expressions of the superorganic position in folklore since Olrik implied that the laws were both universal and independent on the folk poets themselves. Because the laws were wholly internalized and not expressible by the poets themselves, tradition existed outside the minds of humans. This odd proposition led to significant contradictions in the collection of folklore. Collectors took a profound interest in finding old people who could remember the ostensibly even older folk expressions that offered a window onto the original national culture, but once they found these people, they took no interest in them as individuals. Instead, their interest was more in storytellers as representatives of a class of people who, because of their economic status and their age—older peasants were always preferable to younger peasants—were vessels of the objects of collection. The "laws" fully constrained their folk expression. They themselves were implicitly considered not worthy of being studied (and understood).

Peasants were preferable to all other classes because, while they were clearly the progenitors of the urban, elite classes with whom the scholars identified, they were unsullied by the corrupting influences of education. Largely considered illiterate, peasants were seen as uncritical storehouses of wisdom (lore) that had been passed down in unadulterated form from the earliest times of the *ethnos*. This idea of the *ethnos* was in turn conflated with the concept of nation. Scholars could aggregate the peasants stories and songs; pass aesthetic judgment on variants regarding which episodes or verses must be the "more original"; and then reconstruct the outlines of earlier culture. Ultimately, these scholars aspired

to creating a picture of the original oral “treasures” of the nation.

Implicit in many of the large nineteenth century collections and subsequent academic studies of these collections is an attenuation of the most extreme form of a superorganic conception of folklore. Rather than positing an external life for tradition, these studies suggest that tradition is rooted in the collective—tradition does not exist by itself, but rather emerges through the collective interactions of the peasants who all contribute to varying degrees to the preservation of their traditions. Even from this attenuated position, the emphasis on the collective processes of folklore without any attention to the individual’s role in tradition began unraveling in the late nineteenth century. Scandinavian folklorists came down on both sides of the equation. Some emphasized the anonymous, collective nature of folklore, which essentially obviated the need for an understanding of the individual’s role in folklore, while others became increasingly aware of the individual negotiation of the boundaries of folk expression. In some sense, this tension recapitulated the shift in the nineteenth century agricultural economy, in which personal anonymity in the larger agricultural *fællesskab* [community], a characteristic of the late eighteenth century, was supplanted by individual agency, with the rural worker as an actor in an expanding “free” market.

Once Tang Kristensen was able to shake off the demanding collecting yoke with which Grundtvig had imposed on him, he became increasingly interested in the individuals from whom he collected. He was not alone in this interest, even though the academic enterprise, spearheaded by Olrik, still was enthralled by earlier national Romantic ideas. The historic-geographic method was largely aligned with the uncritical superorganic view of folklore, since the main methodological innovation of that approach was to map

variants of songs from the Finnish epic tradition Kalevala without regard for the backgrounds of the individuals who sang the songs. Nevertheless, in the early decades of the twentieth century, a theoretical complement to Tang Kristensen's growing interest in his informants developed with von Sydow's criticism of the historic-geographic method. The additional critical light that von Sydow's work and that of his students shed on the folklore process led to an increasing awareness in Nordic folklore circles of the primary role of individuals in the creation and perpetuation of folklore.

The debate was in no way settled by von Sydow's emphasis on "tradition bearers" (Sydow 1948b). The notion that folk tradition has a life of its own independent of the thousands of essentially anonymous people who perpetuate that tradition received a significant boost at the beginning of the twentieth century with Carl Jung's work on the theory of the collective unconscious (Jung 1959). Although Jung was predominantly interested in myth, his idea of a common inherited reservoir of human experiences implied that myth, folk belief and all folk expression for that matter were part of this common inheritance. The idea of a broad common inheritance conflicted, however, with the equally untenable position that folklore was a reflection of the ancient national spirit passed on uncritically through generations by illiterate peasants. Jung's work, particularly that on archetypes, continues to inform popular theories of folklore, such as Joseph Campbell's theory of "universals" (Campbell 1949). The problem with this approach is that it posits an original or normative form for any folk expression, much in keeping with the position of the early Romantic nationalist folklorists. In short, all of these approaches emphasize the "tradition" side of the folklore dialectic, offer no tenable analysis of what tradition is, and pay no attention to individuals as part of this process.

Despite the continuous drumbeat of the superorganic nature of folklore that continues to beat in New Age conceptions of tradition, the study of folklore has become increasingly anchored in the study of individuals and their relationship to folk traditions. Among the first substantive studies of individual repertoire were those of Milman Parry and his graduate student Albert Lord, who studied Serbo-Croatian epic (Lord 1964). Their goal was to understand how individuals were able to remember and perform epic, a nagging question of composition raised by Homeric epic and given additional momentum by the discovery—or creation—of other national epic traditions such as the Finnish *Kalevala*. The result of Parry and Lord's analysis of the repertoires of Serbian epic singers in Bosnia was their proposal of the oral formulaic hypothesis of folk composition. Even though Parry died young when a gun in his luggage discharged, Lord continued their work on the hypothesis and, in the process, drew increasing attention to the performance of folk expressions.

Since the underlying idea of the oral formulaic hypothesis maintains that epic is not memorized, but rather recomposed—and the field data unequivocally supports this idea—Parry and Lord's position refuted the stance that folklore was passed down uncritically and essentially unchanged by the illiterate masses. Rather, the transmission became tied both to the individual who learned, remembered and brought his or her own individual artistry to bear on the material and to the audience whose response to the individual's performance conditioned that performance. Although texts were still of paramount importance to Parry and Lord, other considerations now came into play. These considerations of how tradition spreads through the intervention of individuals who “perform” aligned well both with the theories of von Sydow and his students. The ideas

also offered fertile ground for the emerging field of structuralism. Implicit in Parry and Lord is the notion that competent performers of a tradition internalize the structure of the folk expression, and expand or contract their performance of a story based on their own expertise, experiences and the performance context—stories and songs do not need to be memorized (although some certainly are) for them to be part of the traditional repertoire of a “singer of tales.” Support for these ideas can be found quite easily in Tang Kristensen’s collection. Although he never explicitly articulated a theory of the individual and tradition, Tang Kristensen had clearly surmised the importance that individuals play in the folkloric process.

These emerging ideas in early folkloristics concerning the role of individuals as creators of tradition aligned with developments in the field of anthropology. Franz Boas, at the turn of the twentieth century, had revolutionized the study of anthropology in the United States, with his book *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911). His historico-critical school of anthropology, which emphasized the way individuals tried to make sense of the complexity of the societies in which they lived, informed the work of his later students, such as Ruth Benedict, who was also deeply involved in the development of folklore studies in the United States (Levy Zumwalt 1988). The functionalist anthropology of Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown also helped tilt the general field of folklore toward an appreciation of the tension between individuals and communities, and the function that expressive culture has for individuals in these communities. As Juha Pentikäinen noted, “The golden rule of the functionalists was: ‘Ask the natives.’ In collecting as well as studying they considered the attitudes, interpretations and world views of the natives important, neither did they in describing the culture’s totality and its functions forget to depict individual

differences” (1978, 14-15). Although Tang Kristensen did “ask the natives,” he was apparently the only one listening at the time. Fortunately, he had the good sense to write down what they told him.

Boas’s theories and his fieldwork methods influenced a large number of folklorists throughout the world. His methodological emphasis on the close working relationship between a researcher and a single informant—an approach that reached its zenith with Boas’s student Alfred Kroeber, who brought the native Californian Yahi Ishi to live in the anthropology building at the University of California, Berkeley—resulted in a boom of studies of individual repertoires. A precursor to these ethnographic studies was Mark Azadovskij’s (1926) study of a Siberian storyteller, Natalja Osipovna Vinokurova, the first scholarly consideration of an individual and her folklore repertoire. He situated her and her stories in her social and economic milieu, as much as in her tradition milieu, and explored her narrative style, noting that she is preoccupied with the historical aspects of her stories (see also Pentikäinen 1978, 15-16). The portrait he painted of her is intriguing, and he presented her as a distinct individual whose repertoire diverges quite dramatically from what normative collections would suggest. In so doing, he highlighted the way collections often “level” the expression of individuals to fit editorial expectations, and he drew attention to the importance that individual predilections have in shaping tradition. Azadovskij’s study was influential in both Russia and Hungary, and one can trace his considerations of individual repertoire and the role of storytelling in the work of Gyula Ortutay (Ortutay and Fedics 1940) and, later, Linda Dégh (Dégh 1969).

Otto Brinkmann’s study of storytelling in a small German village society, *Das Erzählen in einer Dorfgemeinschaft* (The Storyteller in a Village Society, 1933), was a precursor to

Dégh's work in Hungary, and ushered in an increasing focus among northern European folklorists on the role played by storytelling and storytellers in small communities. Gottfried Henssen narrowed the focus from an entire community to a single individual in his work *Überlieferung und Persönlichkeit: Die Erzählungen und Lieder des Egbert Gerrits* (Tradition and Personality: The Stories and Songs of Egbert Gerrits) (1951). Henssen explored the relationship between personality and repertoire, emphasizing the psychology of a gifted, creative individual. This shift away from the community and toward the study of exceptional individuals, a shift that one also sees in Carl Hermann Tillhagen's studies of repertoire (Tillhagen and Taikon 1948; Tillhagen 1959), may have let the pendulum swing too far. The approach risks misrepresenting the character of tradition in a community, and also risks descending into the study of idiosyncrasy rather than the tension between individual and tradition. Importantly, the study of the role that individual personality plays in shaping culture was an increasing focus of anthropologists as well, an agenda that had been shaped by developments in psychological testing and profiling in the 1940s, and John J. Honigsmann's influential work on culture and personality (Honigsmann 1954; see also Pentikäinen 1978, 28-30).

In northern Europe, Siegfried Neumann continued to explore the productive tension between individual and tradition with two studies of storytellers in Mecklenburg, *Ein mecklenburgischer Volkserzähler* (A Mecklenburgian Folkteller) (1968) and *Eine mecklenburgische Märchenfrau* (A Mecklenburgian Fairy Tale Woman) (Neumann and Peters 1974). As in many such repertoire studies, Neumann focused primarily on tellers of fairy tale. Stefaan Top's "Repertoire und Biographie am Beispiel einer flämischen (Volks-) Liedsängerin" (Repertoire and Biography of a Flemish (Folk) Singer as Example) (1982) extended the genre range to

include ballads, but it still limited the study to someone with a particular genre specialization. Although an emphasis on specialized repertoire made sense in the groundbreaking work of Parry and Lord, whose goal was to understand compositional techniques among a highly specialized and professional group of epic singers, it makes less sense in the context of the interplay between individuals and tradition in general.

Intriguingly, Tang Kristensen intuited the need to collect entire repertoires, irrespective of genre specialization. This awareness became more important after Grundtvig's death, which took with it Grundtvig's inordinate focus on fairy tales and ballads. In short, although all the studies I have mentioned helped shift the emphasis away from the texts *per se*, and situate folklore expressions as products of the complex relationships between individuals, their communities and the traditions of the groups to which they belong, they often fell short of the holistic perspective to which they aspired, either by emphasizing the idiosyncrasies of an individual to the detriment of an understanding of community or by emphasizing one genre to the detriment of an understanding of the interplay between genres.

It took several decades for the study of individual repertoire and performance to catch on in the United States. When it took hold in the 1960s—at the same time that structuralism had taken hold—the study of performance emerged as one of the main theoretical focal points in American folkloristics. Dell Hymes's work on *The Ethnography of Speaking* (1962) and his later essay, "Breakthrough into Performance" (1975) were influential in focusing folklore scholarship on aspects of performance. In 1972, Americo Paredes and Richard Bauman published a small collection of influential essays under the title *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore* (1972). Bauman, Hymes and several others,

increasingly focused on the “ethnography of speaking,” an approach that also aligned them with linguistic anthropologists and sociologists such as William Labov and Emmanuel Schegloff. The perspectives in the Paredes and Bauman compendium were not necessarily new (although their application in folkloristics was), but the volume did focus American folklore on aspects of performance and the importance of context in folklore. Alan Dundes, in “Text, Texture, Context,” had drawn attention to the interplay between texts, and the importance of context for understanding the performance of a particular text (1964). Similarly, studies of the anthropological and ethnographic component of folk performance had raised the important issue of competence, an issue that informed von Sydow’s distinction between active and passive tradition bearers.

By sheer force of numbers, Tang Kristensen managed to capture this holistic perspective on the interplay between individuals and tradition in his collection. Although he was interested in collecting from excellent storytellers and singers, mentioning in many of the prefaces and afterwords to his published works the lengths to which he went to seek out the best storytellers and singers, he did not limit himself to one genre or another and always accepted even the smallest contribution. Without saying so explicitly, he was giving voice to what most people understand intuitively—that some people are better at some things, such as storytelling, than others. If one wants to hear a song well sung, one seeks out a known singer. To hear a joke well told, one seeks out someone known to be a good joke teller. Sometimes such people are one and the same, and sometimes they are not. In light of this, I proposed a modification of von Sydow’s idea of “tradition bearers”: instead of speaking of “active” and “passive” bearers, Tang Kristensen’s collection reveals that it is more accurate to speak of a sliding scale between active and

passive tradition *participants*, recognizing that an active participant in one part of a community's tradition might well be a passive participant in another part of the tradition. Similarly, being active in a tradition at one point in one's life does not mean that one will be active later on in life, and just because one is active in the tradition does not necessarily mean that one is also competent (Tangherlini 2008c). Given this complexity, repertoires cannot and should not be studied in isolation.

One of the most articulate voices calling for increased attention to performance was that of Roger Abrahams. In his work, he recognized the range between active participation and passive participation, as well as the shifting terrain of tradition competence. His study of "the dozens" included clear examples of individual performances where tradition participants challenged each other's competence to perform. In writing about folklore performance, Abrahams noted, "The performer...given his ability to actively produce a narrative [relies] heavily upon the audience's understanding of the lineaments of both the type and its individual manifestations. Of importance in such an approach is not the item itself but the total event in which the item provides the primary focus... His role as presented is to activate the sense of meaningful encounter, meaningful transaction. He differs from the members of his audience only in that he has a productive competence within that type of performance while theirs is, at least at the moment, a receptive competence" (Abrahams 1975, 15-16). As American folklore studies became increasingly focused on the "folklore event"—a focus that brought with it a concomitant emphasis on the tension between the individual and tradition—one could trace among some scholars a decreasing interest in the study of texts. This decreasing interest in the "primary focus" of the folklore event brought with it the danger of abandoning folklore

altogether in favor of the far more general study of performance.² During the past two decades, this shift in folkloristics from a field that paid scant attention to the individual to one where the individual as an agent in creating, shaping and perpetuating traditional expressive culture has been characterized as a split between “performance oriented” scholars and “text oriented” scholars.

Despite this alleged “split,” one would be hard pressed to find folklorists who abandoned the study of text altogether. Instead, over the course of several decades, the appreciation of the importance of individuals and their performances fused with the study of texts that had, until the first decades of the twentieth century, been studied largely with no consideration of the performance contexts in which they were recorded. In some ways, this state of affairs echoes Malinowski’s forgotten maxim, “The text, of course, is extremely important, but without the context it remains lifeless” (Malinowski 1926, 24; quoted in Pentikäinen 1978, 22). Linda Dégh, for instance, continued to expand her study of storytelling communities that she had begun with her dissertation, *Märchen, Erzähler und Erzählungsgemeinschaft* (Folktale, Storyteller, and Storytelling Community) (1962). Similarly, Alan Dundes developed an increasingly sophisticated psychoanalytic approach to folk expression that recognized the role that individual psychology plays in the conditioning of repertoires and individual variants. Elliott Oring’s studies of humor (1984), Henry Glassie’s ethnographic explorations of the role of folklore in small communities (1982), Dan Ben-Amos’s explorations of folklore in context (1975 and 1982), and Kenneth Goldstein’s recordings of folksong repertoires (1956a and 1956b) all contributed significantly to the increasing awareness of the theoretical importance of foregrounding individuals in the folkloric process.

Abrahams, in his characterization of the folklore event, brought up another important issue, namely that of the “meaningful transaction.” Folklore creates meaning, both for the people who perform it and for the people who listen to it. Once something no longer creates meaning, people stop doing it—unless the lack of meaning, such as the performance of nonsense rhymes, is meaningful itself. William Bascom in an influential article entitled “Four Functions of Folklore” (1954), proposed that folklore serves a series of distinct functions in any culture: (1) it can offer escape (2) it can validate cultural ideology (3) it can educate and (4) it can assert social pressure. Although overly broad and reductionist, Bascom’s emphasis on the role that folk expressive culture plays as a meaning making aspect of culture is one that deserves attention. One of the key tasks of folklore analysis is the exploration of the range of meanings created through the performance of folk expressive culture. Such an approach necessitates both a deep understanding of the culture in which the performance takes place, as well as a thorough knowledge of the performer, including his or her background, along with a broad knowledge of the backgrounds, expectations and tradition competence of the audience (or implied audience). Since this sets the bar quite high—perhaps to an unattainable height—the best one can hope to achieve is an ethnographically thick description of the target culture incorporating a strong social, cultural, economic and political dimension coupled to an in-depth biography of the teller or tellers. Few collections of folklore are by themselves extensive enough to sustain this type of approach; similarly, the range of meanings created by a folk performance can be very broad. These considerations, however daunting, do not doom the folklorist’s task to futility; rather, they force one to recognize that any analytic conclusions are necessarily contingent on the degree of detail

available for the micro-context of performance and the macro-context of the performer's life in a complex society.

In Scandinavia, the pendulum began its swing away from the early conceptions of folklore as a superorganic entity in the early decades of the twentieth century. Von Sydow and his students led the way, despite the still powerful sway of the Finnish school. The very large collections of folklore such as those of Tang Kristensen in Denmark and the Finnish Literary Society in Finland offered an archival anchor that allowed for the very large cataloging and indexing enterprises such as the ATU index and the ML index to continue. At the same time, von Sydow's concept of tradition bearers became increasingly influential. As researchers and students alike explored the archives, they began discovering the individuals behind many of these traditions. Consequently, they recognized the possibility of rehabilitating the archive to align with modern concerns of performance and context, leading to several productive studies of individual expression based on archival resources that had been discounted as old fashioned by folklorists in the 1970s (Holbek 1987; Tangherlini 1994).

Juha Pentikäinen's study of the repertoire of Marina Takalo, a Karelian folk singer, was the first sustained examination of the productive tension between an individual and tradition (1978). His study, *Oral Repertoire and World View*, was based predominantly on recent collections but situated Marina's repertoire in the context of several hundred years of folk collection in Karelia. As the title of his study suggests, his goal was to explore the interaction between a singer's traditional repertoire and her world view, revealing the interplay between the two: the songs in her repertoire, along with her personal interpretation of those songs was influenced by her experiences and expectations, while those experiences and expectations were influenced by her songs.

As he noted, “Life-historical repertoire analysis thus throws light on the way an individual experiences her *Umwelt* [environment] in her own niche and how she arranges and organizes her *Umwelt* on the basis of her own experiences and world view” (1978, 32). Although the method he proposed can seem unnecessarily complex, the analysis of repertoire in the context of individual experiences and broader social history, along with an awareness of the performance aspects of folk expressive culture offers the reader a far deeper appreciation of the productive tension between individuals and tradition than an aesthetic consideration of text ever could. Similarly, the approach offers a clear route to recognizing how folk expressive culture creates meaning for individuals in complex societies.

Pentikäinen’s study posed several intriguing questions related to stability and change in folk traditions, questions that have always been an important part of folkloristics. Unless these questions are situated in the study of individuals, their repertoires, and the repertoires of others in the tradition community—either explicitly as in the case of Dégh’s study of folktale tellers in Hungary, or implicitly as in the case of Pentikäinen—the answer to those questions often exclude the most important part of the folklore equation: the individual. In his consideration of Takalo’s repertoire, Pentikäinen concluded, “[her] repertoire of folklore did not seem to be any stable, unchangeable whole, rather it appeared to change in accordance with the development of the individual personality and the epochs of her life history. There was an active repertoire...which Mrs. Takalo spontaneously and without specific prompting...hurried to convey to every researcher who came to meet her” (1978, 331). Pentikäinen went on to distinguish between a person’s “latent” and “active” repertoire, and the threshold between the two, emphasizing the dynamic nature of repertoire.

Since Pentikäinen's landmark study of Takalo's repertoire and his interpretation of the repertoire as a reflection of her world view, the study of individuals and their folklore repertoire has become one of the hallmarks of Nordic folkloristics. Repertoire is of course a moving target. In these studies, repertoire refers to all the folklore that a single person performed for a collector, either during a single interview or, in most cases, over the course of extended fieldwork. This view is necessarily limited in scope, as the fieldworker's biases can easily influence what is collected. One need only think of Tang Kristensen's early methodology where, with Grundtvig's encouragement, he asked first for ballads, then folktales and then anything else. Rather than providing an accurate picture of "everything" a person can tell, the repertoire view is a snapshot—or perhaps a collage of snapshots—that gives a broad sense of what a person told or sang over the course of several meetings. Although these snapshots can never be considered exhaustive documentation, they can provide an accurate picture of what the repertoire "looked like" at a given time. Indeed, many repertoire studies reveal that certain stories are a "stable" part of an individual's repertoire, while other stories lose their ability to create meaning for the teller or his audience, and thus move out of the active repertoire (Goldstein 1971; Siikala 1990; Kaivola-Bregenhøj 1996; Georges 1994; Tangherlini 2003).

Since the mid 1960s, numerous important studies of individual repertoires as well as groups of repertoires have been published. Tillhagen's earlier studies of Swedish storytellers and their repertoires, as well as his study of gypsy storytelling clearly set the stage for Pentikäinen's work (Tillhagen 1948; 1959). Finnish folklorists, such as Anniki Kaivola-Bregenhøj and Anna Leena Siikala, are among the most productive in this area. Kaivola-Bregenhøj's *Narrative and Narrating. Variation in Juho Oksanen's Storytelling* (1996), an

abridged version of her monograph *Kertomus ja kerronta* (Story and Narrative), is based on her fieldwork in the 1960s and 1970s with a sexton who also turned out to be an excellent storyteller (1996, 9). Her close analysis of a single performer's repertoire set against a thick ethnographic description of the tradition and the cultural context allowed her to undertake convincing analyses of variation in his repertoire. As she noted, "Narrative variation never takes place on the narrator's terms alone; it is always the outcome of interaction between the narrator and the audience" (1996, 29). The study of variation, accordingly, should be predicated not on the study of a single repertoire, but rather on a series of repertoires, thus allowing for the delineation of variation within a repertoire, and variation within a tradition group.

Anna Leena Siikala, in a series of thorough studies of Finnish storytelling, provided such an analysis (1980a; 1980b; 1984; 1990). In these works, she emphasized the interaction between individual personality and repertoire, as well as the contours of tradition as shaped by the individual storytellers. Some of this work is inaccessible to a non-Finnish speaking audience (1980 and 1984). *Interpreting Oral Narrative* (1990) offers the most accessible formulation of her approach. In the course of the examination of storytellers in Kauhajoki, Finland, she outlined a typology of narrator types (1990, 143-160), which provides a more sophisticated representation of the varying levels of engagement with different aspects of tradition among community members than the simpler model proposed by von Sydow.

Beginning in the 1960s, the shift in Scandinavian folkloristics toward the study and analysis of individual folklore considered in the context of larger tradition and set against the shifting economic and cultural terrain of the individual's own life is striking. Bjarne Hodne's study of fairy tale telling Norway, *Eventyret og tradisjonsbærerne: Eventyrfortellere*

i en Telemarksbygd (The Folktale and the Tradition Bearers: Folktale Tellers in a Telemark Village) (1979), is among the best known of these studies and stands as a Norwegian companion to classic works such as that of Brinkmann and Dégh. Gun Herranen undertook a preliminary analysis of the repertoire of a blind storyteller, whose life experiences colored his stories (1984; 1989). Reimund Kvideland contributed to the study of repertoire, both with his short article “Olav Eivindsson Austad: Ein forteljar og miljøet hans” (Olav Eivindsson Austad: A Storyteller and his Milieu, 1989) and his overview article “The Study of Folktale Repertoires” (1993). An edited collection of fairy tale repertoires from the Nordic region piloted the idea of repertoire comparison across a broad, yet linguistically and culturally linked region (Kvideland and Sehmsdorf 1999). Important for the present work is Henrik Koudal’s study of the repertoires of two Danish singers from Tang Kristensen’s collections (1984). Unlike most repertoire studies, Koudal presents the entire song repertoire of each of the informants. Finally, Marisa Rey Henningsen brought the Nordic emphasis on the study of repertoire to southern Europe, and offered a compelling portrait of storytelling among women in Galicia in Spain (1994; 1996).

Bengt Holbek’s landmark study *Interpretation of Fairy Tales* (1987) is a masterful exploration of individual repertoire, personality and community. Holbek not only developed an important methodology for the study of fairy tales, but also explored the lives and repertoires of one hundred twenty-seven storytellers (Holbek 1987, 85-87). He supplemented the necessarily broad study of these repertoires by including two additional sections: The first section, an analysis of one fairy tale, *Kong Lindorm*, in thirteen variants told by a series of narrators all from Jutland and all collected between 1845 and 1905, and the second section, an analysis of the fairy tales of

five storytellers. These analyses were inspired by Dundes's psychoanalytic approach predicated on a Freudian analysis of symbolism in the stories, but were conditioned by an understanding of the social context and economic conditions in which the storytellers lived. By exploring the repertoires of a series of storytellers set against a comprehensive appreciation of the tradition group, Holbek sidestepped the problems that pester other studies of repertoire. Nevertheless, as with many other repertoire studies, he emphasized a particular genre, and offered little comparative material for understanding the interplay between genres in an individual's repertoire. In earlier work, I presented a similar approach to the study of Danish legend repertoire, offering an overview of one hundred legend repertoires and an in depth analysis of three repertoires, all set against the social, economic and political developments in nineteenth century Denmark (1994).

Repertoires cannot and should not be studied in isolation. Folklore has come a long way from the days when philological interests were the driving force behind collection. Yet even nineteenth century collectors who were inspired by the quest for *urkultur* (original culture) occasionally paid attention to the individuals who were the "storehouses" of this "ancient" lore. Tang Kristensen's idiosyncratic insistence on keeping notes on his informants led to his own increasing interest in these people. As this approach developed, he became one of the first collectors to systematically collect as complete an overview of individual repertoires as he possibly could.

The five repertoires presented here allow one to engage in one's own analysis of multiple repertoires that include a wide range of folklore genres, and to situate that analysis in the social, economic, political and physical environment in which these storytellers lived. The productive tension between the individual and the broader tradition can be brought into stark

relief through the study of these repertoires. Such an approach enables one to interrogate more fully how these particular expressions helped create meaning for a number of Danes at a time of profound social, cultural, economic and political change.

Notes

¹ The superorganic view holds that there is a level of culture that is not controlled by the organic level—i.e. the level of human control—but which guarantees a consistency in human behavior (Pentikäinen 1978, 17; Dundes 1965, 129-130).

² This danger was realized in the late 1990s when the Program in Folklore and Mythology at UCLA was disestablished in favor of a program entitled “World Arts and Cultures.” This degree program shifted the intellectual focus to the broader study of cultural performance.

7

“Bitte Jens” Kristensen: Cobbled Together

Jens Kristensen was born on June 3, 1825, the son of Christen Pedersen Tved and Maren Jensdatter from Ersted. He was the only boy in a family of five children. His oldest sister, Ane Margrethe, was five years older than he; Kirsten, the second daughter, was three years older than him; and his two younger sisters, Anne and Karen, were two and five years younger than he, respectively. Jens's father pressed his only son into service early, both helping make clogs—an endeavor that Jens continued with throughout his life—and later, when he was older, helping with the harvest. In a short biographical sketch of Jens that Tang Kristensen cobbled together from various sources and field notes, he writes:

Jens Kristensen (i daglig tale kaldet Bitte-Jens) er født den 3. juni 1825 i Ersted by, Årestrup sogn. Moderen var fra Årestrup, men faderen fra Tveden. Han har altid opholdt sig der på egnen, og han var kun en 8, 9 år, da han skulde til at hjælpe sin fader med at bore i træskoene. Hans fader var træskomand, og han har altid selv ernæret sig derved. Da han blev så vildele, at han kunde magte det, gik han dog i höstens tid

ud på høstarbejde. Han var med i 1848-krigen, boede i mange år i et hus i Ersted, det var der, jeg opsøgte ham, og for 5, 6 år siden flyttede han ud nordvest for Årestrup I Hovbakshuseue. Hans fader ejede kun et lille hus til 1 ko og 5, 6 får. Sine viser har han lært af sin moder, men hun sang dem alle med én tone. Faderen derimod var god til at synge, og af ham lærte han melodierne. Han kunde for resten også nogle viser. Jens har sunget mange viser sammen med Johan Pingel, der først var vejmand og siden blev banevogter henne ved Ellidshøj. Jens kalder alt, hvad han fortæller, noget sludder og vås, der ikke er værd at høre på, men skam slå ham, han mener ikke noget med det. Konen kan ikke lide alt det her gamle skidt, og i hendes nærværelse holder han ikke meget af at åbenbare sig. Heldigvis stikker hun jævnlig af ud til naboerne. Han er udmærket godt inde i det gamle tankesæt og de gamles levevis og fortæller ivrigt derom. (JAT vol. 6, 896; GKV 82)

[Jens Kristensen (in daily speech, called Bitte-Jens) was born the third of June 1825 in Ersted town. His mother was from Aarestrup but his father was from Tveden. He has always lived here in the area, and he was only eight or nine years old when he had to start helping his father drill out clogs. His father was a clog maker, and he has always supported himself doing that. When he got strong enough to handle it, he worked

during harvest time with the harvest work. He took part in the war of 1848 and lived for many years in a house in Ersted, that is where I visited him, and five or six years ago he moved to the northwest of Aarestrup to Hovbakshusene (Hovbaks houses). His father owned but a small house with one cow and five or six sheep. He learned his ballads from his mother, but she sang them all to one melody. In contrast, his father was a good singer and he learned the melodies from him. He also knew some ballads. Jens has sung many a ballad with Johan Pingel, who was first a road worker and later a railroad guard over in Ellidshøj. Jens calls everything that he tells a bunch of nonsense and not worth listening to, but no shame, he does not mean anything with it. His wife does not like all this old rubbish, and he does not like to open up in her presence. Luckily, she goes off to the neighbors with regularity. He is well attuned to the old mindset and the way the old people lived and he tells about it eagerly.]

This brief biography only hints at the complexity of Jens's life in Himmerland. Although he was not terribly wealthy, he was not terribly poor either. Jens lived an interesting life that spanned one of the greatest periods of change in recent Danish history. Through it all, he told stories.

Family Background

Jens's father, Christen Pedersen, was born in Tveden, a small collection of houses in the middle of Rold forest, south of Ersted, on August 24, 1788. Christen's father, Peder Bødker, was a cooper and, according to census records, a smallholder—probably a copyholder to one of the larger manor farms in the area, possibly Mylenberg or Torstedlund. He had most likely come into possession of his house and land as a result of the land reforms of 1782 when both of those manors were partitioned. Following the naming conventions of the time, Jens's paternal grandfather took the name of his profession (*bødker*) and abandoned his patronymic.¹ Life in the forest for Peder Bødker, his wife and five children would not have been easy, given the challenges of forest life, where the soil was poor. Nevertheless, coopering was an important craft and, despite the high price trees could fetch at auction, barrels were always in demand.

When Peder's son Christen was in his twenties, he married Maren Jensdatter, from Årestrup, who was three years his junior, and together they moved to a small house in Ersted. They eventually bought this house from the manor farm, Torstedlund in the 1830s, again fallout from the land reforms of 1782. Ersted was at the time a very small collection of houses—hardly a village—several kilometers east of the larger village of Årestrup. Ersted had been partitioned in 1800, after which several farms were moved out onto the nearby heath, the same heath where Bitte Jens eventually bought a smallholding. The heath lay to the north and west of the village, while to the south of Ersted was the large *Rold skov* forest. That forest figures prominently in Jens's stories, often as the lair of robbers. To the east, there was also a forest and a deep river valley cut by Lindenborg river. Down by the river was the important water mill, Røde mølle.

The houses in Ersted itself were arranged in a broad ellipse around three small ponds, and Jens’s parents house was on the northeast side of town.² Very little happened in Ersted. The nearby town of Årestrup was the focal point of most local life, as both the parish church and the school were located there.

The house that Jens’s parents acquired was small, consisting originally of two *fag* or spans, and the living quarters were essentially shared with the animals in the winter. Jens later built onto the house as his family grew, turning it into an L-shaped structure, and eventually took over ownership of the house from his parents. In a standard *aftagt* arrangement, his parents continued to live there with Jens and his family through 1855. At that point, the local records get jumbled and things get somewhat murky. Whatever the case, either he or his parents moved from the house. The most likely scenario is that Jens left his parents in the Ersted house and moved his family outside of town to another house that he owned. Jens’s mother died September 3, 1861 of old age, and his father died March 4, 1874, also of old age, both of them living out their days in the little house in Ersted.

Jens’s second house was in *Hovbakshusene*, an area northwest of Årestrup, on Ersted heath. Oddly, *Hovbakshusene* does not appear on local maps, an indication that it was a short-lived grouping of small houses. This lack of staying power is not surprising given the origin of *Hovbakshusene*. In the aftermath of the three years war (1848-1850), the government launched a new housing policy designed to prevent the suddenly unemployed former soldiers from moving to the cities or returning “home” and burdening local parish poverty assistance boards. The program created thousands of smallholdings built on the Jutlandic heath, and these were offered for sale to the newly discharged soldiers at favorable prices.³ Not surprisingly, many of these houses

were on the least desirable farmland and the lots themselves were not large. Although the program offered the newly discharged soldiers a chance to become landowners, it also guaranteed that their first years on that land would be marked by considerable toil and meager crop yields.

Jens was clever. By taking advantage of his parent's nearby house, and an *aftægt* agreement with them, he was able to purchase one of these government sponsored smallholdings and rent it out for the first several years. In so doing, his tenants improved the property, using their sweat to build his equity. Although it is unclear when Jens finally took residence in *Hovbakshusene*, by 1895 he and his wife had certainly moved there. During a trip with the photographer Peter Olsen in 1895, Tang Kristensen did not find "Bitte Jens" in Ersted: "Vi tog nu op til Støvring St. og kom til Jens Kristensen, der ikke boede længere i Ersted, men var flyttet op til Hovbakshusene, hvor vi saa tog ham." [We went up to Støvring Station and came to Jens Kristensen who no longer lived in Ersted, but had moved up to Hovbakshusene, where we photographed him] (MO 4, 72). Jens and his wife moved back to Ersted later in life, probably to his parents' old house.

At the time of Jens's birth, his father Christen was listed in the church book with the title *gårdmand*, an annotation that should not be confused with the more prosperous *gårdejer*.⁴ Despite the seemingly grand title of *gårdmand*, the house that Christen bought in Ersted had no more land than could support a cow and five or six sheep. The censuses (*folketællinger*) from 1834 and 1840 make Christen's status much clearer: although the 1834 census listed him as a *husmand*, the 1840 census noted that he was a copyholder. In both censuses, annotations mentioned that he lived off his small plot, and supplemented his income by working as a cobbler. He probably had several small fields on which he would have planted barley, rye and wheat. Apart from

running his own small farm, Christen would have had to do villeinage at the manor farm that held the copyhold on his property. In addition, the local parish would have been able to press him into service to repair roads, shovel snow and other parish imposed work.⁵

Christen's children seem to have been reluctant to leave home, although the census records indicate that they went off and served at other farms from time to time. For instance, in 1834, the oldest daughter, Ane Margrethe, was not living at home, but she had returned by the 1845 census, still unmarried. By that point, her two youngest sisters had moved away from home to work as hired girls at local farms. Similarly, the older Kirsten was also away from home in 1845, but reappeared with a two-year-old child born out of wedlock in tow by the time of the 1850 census. She was not without skill though, and consequently was not as great a burden on her parents as she might otherwise have been. Much like Ane Margrete Jensdatter, Kirsten had learned how to weave and supplemented the family income with her work.

Jens, by way of contrast, continued to live at home through his twenties, a somewhat unusual state of affairs given the normal practice of young men and women leaving home soon after their confirmation to work as hired hands. Jens was confirmed on April 26, 1840, and the minister noted that his knowledge was “godt” [good]—a mediocre grade—while his behavior was a significantly better “meget godt” [very good]. In the years that followed, he worked for his father helping to make clogs. He also worked on local farms as a day laborer, which allowed him to live at home with his parents. Not until after his military service did he start a family of his own—all the while living in his parents' old house.

Even though the Danish constitution made army service universal, and not solely the burden of the peasant class, the

new organization of the military still meant that rural men could be conscripted. Given the state of affairs between Denmark and her southern neighbors in the 1840s, it is not surprising that Jens was called up to serve. He was initially recruited in 1850, near the end of the war, even though his name had first appeared in the conscription lists (*løgdsruller*) in 1841. People could linger on these lists for many years without being called up. Although the conscription lists were not very detailed, they did note that Jens was short, only five feet, one and three quarters inches tall.⁶ In 1850, the average height of men called into the military was five feet five and one-quarter inches, a good three and a half inches taller than Jens (Dybdahl 1982, 15). Jens's late call up may have been related to his size—passed over at the start of the war, by the end of the war, the military needed every warm body they could get, irrespective of height.

Jens was first called up to active service on January 5, 1850. He was assigned to the first company of the 11th Line Infantry Battalion on the thirtieth of March that same year after completing the normal ten-week basic training. He was one of twenty recruits for a company of two hundred (there were a total of seventy-four new recruits for the entire battalion). A battalion consisted of four companies, each with two hundred enlisted men. The need for this many recruits reflected both the high casualty rate suffered during the war and the much shorter service time required of conscripts. The active service commitment was sixteen months, down from six years prior to the military reforms. Jens probably served even less time since many soldiers were released once their battalions were put back on peacetime footing; the 11th Line Infantry Battalion stood down in late 1850.

Jens served without distinction and, according to family members, rarely spoke of his time in the military. When pressed, he would acknowledge that he had shot someone,

but then he would add, “det kunne da måske også have været en anden” [but it could have been someone else, too]. In his laconic remark one can trace both a recognition of the chaos associated with the battles in which he was involved, and his own unwillingness—not unlike that of many war veterans—to discuss the horror of combat. There is no doubt that he saw significant combat, since his company was in the thick of things at two major battles, and likely three. The battle at Helligbæk on July 24, 1850, the battle at Isted on July 25, 1850, and the battle at Stentenmühle on August 8, 1850 were all horrific, gruesome affairs, and the 11th Line Infantry Battallion suffered major casualties at each one (Svane 1879). Although the battle of Isted is considered by many war historians to be one of the most important victories ever for the Danish army, the battle on the previous day probably had a much more profound impact on Jens.

Along with Jens in the first company of the 11th Line Infantry Battalion was another young man from Ersted, Jens Nielsen. Nielsen had been recruited a few months earlier, even though he was several years younger than Bitte Jens, born February 19, 1827. He was confirmed a year after Jens and, given the tiny size of Ersted, it is inconceivable that the two did not know each other as children. Furthermore, once in the army, the regional bonds likely drew the two together—they were, after all, assigned to the same small company. Unlike Bitte Jens, though, Jens Nielsen never made it back to Ersted, falling in the battle at Helligbæk. He was one of six privates from the battalion killed during what was a bloody, chaotic and utterly mismanaged battle. Svane, in his account of the fight, describes a gruesome struggle to capture a hill from the enemy forces. Although the Danish soldiers successfully took the hill, they were then ordered to abandon it, and soon found themselves in pitched hand-to-hand combat in a nearby forest. Given these poor strategic

decisions, the confrontation devolved into a slaughter for both sides (Svane 1879, 49-51). The loss of a friend—or at least a childhood neighbor—and the subsequent horrors of the battle at Isted the following day, where another 25 members of the battalion died, must have had an impact on Jens's psyche. In two short days, Jens had been present when nearly one fifth of his battalion had been butchered. He later told people that he had been hit in the head with a bullet, and this had led to a loss of memory. It is unclear if or when he was wounded since Svane's history only lists the soldiers who were killed, and there is no way of confirming whether Jens was one of the ninety-nine privates listed as injured over the course of the three battles. Tellingly, his loss of memory was only temporary—affecting him at a certain time of day—and he regained all his faculties by the time he was fifty. Or at least so the story goes.

When Jens returned from the war, he set to the business of settling down, marrying Anne Sørensdatter of Årestrup on December 26, 1853. Anne, twenty-eight years old at the time, was the daughter of *gaardmand* Søren Sørensen and his wife Mette Jensdatter. In 1854, Anne and Jens had their first child, Ane Margrethe who apparently died at a young age since, by the time of the 1860 census, she was no longer listed as living with the family. It is possible that she was sent off as part of a foster arrangement to live with another family, a fairly common approach among smallholders to care for their youngest children. Jens, however, does not seem to have used this option for caring for children until he married his second wife and so one has to assume that Ane Margrethe died. The death of Ane Margrethe would not have been out of the ordinary, particularly among the poorer rural classes. Yet, by the last decades of the nineteenth century, infant and child mortality were falling rapidly (Dybdahl 1982, vol. 5, 30). There were several epidemics of measles, diphtheria, scarlet

fever and influenza that primarily affected children—with frighteningly high mortality rates—during this period, but better hygiene, better access to consistent food supplies, and a better understanding of care for the sick all contributed to a marked decrease in childhood mortality (Dybdahl 1982, vol. 5, 30-5).

Death was never too far away from the cotters' houses. On May 12, 1860, Jens's wife Anne died of scrofulous, a tubercular infection of the skin of the neck, not quite thirty-five years old. Jens remarried on November 2 of that same year, as most smallholdings relied on having both husband and wife available to do the necessary work. Statistical studies of marriage patterns during the nineteenth century up through 1870, reveal that it was common for people to remarry within two months of the loss of a spouse (Johansen 1979, vol. 4, 61-63). Jens's second wife was his twenty-year-old step-cousin from Gravlev, Maren Andersdatter, who was employed as a hired girl. She had at least two younger siblings: a brother Niels, eight years her junior, and a sister Maren Kirstine, ten years her junior. Her mother was Ane Lene Nielsdatter and her father was Anders Christensen Bundgaard, a fifty-seven year old copyholder from Gravlev. His last name is the source of the patronymic that Jens's sons Anders and Niels Peter later took as their legal name.⁷ Maren's background was not much different than Jens's, as she also came from a family of smallholders. Together, Jens and Maren had five children: Ane, born in 1861; Anders, born in 1864; Marie Kirstine, born 1866; Ane Cathrine Margrethe, born 1869; and Niels Peter, born 1879. Anders grew up to be one of Denmark's most famous early twentieth century sculptors.

In Tang Kristensen's biographical sketch of Bitte Jens, he noted that Maren often left the house when he came to visit because she did not like to hear the stories that her husband

told, the implication being that she found the stories to be filled with superstition and, as a modern woman, was uninterested in the simple ways of the earlier generations. This representation of Maren is misleading: she herself was said to be prophetic (*synsk*), and a story in family tradition provided “proof” of her second sight. According to the story, her parents’ house burned in 1854, when Maren was fourteen. She believed she could “see” who had set the fire, and she brought her accusation to the court in Nibe. To the horror of the district judge, she accused the wife of the largest farmer in the area; despite the obvious class differences, her accusation was proven true, and the woman was sent to jail. Less dramatic stories suggest that Maren was able to know ahead of time when she would receive a letter from one of her children (Various 1995). Given her background, it is far more likely that Maren did not like to listen to her husband’s stories not because of their seeming endorsement of superstition, but rather because of his propensity to tell crude, even obscene, stories. Interestingly, while Bitte Jens told numerous stories of people with second sight, he never mentioned Maren’s alleged abilities to Tang Kristensen.

Documentation of Bitte Jens and Maren’s children’s lives is uneven. Their daughter Marie Kirstine is perhaps the hardest to follow in her early life; paradoxically, this lack of clarity helps illustrate an important aspect of rural life and the impact of economic pressures on family organization. While Marie Kirstine is listed in the church records under live births, she disappears from the local census records, and does not reappear until the 1880 census, when she suddenly appears as a thirteen year old girl. The lapse is not, however, as inexplicable as it may first seem. Rather, it points to the practice of fostering, both formal and informal, that acted as a social safety net within small communities and more extended networks of relatives. Formal fostering

arrangements were a component of developing programs for assisting the poor, and these were often straightforward business propositions—families bid for communal support to take children into their care; before reforms to this system with the child laws in 1889, it was shockingly common that foster arrangements would be rebid each year. Children caught in the system could find themselves shuttled from family to family on a yearly basis. The practice of housing children with the lowest bidder further added to the inhumanity of the system, because children were routinely exploited, chronically undernourished, and emotionally traumatized (Jørgensen 1940, 165).

There was, however, a more humane, informal network of fostering, in which families with young children would ask close friends or relatives to help care for the children in those first years, allowing the family to maintain or develop a sounder economic base, and not have to worry about disruptive and demanding infants and toddlers. When the children reached school age, or a bit before, they would return home. Jens and Maren’s son Anders was, shortly after his birth, sent into fosterage with his grandparents in Gravlev. The same—or at least a similar—fosterage arrangement was in place for Marie Kirstine during her earliest childhood. Anders was back at home with his parents by age five (in time for the 1870 census), and so it is likely that Marie Kirstine received similar treatment. Since the youngest brother Niels Peter also later took the name Bundgaard, as his older brother who had been in fosterage with his grandparents, it is likely that he too was sent to live with them when he was very young. Indeed, it could well be that Ane Cathrine Margrethe, the second to youngest, also had a stint in fosterage with her grandparents.⁸

The Local Environment

Ersted perches on the northern border of Rold Skov, one of the largest forests in northern Jutland. The farmland here is not good since it is sandy, but the proximity of the forest, with its opportunities for charcoal production and access to wood for building barrels and making shoes, made it an economically attractive place to live. Indeed, forest covered more than a quarter of the parish in the late nineteenth century. Reclamation of the heath and swamplands was a major undertaking during the 1880s, and the arable land was increased considerably during the last decades of the nineteenth century, in no small part by efforts of smallholders and, equally important, ambitious farmers. Lindemborg River, marking the border between Hornum Herred and Hindsted Herred, cuts a dramatically deep valley to the east of Ersted, and at the bottom of the valley lay a large mill complex, *Rode Mølle*. Several large hills stand out in the terrain, notably Møgelhøj (99 meters), Torsted Bjerg (68 meters) and, most important for Jens's storytelling, Bavnehøj (88 meters).

Årestrup (1455 Aariztorp, 1462 Orestroph, 1798 Aarestrup) was the local parish seat, with a church originally built in the twelfth century, a parsonage (1884), and a schoolhouse (1885). It was part of the Hornum district of Aalborg county. The savings association in Årestrup was established in 1886, and provided local farmers and smallholders a new opportunity to borrow money. In 1910, Årestrup opened its own cooperative dairy and a sawmill. The rest of the parish was comprised of Ersted (1611 Ersteddt; 1688 Errested; 1800 Ersted), where Jens lived; Foldager (1664 Fold Agger); Torsted (1451 Torstet; 1798 Torsted) and a collection of houses and farms at Stubberup and Hellegde. Some of these place names, including Ersted and Torsted, indicate settlements in the area stretching back to the middle

ages; and archaeological finds suggest settlements stretching much further back, perhaps three thousand years (Trap 1058-9). There are several other noteworthy archaeological finds in the area, including two long mounds, and thirty-four mounds. Near Foldager, there was a large group of twenty-three mounds, although by the 1950s, only eight were left; the rest had most likely been plowed level to increase arable land or been used for marl. There is also a stone setting burial area from the late Iron Age near Torstedlund, and a bowl shaped stone in Årestrup that once had been the cover of a mound (Trap 1958, 1062).

The main economic player in the area was the manor farm, Torstedlund. As far as manor farms go, it was modest, with only 22.8 barrels of *hartkorn* in land valuation, hardly enough to qualify it as a *gods*, but at the very high end of the *proprietar* scale. In 1724, Torstedlund manor was folded into the larger Nørlund manor, as part of a purchase of Torstedlund and Albæk manor by Count Chr. Fr. Lewetzau, who bought the two farms for 34,860 rixdollars. The combined estate had a valuation of 712 barrels of *hartkorn*, including all of the affiliated farms. In 1811, the house of Restrup was dissolved, and all of its farms were sold for 1.15 million rixdollars to Malte Ulrik Friis. A series of sales followed but by 1826, Torstedlund and Nørlund had been consolidated into one large estate by a single owner, Carl de Neergaard.

Nørlund manor has a long and confusing history as well. Records date it as far back as the 1300s, when it was denounced as a robber fort that was later destroyed by King Valdemar Atterdag. After she took the throne, Queen Margaret I forbid any further building there in 1396, and subsequently tore down a small fort that was being used by a band of robbers as a base of operations to attack travelers, an event that Jens mentioned in several of his stories (see BJK

1.25 and 1.27). In 1570, Ludvig Munk Nørlund took over the manor, marking the beginning of a noble era at Nørlund. His daughter, Kirsten Munk, was married “to the left hand” with King Christian IV (see BJK 1.28). Nørlund manor traded hands frequently over the next several centuries, including a sale to Iver Rosenkrantz-Lewetzau, under whose control the manor became a hereditary holding (*stamhus*) in the Restrup lineage. In the early nineteenth century, the manor was consolidated with Torstedlund and Albæk manors, and later sold in 1830 to krigsråd Rasmus Conradsen, who started a glassworks, Conradsminde, there in 1834. The glassworks failed, and in 1868, the manor was taken over by Commander Emil Bluhme. He established a sawmill there and, for much of the nineteenth century, a large part of the estate’s income came from the forest. This emphasis on forestry over grain or animal production was unusual for manor farms. A major storm in 1910 felled a large number of trees on the estate’s land, and plunged it into a financial crisis. As a result, the estate was sold to real estate speculators (Trap 1958, 1060).

The two manor farms, Torstedlund and Albæk, constituted an independent judicial district (*birk*), a status which had been granted by King Christian V in 1686 to Admiral Chr. Bielke, the manor lord at the time. All of the peasants who had villeinage at either farm, as well as everything that Bielke could acquire within a three-mile radius of the manor farms, belonged to this *birk*. With the purchase of the two manor farms in 1724, all of the Restrup lineage holdings came under this administration. The *birk* held judicial sway for nearly a century but, by 1814, with the various legal and land reforms, it was disestablished, and the judicial administration of the areas reverted to the local districts (*herreder*) (Trap 1958, 1060-1).

Årestrup parish along with Haverslev parish comprised a pastorate. Årestrup was under the deanship in Fleskum and

Hornum Herred. The church in Årestrup is an unusual structure, constructed predominantly of granite blocks, and laid out on an east-west axis, with the tower in the west, and the entry foyer to the north. In 1888 the church was restored, at which point workers discovered chalk paintings from the sixteenth century, the same period as that of the church bell, which is from 1582. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the church in the context of Bitte Jens’s life is a plaster relief of Abel’s Death, executed by his son, Anders Bundgaard.

The farmland around Ersted and Årestrup was greatly influenced by the surrounding heath, and the mineral wealth in the area. On his first visit to the area, Tang Kristensen wrote,

Det var ellers en underlig Egn at færdes i. Smaavejene var graa eller hvide, for Kalken stak hele Tiden oven ud af Jorden, og mine Støvler blev helt hvide deraf. Der oppe kommer de nemt afsted med at gjøre deres Veje i Stand og holde dem vedlige, da Kalken er saa haard og bindende, at der ikke behøves Grus paa dem. Jeg kunde jo se, at naar man pløjer Jorden der, kommer Kalken ogsaa frem, og Jorden kan da under gunstige Vejrforhold give stærke Afgrøder af Korn, men Straa bliver der kun lidt af. Alt dette lagde jeg Mærke til strags, jeg kom der, og fik Bekræftelse derpaa de følgende Dage (MO vol. 3, 79).

[It was a strange area in which to travel. All the small roads were either gray or white, since the lime deposits kept poking up out of the ground, and my boots turned

completely white because of that. It is easy for them to repair and maintain their roads up there, since the lime is so hard and sticks together so well that there's no need for gravel. I also noticed that when you plow the earth there, the lime comes up too, and the earth can give plentiful grain harvests if the weather is good, but they do not get much straw. I noticed all of that as soon as I got there, and this was confirmed over the following days.]

These unusual environmental features left their mark on Jens's storytelling and his son Anders's artistic production.

Critics have long noted that Anders Bundgaard's sculpture is closely linked to the physical and natural environment of Himmerland, where he grew up herding sheep and helping his father. His son, Jens Andersen Bundgaard, writing in a local historical journal, noted, "Naturen har altid været en kunstnerisk oplevelse for ham, lige fra han var en lille dreng på Ersted hede. Derfra stammer hans stil. Det var naturens pragt, han var betaget af" [Nature has always been an artistic experience for him, ever since he was a little boy on Ersted heath. That is where his style comes from. It was the splendor of nature that moved him] (Various 1995). During his youth, Anders often mused that if he were rich, he would purchase Thindbæk Møllegård, since he considered it the most beautiful place he knew. In 1905, he did just that. The mill lay a few hundred meters downstream from Røde Mølle, and two and a half kilometers east of Ersted. The mill was no longer used as such, but rather rich lime deposits in the nearby hills allowed Anders to expand the mining enterprise there. It is interesting to note then, the significant change in status in Bitte Jens's family, all within

one generation: from a poor cotter family, the family became a relatively well-to-do family, fully integrated in capital economic developments and at the forefront of national cultural production.

Anders’s sculptures are often said by critics to be closely linked to his father’s stories, which in turn are also closely related to the local topography. Yet Anders’s best-known sculptures do not reflect that connection clearly, particularly those works based on religious motifs. Others reflect the connection to a small degree, implicitly illustrating aspects of the fantasy realm of the fairy tale. Indeed, the polar bears that he sculpted for the roof of the Copenhagen city hall were, in his own mind, linked to the fairy tales that his father told, although they could just as easily have been seen as representations of the polar bears on the Danish royal coat of arms (representing Greenland). Even though polar bears do not appear in any of the stories Bitte Jens told to Tang Kristensen, Anders’s comments that he was inspired by his father’s stories hint at an even larger repertoire than recorded by both Tang Kristensen and the local teacher, Karl Hjorth.⁹

Anders’s most famous statue—that of Gefjon plowing Sjælland out of Skåne—is also linked to Bitte Jens’s stories but only anecdotally. Nordic mythology had gained widespread popularity during the mid nineteenth century, largely through the efforts of N. F. S. Grundtvig. Nordic mythology at the time was also closely linked to the folk high school (*folkehøjskole*) movement. Snorri Sturluson’s Edda and Saxo’s Chronicle of the Danes had both been translated into Danish, and both works were widely available to the newly literate rural populations.¹⁰ Furthermore, Nordic mythology was deliberately used as a touchstone for being Danish minded (*danskesindet*) in the various nationalist movements that took hold both during mid century, and in the aftermath of the Schleswig-Holstein debacle. Stories from Nordic

mythology informed several of Anders's other sculptures as well, most notably a sculpture of the norns, Fenja and Menja, grinding out the fates of men, an image closely related to the agricultural work of Bitte Jens's (but not Anders's) childhood. Anders did not cite Snorri or Saxo as his main inspiration for these mythological sculptures. Instead he recalled sitting under the finishing table where his father sat putting the last touches on clogs and recounting these myths. By linking the stories to his father, Anders narratively anchored his sculptures in the local traditions and people of Jutland, and by extension peasant (*almue*) culture, as opposed to anchoring them in the deliberate national Romantic revivals of Nordic mythology represented by Grundtvig's written translations of Snorri and Saxo. The Gefjon fountain certainly emphasized the physicality of her endeavor and his representation of the bulls in particular, with steam pouring out of their noses as they strained against the plow, clearly built on Anders's own personal experience with animals and plowing. In this way, one can interpret the sculpture as more closely related to the emergent, realistic folk breakthrough (*folkelig gennembrud*) literature and a neo-Romanticism that was more socially progressive than its earlier Romantic counterparts (late eighteenth and early nineteenth century).

Some of Anders's other art works were more closely related to local topographical features and his father's legends. One of the best examples of this connection can be found in his work *Skat i gemme* [Hidden treasure], that plays on one of his father's frequent story motifs, namely buried treasure. In the sculpture, Anders took advantage of the huge caverns that were left behind from the mining operations in Tindbæk, converting them into an elaborate underground art museum. His original intention was to carve a series of reliefs in the walls, organically connecting his art to the earth itself. A mining accident that killed his son Christian interrupted his

plans, and he only completed one bas relief; this one relief hints at the clear connection in his mind between the earth, his art, and the stories that accrued to the local landscape. Entitled *Bakkernes Ånd* [The Spirit of the Hills], it shows a reclining woman cuddling up with a three-headed snake, presumably a *lindorm* (see BJK 1.13). In the background, a mineworker is busy with his work, tearing apart the hill. The contrast of hill spirit and mine worker sets into relief the very tensions that Bitte Jens addressed in many of his stories between the modern, capitalist redefinition of the environment and the earlier relationship between farmer and the often hidden, spiritual dimension of the landscape. Although Anders never completed the reliefs intended for his underground museum, the plaster casts of many of his sculptures were moved into the mine, and the current museum highlights the connection between Anders’s art, the local environment and his father’s storytelling.

Everyday Life in Ersted and Årestrup

There is little documentation of the rhythms of Jens’s everyday life, apart from several small biographical sketches that appeared in the *Årbog for Himmerland og Kjær Herred* (Yearbook for Himmerland and Kjær Counties), as well as two short interviews with his son, Anders Bundgaard, about his childhood in Årestrup. J. A. Bundgaard’s short “Bondedreng i Ersted, 1864-1880” (Farm Boy in Ersted, 1864-1880), also in *Årbog for Himmerland og Kjær Herred*, provides some information about the daily life of the young men and women in the area. Perhaps the best document for understanding the daily rhythms of life on the farms near Årestrup does not come from Bitte Jens’s immediate circle but rather from a daily journal kept by farmer Niels Peter

Nielsen Krogh, Øster Bjerregård, Årestrup (b. April 17, 1859, d. 1912). Niels Peter's father, Kristen Nielsen Krogh (b. May 26, 1829) owned one of the two Bjerregårde farms on the northwest border of Årestrup. Eventually Niels Peter took over the farm when his father retired on a standard *afægt* arrangement. Over the course of several years, Niels Peter made short daily entries in his journal, irrespective of whether something major had happened or not. These notations included descriptions of the weather, and a line or two describing the events of the day. Reading through a year of the journal offers fascinating insight into the concerns and the tasks of a farmer in the Årestrup area.

The daily demands of Jens's life were probably different from those confronting Niels Peter, given that Jens was a smallholder, and Niels Peter was a farm owner. Nevertheless, considering the relatively small size of Niels Peter's farm, and the *afægt* arrangement that kept his father under the same roof (albeit a larger roof), the general contours of daily life were probably similar: animals to care for, chaff to cut, grain to be readied for planting. There were, of course, social and political distinctions between farmer and cotter, and these distinctions were mirrored in the types of social engagements that dot Niels Peter's journal—he and his father frequently visited with the social elite of the area, including the forest ranger (*skovfoged*) and the miller's family at *Røde Mølle*. Despite this class difference, the economic difference may not have been that great. Just as Jens needed to supplement his farming income with a craft, in his case making wooden clogs, Niels Peter had to do the same.

Niels Peter's journal makes evident the constancy in daily life, with entries several years apart being essentially interchangeable. For example, on January fourth, 1887, he wrote, "Frost. Fodret kreaturerne. Skaaren hakkelse. Søren flyttet i Sovekamret" [Frost. Fed the animals. Cut chaff. Søren

moved to the bedroom].¹¹ By way of comparison, on January sixteenth, 1895, he wrote, “Tøvejr. Fodret kreaturene. Skaaren hakkelse.” [Thaw. Fed the animals. Cut chaff.] Despite this seeming constancy, the journal includes small interruptions in this constancy that signaled the incremental yet important changes in social and economic organization that were the hallmark of the period. While the goal here is not to explore Niels Peter’s life in detail, several general observations on his everyday life as recorded in his journal may help with a deeper understanding of what it was like to live and work in Årestrup and Ersted in the late 1880s and the 1890s.

Early January was of course marked by the celebration of the final days of Christmas, New Year’s and Epiphany (*Hellig Trekongersdag*). Niels Peter noted a series of visits with neighbors, a couple of remaining Christmas parties (*julegilde*) on January seventh and eighth, and the usual feeding of the animals and cutting of chaff. He was an avid card player, and in January 1887, he spent three nights playing cards, several times accompanied by his father, who still owned the farm. He was also apparently was a fiddler, and played at several parties during the month—a “girl dance” (*pigebal*) on Sunday, January ninth at J. Pedersen’s house, and another dance (*bal*) on Sunday, January thirtieth. Throughout the year, Niels Peter and several others from the area played at parties, almost on a monthly basis.¹² Visits from neighbors, and particularly card playing, was reserved for the darker months, from November through February.

Other events that he noted include Niels Skomager—likely a local day laborer—hired to help with the threshing several days in a row (January twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth), the sale of a pig in Skørping (January tenth), a cow brought to bull at Torstedlund (January eleventh), the birth of a calf (January twelfth), the purchase of several pigs (January

sixteenth), and a trip to Aalborg to pay for a baby ram purchased at auction in Skørping (January fifteenth). The farm had acquired several mechanical devices, and he noted on January twenty-ninth that he had “machined” (*maskinet*) four barrels of barley.

Niels Peter was clearly active in the local savings association, as he attended several association meetings (January seventh and twenty-first). Later in the year (April fifteenth), he was elected chairman of the association, a reflection of his status in the surrounding community, despite his relative youth (twenty-nine years old). He was also engaged in cultural events in the town, attending public lectures at Årestrup School (for example, February twelfth). These lectures covered a wide range of topics, from advances in farm technology to cultural questions (indeed, Tang Kristensen often himself went on lecture tours to speak about his work on Danish tradition) to aspects of regional and national politics.

Årestrup School had a long history, one that stretched back further in time than the school reforms of 1814. One of the first attempts at school reform had been launched nearly a century earlier, in 1708, when the poverty assistance law required that manor lords establish schools. This law led to the establishment of several, privately funded schools. Greggers Krabbe, the owner of Torstedlund at the time, had the jump on his fellow manor lords, having established a local school in 1648, with the goal of “flittigen informere og lære fattige Skolebørn udi deres Catechismus og Børnelærdom og anden Gudfrygtigheds Øvelse, som og at læse Skrift, skrive og regne, saa vidt enhver efter sin Aar og Alder kan fatte og begribe” [to diligently inform and teach poor school children their Catechism and children’s learning and other exercises in piety, and also to read writing, write and do arithmetic to the extent that each can understand and comprehend based on

their age] (Johansen 1948, 5). By 1739, a new law attempted to impose curricular reform for the entire kingdom, and changed the structure of the various schools (including the *rytterskoler* that were established in 1735 on the Crown estates) so that the connection between church and school was clearly established.¹³

By the early nineteenth century, Årestrup had a long schooling tradition. From 1810-1836, Niels Larsen Krabbe ran the school, as the last of the “sognedegne,” or church functionaries. Later teachers, although administered by the local church, were hired primarily to teach (Nørr 1994). Lars Peder Krabsen, who was the first teacher to have actual training as a teacher, ran the school from 1836-1853. He was followed by Jens Larsen, from 1853-1876, who wove for people to supplement his income. Jens Larsen was also Bitte Jens and Niels Peter’s teacher. Karl Hjorth, the teacher who introduced Tang Kristensen to Bitte Jens and also collected Bitte Jens’s ballads and melodies, taught in the school from 1876-1888. Hjorth was from Jerslev, a town fifty-six kilometers to the north, where Niels Peter and his wife had some family connections. Hjorth was followed by Christian Helmod Flyger (1888-1900) and Axel Jensen (1900-1906).

In an entry from much later in the year, November twenty-second, Jens Peter mentioned that a meeting at the school had raised the issue of morality (*sædelighed*). In the 1880s, the morality debate (*sædelighedfejden*) and the question of women’s rights and freedom were front and center in the cultural debates not only in Copenhagen, but also far out into the countryside. The national election was perhaps more politically important, and Jens Peter mentions it in two January entries. On January twentieth, he noted, “Til prøvevalg i Forsamlingshuset i Trængstrup” [To trial election in the meeting house in Trængstrup] and on January twenty-eighth, “Til folketingsvalg i Brørstrup. Valgt J. Vestergaard.”

[To parliamentary elections in Brorstrup. Elected J. Vestergaard].¹⁴

February and March proceeded in much the same way, with increasing focus on preparations for the upcoming planting season. Throughout the year, various holidays disrupted the daily rhythms, but only in a minor fashion—Carnival (*fastelavn*), like many other holidays, required baking, and the holiday was usually marked by visits to neighbors. Niels Peter continued to employ Niels Skomager to help thresh, and he regularly attended meetings of the savings association.

On a local political level, it is interesting to note that Niels Peter also attended a railways meeting in Års. By 1887, the rail network was built out, although other spurs were constantly being added. Års was on a central spur of the Jutlandic railways that branched off from the main western Jutlandic line, at Viborg. The terminus of the line was at Løgstør at Aggersund—although initially the terminus was at Ålestrup (the Ålestrup-Løgstør extension was first built in 1966; in 2002, passenger traffic on Viborg-Løgstør was eliminated). The meeting was likely to have been a planning meeting, since the Viborg-Ålestrup line was not opened until several years later in 1893, whereas the main Randers-Aalborg line (on which Støvring station lay) was opened already in 1869. These planning meetings were held not only to discuss the route of the rail lines, but also to discuss the location of the stations. At times, parishes would provide funding, often through the local savings bank, in return for certain concessions such as the location of a station.¹⁵ Having a station nearby could be a great boon to the local economy.

Niels Peter's journal reveals several interesting aspects of mobility in late nineteenth century Denmark. On the local level, Niels Peter and his father traveled fairly easily and regularly throughout the area, likely by wagon or carriage. On

a more regional level, he and his father made use of the ever-expanding rail network—allowing them to travel easily to Aalborg for example—and were actively engaged in expanding that rail network. The embrace of technology among farmers is also reflected in their use of machines to assist in the farm work. Although Bitte Jens was probably not as involved in these local political decisions, the application of technology on the local level, or the political discussions that led to the expansion of transportation and by extension business opportunities—he certainly would have been aware of these developments and their increasing impact on his daily life and livelihood.

As February wore on, Niels Peter began bringing wood back from the forest, a major, and communal undertaking. On the seventh and eighth, he drove two loads of wood home, and from the ninth through the fifteenth, a load each day; on the fifteenth, there was a *tragilde* or a “wood party,” a celebration to mark the end of a cold, difficult task. The wood was used for various things at Niels Peter’s farm, including wooden shoes, an interesting intersection with Bitte Jens’s sideline as clog maker. Already on the first of March, Niels Peter noted that he had begun sawing the wood for wooden shoes.

The weather throughout the month was unforgivingly cold, with frost, snow and high winds and, along with the work in the forest, it left Niels Peter battling a cold that forced him to bed on the fifteenth. His father fell ill soon there after. Although health care was becoming increasingly sophisticated, illness was a constant threat and, given the relentless work pace on small farms and smallholdings, could have a significant negative impact on the family economy. Unlike his father’s cold, Niels Peter’s cold was serious, and he lay in bed for an entire week. Finally, someone went to the doctor on his behalf. Whatever was given to him must have

worked, since already on the twenty-fourth, he went to Aalborg with butter for an exposition; several weeks later, on a beautiful early March day, he traveled again to Aalborg to enter his butter in a competition, and won third prize. Later in March, on the twenty-sixth, he went to Nibe to display his butter once more. Yet despite his success with his butter, the days of private production of dairy products, particularly on small farms, were numbered. By the late 1880s, the cooperative movement had taken hold, and there was an increased emphasis on consistency of production, particularly for items such as butter. Without consistent controls on quality, the small farmers and cotters would never be able to export their goods to the lucrative overseas market (an advantage held by the wealthier manor farms). With the development of better production methods, the switch to beets and similar crops for animal fodder, and the advent of the cooperatives, this barrier to markets was eliminated, and small farmers such as Niels Peter had greater opportunities for the sale of their products.

The rest of the month of February was filled with visits from neighbors, cutting chaff and feeding the animals. In early March, several events stand out: a stallion was born early in the morning on the fourth (one of the few times Niels Peter actually recorded a time, here three a.m.), the first lamb of the year was born (on the thirteenth), and his wife Ane Margrethe went to bible study (*bibellasning*) in Ersted. Bible study was both a social affair and a religious undertaking. By the late nineteenth century, various religious groups had become quite popular throughout Denmark, and many of these contested the absolute religious authority of the Danish Folk Church—indeed, part of the constitutional reforms of 1849 were directly related to popular movements challenging that authority. This bible class was probably held either by Grundtvigians or the Inner Mission, as these were the two

most active groups in the area, and both proposed that the individual—rather than ecclesiastic officials—should be the focus of religious awakening. Given the forward mindset of Niels Peter, and his vote for the farmers’ party *Venstre*, it seems most likely that the meeting would have been held by Grundtvigians.

It is interesting that Ane Margrethe attended bible study for several reasons. First, her attendance appears to have been an anomaly—perhaps she attended with a friend who was trying to convert her. In any event, it was her only visit to the bible study for the entire year. Second, as with many other farmers, Niels Peter and his family were hardly regulars at church services. Indeed, attending church services was such an unusual event that Niels Peter noted when he had been to the church; he did so twice during the entire year: on February sixth, they attended church for normal Sunday services and on April seventeenth, they attended a confirmation. Most other Sundays were given to small chores around the farm, visiting neighbors, local travel, and fiddling at parties. Even on days such as Easter, there was no mention of church attendance; indeed, on Easter Monday, Niels Peter noted that he played fiddle at a local party.

By March eighth, Niels Peter was able to write that he had his oat stack in the barn, a total of thirteen and a half shocks, a fairly large amount, again underscoring the significant difference between Niels Peter’s and Jens’s economic circumstances. Two events further underscored the differences between the ambitious and relatively well off farmer, Niels Peter, and the much poorer Bitte Jens. On March fifteenth, Niels Peter attended a local meeting of the agricultural association (*landboforening*) at Hjedsbæk Inn, five kilometers north and west of Årestrup. The *landboforening* was one of the most important organizations for the burgeoning class of farmers (*gårdmænd*). Not only did the organization

provide access to information about technological advances in agriculture, and training in modern techniques, but it also served as a special interest representing the collective goals of the farmers on a regional and national basis. The *landboforening* also played a significant role in the farmers' development of an "imagined community," the very basis of *Venstre's* development as an important political party.

On March sixteenth, Niels Peter traveled to Aalborg for another exhibition of agricultural produce and, at the same time, joined the "Skütteforening" or rifle club (*skytteforening*). In the aftermath of the Danish military defeat in 1864, and a concomitant rise in nationalist feelings throughout the country, numerous rifle clubs were established throughout Denmark. By the 1880s, with Estrup's imposition of the provisional budgets (and by extension provisional government), there was an additional component to these local rifle associations, as they were largely populated by *Venstremænd* (members of the political party Left or *Venstre*), and represented, at least in Estrup's estimation, a threat to the power which he had consolidated in Copenhagen. While the groups were banned in the early 1880s, the ban was lifted in 1885. By 1887, the Aalborg club had been reestablished and Niels Peter was able to join—another clear declaration of Niels Peter's allegiance to the ever stronger farmers' party, *Venstre*, and yet another indication of the growing social divide between the farmers and the cotters—while the contours of day-to-day life may have been similar, the paths of political and social engagement were divergent.

Back on the farm, though, things were normal. From March tenth through the twelfth and again from the twenty-third through the twenty-fifth, Niels Peter did the finish work on the clogs that he had made out of wood that he had brought home from the forest earlier in the year. The time between doing the finish work and the initial cutting of wood

for the clogs suggests that he had sent the pieces to local clog makers—such as Bitte Jens—to be made into shoes, reserving the finish work for himself.¹⁶ Late March also saw the birth of several lambs, and on the twenty-sixth, a bull born to the white-spotted cow (*hvidbroget kø*).

At the very beginning of April, under clear skies, Niels Peter began plowing his fields. But work in the fields was not all-consuming, and he found time to play for a festive gathering (*lejestue*) on the day after Easter at Hjedsbæk Inn, and a sixtieth birthday party for his friend Kristen Østergaard. The “machining” of grain continued, and on the sixteenth, it amounted to six barrels of oats. On the twentieth and twenty-first, he prepared a field for sowing, and harrowed the oat fields. By the end of April, he had planted carrots and potatoes, as well as sown several fields with oats, fertilized his barley field, harrowed the fallow field, and sold a one-year-old calf to a neighbor.

Most of May was taken up with sowing fields, and harrowing the various fields that had already been sown or were lying fallow. On the ninth, with his father in Aalborg with the accounts and tax records, he spent the day working at harrowing part of the heath, where several days later he planted potatoes as well. By the tenth, he had started sending his calves out to graze on grass. The twelfth was taken up with a trip to the market in Skørping. Again, on the fourteenth, Niels Peter was away from home, this time traveling to Aalborg for a general assembly. Although it is unclear from his notation, the general assembly was probably that of the *Landboforening*. On the same day, he and his father sent a cow up to a bull at Torstedlund, the nearest manor farm.

May and June were busy months, packed with farm work, and social and political engagements. Niels Peter’s wife celebrated her birthday on May seventeenth, in the midst of

getting the potatoes planted.¹⁷ By the end of May, the tailor had come by to sew clothes (they were delivered on June twelfth), the cows were again grazing, Niels Peter had driven two shocks and forty-eight bundles of oats off, been to a meeting at Jens Petersen's place with the newly elected member of the Rigsdag, Jens Vestergaard, been mildly ill (on the twenty-fifth), celebrated his father's birthday (on the twenty-sixth), fertilized the potato patch, cut peat in the heath, washed and sheared the ram, attended several meetings of the savings association and played at a party at Hjedbæk plantation. In June, Niels Peter planted beets, cut peat in the heath with Christian Hand, a local daylaborer, wrote a *stamtavle* or genealogy for his horse "Jette" (likely in preparation to sell or show her), and got ready to thatch the roof. He also brought three loads of clay from Ersted—possibly from the clay pit that Bitte Jens owned jointly with several other men in Ersted—for a new threshing floor, which he lay the day after getting the clay.

Several unusual events interrupted the otherwise steady pace of the work during the month. On the political level, Niels Peter played at a constitution day party (*grundlovsfest*) in Oplev Krat on June fifth. The celebration of constitution day during the late 1880s took on a particularly political tone, as Estrup's government in Copenhagen continued the end-run around the democratically elected parliament (*rigsdag*), by blocking normal budgetary debate, and issuing provisionary budgets. The *grundlovsfest* was an opportunity for people to publicly show their support for the democratic principles of the constitution and implicitly challenge the legitimacy of Estrup's government; *Venstre* and the farmers were at the forefront of this moderate resistance.

Later in the month, Niels Peter and his wife traveled north to Vendsyssel to Jerslev. After a three-day trip, they returned and, on the very next day, Niels Peter made a large

investment in property, purchasing “Engerd” (Matrikel 143) from Årestrup meadow for two thousand crowns. The contract was finalized on July third. This purchase alone underscores the considerable economic distance between a farmer such as Niels Peter and the much poorer Bitte Jens. While Bitte Jens was trying to make a go of it with his small lot, Niels Peter was investing in expansion and capital development. These differences echoed throughout Jutland in the late 1800s, and contributed to the ever-increasing divide between the farmers and the cotters.

During the month of July, Niels Peter hired a local carpenter to thatch his roof while he tended to the fields, weeded the beets, drove loads of peat back from the heath (ten loads on the fourteenth and fifteenth of July) and brought his animals to various fairs (his ram won fifth prize in one of these local fairs). By mid July, he was already helping to cut hay in some of the area fields. The work was collective, and it was not until the twenty-third that he mentioned that the hay had been cut in his own fields. By the end of July, he and his father had raked and stacked the hay in their fields. In August, he began harvesting the rye and the barley; by mid August, the rye was in (thirteen loads, or sixteen shocks and seven bundles), and the oats had been harvested from several fields. The fallow fields had been plowed under again, and the rye that had been planted on the earlier heath had also been harvested. The short, almost terse entries hide the extraordinary amount of work that must have lain behind them; the workdays were long, and during much of the month, the weather was hardly cooperative, alternating between wind and rain. By the end of August, Niels Peter had shod his horse Jette, had begun tarring an unthatched roof (possibly the roof of a barn), and repaired the walls of the farm. His farmhouse was most likely a half-timber structure that needed annual upkeep of the stucco. He had also begun

driving fertilizer out to the newly harvested fields, particularly the heath fields, using manure from his animals.

September and October saw the end of the harvest. In early September, Niels Peter sold a horse for two hundred and fifty crowns, finished fertilizing, sowed a crop of barley, and plowed the stubble back into the harvested fields. In mid September, he purchased an order of honey, a key ingredient in baking and brewing at the time. The end of September was marked by home improvement projects, including a new kitchen table and a new floor in the entryway. By October, the weather had become much cooler, and by mid October, soon after all of the fields had been plowed and fertilized, there was an unseasonably early snowstorm. The storm was only a minor interruption, and he harvested his potatoes, sold another horse for two hundred crowns, and finished harvesting his beets.

By November, the pattern of feeding the animals, cutting chaff, visiting friends and playing cards dominated once again. On the first of November, a new girl was hired, Sine Krabsen. By this time, May first and November first were well established as the days that hired hands moved to new employment if their contracts were up and had not been renewed. It was also at this time of year that spikes in marriages took place: young men and women, freed from their contracts, could now marry and pursue a life together, often acquiring a small house, either with or without land (Dybdahl 1982).

Niels Peter's father, exhausted from the work of the harvest, fell ill, and several days later, the doctor was sent for; by the end of the week, he was better, although his convalescence lasted well into the next week. In mid November, along with N. Skomager and C. Hendriksen, Niels Peter set out boundary markers in the swamp—likely in anticipation of beginning a reclamation project. By the end of

the month, he had brought lumber out to the swamp to build a bridge. On November seventeenth, his father went to the forest auction—it was here that the wood was purchased that was driven home in January. Otherwise, little of note happened: he and his wife bought some pigs, and a cow was brought to the bull.

In December, Niels Peter sat down to write an article about fertilizer, most likely with the intent of having it published by the agricultural society. On December third, he went off to Aalborg to purchase paper for his article, a distance of twenty-seven kilometers! The next day, the family was visited by Jørgen Knudsen from Foldager concerning music instruction—it is unclear whether he was offering or seeking instruction, although given Niels Peter’s frequent travel to parties to fiddle, it seems likely that it was the latter. There are no further notations about this, so Niels Peter probably did not take Jørgen on as a student. Indeed, there is nothing to suggest that Niels Peter taught anyone music. On the eighth, he slaughtered a pig for home consumption, a fairly common practice, and one that would guarantee an excellent ham for Christmas celebrations later in the month. During the weekend of the tenth and eleventh, Niels Peter wrote his article about manure, and by the twelfth, he was able to send the completed article off to Århus (another indication that the article was intended for the agricultural society—there had probably been a general call for articles at the general assembly (*generalforsamling*) that he attended earlier in the year, with a deadline by the end of the year). The end of the month was taken up with preparations for Christmas, and the machining of the harvested grain. On the twenty-second, Niels Peter and his wife hosted a dance, but otherwise spent the Christmas season visiting nearby friends.

The year has a clear rhythm, governed by planting seasons and the weather. At the same time, the advent of the

railway, significantly better roads, and much better communication allowed the local to be connected to the regional and the national. The little towns of Årestrup and Ersted were not as isolated as they perhaps were earlier in the century. Rather, political movements, such as the rise of the farmers' party *Venstre*, and cultural movements, such as the *sædelighedsfejde*, erupted in the local landscape and local individuals became involved in these larger movements. The school, and local commissions and organizations had supplanted the church as the center of local engagement. Niels Peter's journal also draws into sharp relief the distinctions between classes—upwardly mobile farmers, who had access to reasonable capital and were able to expand their farms, as opposed to the more stagnant smallholders and day laborers who, without capital and without resources, were unable to expand their opportunities.

Making Clogs

Jens did not keep a journal like Niels Peter, and so it is hard to describe in similar detail a year in his life. The patterns of planting, harrowing, harvesting, threshing, feeding and caring for animals, repairing buildings, buying wood and making clogs, doing household chores and baking, and visiting with neighbors and friends must have been more or less the same. It is unlikely that Jens was involved at the same level in regional and national politics, and there is no indication that Jens had any local responsibilities (such as Niels Peter's involvement in the savings association). Nevertheless, it is likely that Jens took part in local cultural arrangements (meetings at the school house), and probably even attended some of the same parties as Niels Peter.

Although Jens’s main work revolved around his smallholding, and keeping enough food on the table for his family, an important sideline—or *binæring*—was the production of wooden shoes (clogs). While there were several types of clogs routinely made in northern Jutland—a fact to which Jens alluded in his stories—by far the most common were ones made out of a single piece of wood. Clogs were work shoes, and were worn at all times of year, and for all kinds of outdoor work. The making of clogs was considered a skilled craft, and Jens had learned the craft starting in his early childhood. The work proceeded in three main phases, and as Niels Peter’s journal makes clear, most of the work was completed by the end of March.

The first phase was acquiring the wood, a process that was done entirely on speculation. Wood was purchased before being felled at auctions in the nearby forest. Although other wood supplies might have been bought on a supplemental basis from farmers (such as Niels Peter), Jens and his cohort acquired the majority of their wood at these auctions, held usually in late October or November, after all the leaves had fallen from the trees. The best trees for making clogs were thirty inches around (75 centimeters), without knots or obvious bends. Smaller trees were not suited for making clogs.

In December, the trees were felled using wood axes, wood saws, steel wedges and a long wooden sledge known as a *nyder* (Various 1995). Once the trees had been felled, they were cut into three to four meter (ten to thirteen feet) lengths, and allowed to dry in the forest. In January or February, depending on the weather, the purchased logs were loaded onto a wagon, and driven back to the farm. Jens used oxen to pull his wagon, and it is likely that several men assisted each other—the wood party to which Niels Peter alludes reflects the communal nature of getting the loads of wood back from

the forest. When the wagon arrived at Jens Peter's house, they would tip it over, spilling the logs into the farm's courtyard, and then right the wagon again using poles for leverage.

Jens would start working the wood in the morning, using a series of specialized tools to fashion the shoes from a solid piece of wood. The wood was first sawed down to size—both across and lengthwise. From one length of wood, thirty inches in diameter, one could make two pairs of clogs (Various 1995). The rough wood was then drilled out using a series of boring devices. First it was clamped to a drilling bench (*bulestol*), and then the various parts of the shoe were fashioned. The *foreborenaver* was used to rough out the foot hole, the *blokøkse* was used to shape the exterior wood, the *tåjern* fashioned the toe box, the *brystbor* was used to complete the hole, while the *slettenaver* and *skraber* were used to finish the clog. The last part of the process was the less exacting finish work, referred to as *at talle*, because the clog would not only be polished, but also rubbed with tallow (*talle*) to condition the wood. The clogs were marked with the clog maker's mark, and then smoked to finish the conditioning of the wood. Bitte Jens's mark was a cross on the top portion of the clog, but apparently he only put this mark on women's clogs (Various 1995).

Overview of Bitte Jens's Repertoire

Jens's repertoire is marked not only by extraordinary scope but also by considerable generic diversity. Indeed, many of Jens's stories and ballads play with the very conventions of genre itself. Accordingly, a description by genre of the stories and songs that Bitte Jens told and sang is bound to be somewhat loose. Jens was a masterful storyteller

and singer, and his repertoire was far ranging. Tang Kristensen’s collecting biases likely influenced Bitte Jens in what he chose to perform, particularly during their first session together, but as their relationship developed, Bitte Jens seems to have taken control of the sessions, and Tang Kristensen cleverly allowed him free rein.

Bitte Jens’s repertoire consists of eighty-three legends and descriptions of local events or topographical phenomena, three descriptions of folk practice, ten jocular tales or *schwank*, twenty examples of folk speech, including sayings, proverbs, and descriptions of dialect, four fairytales and folktales, sixteen ballads, and four short notations that relate to Tang Kristensen’s fieldwork.¹⁸ Perhaps the most striking single feature of Bitte Jens’s repertoire is his sense of humor. Although many of his legends detail frightening encounters with the supernatural—most often with witches, robbers and mound dwellers—they are interspersed with humorous stories about local farmers and ministers. As is the case in many smallholders’ stories, the tension between classes, particularly between peasants and the nobility but also between smallholders and farm owners, is apparent in many of Jens’s stories. Much of his humor borders on the obscene, and Tang Kristensen went to extraordinary lengths in some cases to eliminate the obscenity from his stories (Tangherlini 2008a). Bitte Jens’s sense of humor surfaces not only in his jocular tales, but also in his folktales, legends and, importantly, his ballads.

Despite the seeming comprehensiveness of Tang Kristensen’s collecting efforts with Bitte Jens, it appears he only scratched the surface. Anders Bundgaard, his son, alluded to numerous stories—particularly mythological ones—that do not appear in Tang Kristensen’s notebooks. More important are references to Bitte Jens’s good friend, Johan Pingel, with whom he apparently often sang ballads.

Tang Kristensen contacted Pingel in 1896, but by that time, Pingel was seventy-eight years old, and was having difficulty with his memory:

Men paa Vejen var jeg saa inde hos Banevogter Johan Kristian Pingel, som var bleven mig anbefalet. Han boede i et Vogterhus et godt Stykke syd for Stationen og var nu 78 Aar, saa han kunde nu ikke ret længe beholde Pladsen. Han sang nogle Viser for mig og fortalte ogsaa noget, men han var alligevel ikke saa dygtig, som jeg havde forestillet mig. Hukommelsen slog ham ret tit fejl. (MO vol. 4, 102).

[Along the way, I went in to railway guard Johan Kristian Pingel, who had been recommended to me. He lived in a guard house a good piece south of the station, and he was now 78 years old, so he could not keep the place much longer. He sang some ballads for me and also told some things, but he was not as good as I had expected. His memory failed him frequently.]

Karl Hjorth's collections, particularly of ballads and melodies, also point to a slightly larger repertoire than that collected by Tang Kristensen.

Sessions One and Two—February 1887

Tang Kristensen visited Bitte Jens for the first time in February of 1887, probably on Tuesday the eighth or Wednesday the ninth. He visited him for the second time on

Friday the eleventh or Saturday the twelfth. February was very cold according to Niels Peter’s journal, but it did not become stormy until later in the month. The fieldtrip started early in February, on the third, and was at the instigation of a teacher in Vokslev named Schytte, who had invited Tang Kristensen to the area to hold a lecture (MO vol. 3, 77). Tang Kristensen had met Schytte at a school meeting in Støvring in 1885, where he also met Karl Hjorth for the first time. Hjorth later became Tang Kristensen’s contact for Bitte Jens:

Altsaa tog jeg til Støvring d. 4de Januar og traf godt nok Karl Hjort, som var kjørende derhen. Efter Mødet fulgtes jeg med ham hjem. Den Vej kom jeg senere til at gaa til Fods, men nu var det Nat, og jeg saa ikke noget til Egnen. K. Hjort var Enkemand og havde en lille Søn, som var et og alt for ham. Han var noget fin paa det og noget pillen, men jeg befandt mig dog vel hos ham, og da han havde megen Interesse for vore Folkeminder og tillige var meget musikalsk, blev han mig siden en god Støtte. (MO vol. 3, 29).

[So I went to Støvring on the fourth of January and met Karl Hjort, who was driving in that direction. After we met, I went home with him. I later walked that same road, but now it was nighttime and I did not get to see any of the area. K. Hjort was a widower and had a little son who was everything for him. He was a bit of a dandy and a bit persnickety, but I was comfortable with him and since he was interested in our

folklore and was also very musical, he later became a great help for me.]

Although Tang Kristensen collected several stories and ballads during that visit in 1885, there is no indication that he collected anything from Jens Kristensen.

The field trip in February of 1887 was not terribly long, lasting no more than two weeks. He was back home in Brandstrup already on February eighteenth. But the trip represented one of Tang Kristensen's first trips to Himmerland, and particularly the area near Årestrup and Ersted. He started his trip in Støvring and continued on to Vokslev (to hold his lecture). After the lecture, he headed again through Støvring to Lynbjærg, Støvring hede, and Mastrup, before heading on to Ersted.

The entire visit spans field diary pages 3164a-3281a, and Jens's stories are recorded on pages 3236a-3251a and again from 3262b-3268a. Concerning his first series of visits with Bitte Jens, Tang Kristensen wrote:

Herfra tog jeg saa igjen over til Aarestrup og søgte naturligvis til Karl Hjort, som viste mig hen til Bitte-Jens i Ersted, nogle spredte Huse, et Stykke øst for Aarestrup By. Jeg traf godt nok Manden, og fik ham ogsaa til at fortælle for mig, men det kunde Konen ikke lide, og hun skyndte sig nu at komme af Vejen. Hvor hun blev af, véd jeg ikke, men jeg saa ikke mere til hende al den Tid, jeg opholdt mig der i Huset. Jens var god til at fortælle, og han kunde saa udmærket gjøre Rede for gammel Skik og Brug der paa Egnen og især for den gamle Dialekt, som de gamle havde talt med, men som den

yngre Slægt nu var ved at forlade. Han var altsaa en udmærket Mand at komme til. Han havde en Søster, som boede oppe ved Vejen til Stationen, og hun sang ogsaa lidt for mig, men var ikke nær saa god til at huske som Broderen. Henne hos Karl Hjort fik jeg Mad og Nattely, for hos Jens Kristensen kunde det jo ikke lade sig gøre, da Konen var forsvunden. Ellers fik jeg Indtryk af, at Jens, som for Resten ikke var særdeles lille af Vægst, var helt stor af Sønnen derovre i København. Han var Billedhugger og havde saa godt som arbejdet sig selv frem. Senere er samme Søn jo bleven en berømt Mand, da det er ham, der har lavet det store Springvand ude i Grønningen, som forestiller Gefion, der pløjer Sjælland ud fra Skaane, og som jeg tit senere har staaet og beundret.¹⁹ Faderen fortalte mig en Del om ham, som var af stor Interesse, netop fordi han særlig dvælede ved, hvordan Sønnen der hjemme havde vist sine betydelige Evner. (MO vol. 3, 82-3).

[From here I went over to Aarestrup again and naturally sought out Karl Hjort, who showed me to Bitte Jens in Ersted, a group of scattered houses a little bit east of Aarestrup town. I met the man and got him to tell for me, but his wife did not like that, and she hurried up and left. I have no idea where she went, but I did not see any more of her while I was there at the house. Jens was a good storyteller and he was also able

to explain old customs from the area, particularly the old dialect that the old ones had spoken, but the younger people are now abandoning. He was an excellent man to meet. He had a sister who lived up on the road to the station and she also sang a little bit for me, but she was not nearly as good as her brother at remembering. At Karl Hjort's place I got food and lodgings, because it was not possible at Jens Christensen's place, as his wife had disappeared. Otherwise I got the impression that Jens who, by the way, was not that short, was quite proud of his son over in Copenhagen. He was a sculptor and had worked his way up. Later that same son became a famous man, as it was he who made the large fountain out at the Grønningen that shows Gefjon plowing Sjælland out of Skåne and that I have later stood and admired. His father told me a bit about him and that was interesting in large part because he dwelled on how his son had already shown his considerable talents at home.]

Tang Kristensen mentioned Jens's sister, Kirsten, whom he also visited on that same trip in February 1887, apparently right after visiting Jens. Her stories are recorded on pages 3268a-3272a of the field diary. Despite mentioning that Kirsten sang for him, he only recorded stories from her in the field diaries—there are no ballads in the field diaries attributed to Kirsten. The published versions of her stories can be found in *Danske Sagn* (III 271, 446, 1544 and IV 39). He also repeated the claim that Jens was not short, despite

the military records to the contrary. Tang Kristensen in this note also mentioned up Jens’s son Anders, but he must have conflated later discussions with Jens because at the time in 1887, Anders was still a young man, perhaps twenty-two, and was a student of Stephan Sinding in Copenhagen. Anders had yet to accomplish anything of note, although that would hardly prevent Jens from being proud of his son’s achievements at that time.

In his first session with Tang Kristensen, Jens sang numerous ballads. Although Svend Grundtvig had died four years earlier, Tang Kristensen still emphasized ballads and folktales in his initial collecting efforts with new informants. Jens started the session with nine ballads—over half of the ballads that he would eventually sing for Tang Kristensen. But once he had finished singing, he turned his attention to legends (18) and folktales (2). He interrupted his storytelling with another ballad, before returning to legends and jocular tales. The most remarkable story the Jens told that day was an obscene story that was published as two distinct stories, eliding the obscene parts (Tangherlini 2008a).

Tang Kristensen’s second session followed soon after the first, and occurred during the same field trip. This much shorter session comprised only six pages in the field diaries (3262b-3268a).

Session Three—May 1888

Tang Kristensen did not return to Ersted until May of 1888. The trip was short, and he accomplished very little collecting, probably because people were busy with farming tasks. Yet it was an important trip for Tang Kristensen, as the young and ambitious Axel Olrik accompanied him. Tang Kristensen viewed the trip as a chance to teach Olrik the

fieldwork ropes but as their time together wore on, Tang Kristensen lost patience with Olrik. In his memoirs, he took pleasure in describing Olrik's inexperience in collecting stories and, more importantly, walking the rugged Danish landscape:

Lidt hen i Maj fik jeg saa Brev fra Axel Olrik, at han Kunde have Lyst til at gjøre en Fodrejse sammen med mig og vilde da komme over til Brandstrup, saa snart det passede mig. Jeg foreslog ham at komme strags, da jeg i Juni ønskede at være i Kjøbenhavn, og Tiden skulde jo bruges saa godt som muligt, imens jeg havde Hjælpelæreren. Han kom da ogsaa strags efter, og saa skulde vi jo afsted med det samme. Jeg syntes, at vi skulde tage en Tur op i Himmerland. Nu havde jeg lige været der og var kjendt med Forholdene. Ikke just fordi det var den bedste Egn at komme til, men Rejsen vilde ikke blive saa dyr, og jeg havde ogsaa Lyst til, at han skulde lære Pilmanden at kjende og høre ham fortælle for os. Olrik havde intet at indvende, og saa tog vi om Morgen en til Viborg og derfra med Dagvognen til Gjedsted. Det var vist ret morsomt for ham at prøve saadant et Befordringsmiddel. (MO vol. 3, 180-1).

[A bit into the month of May I received a letter from Axel Olrik. He indicated that he wanted to go on a walking trip with me and that he would come to Brandstrup as soon as it was convenient for me. I suggested that

he come immediately since I wanted to be in Copenhagen in June. Also I had to use my time as best as I possibly could while I still had the substitute teacher. He came soon thereafter and we left immediately. I thought we could take a trip up to Himmerland. I had just been there and knew the lay of the land. Not only was it the best place to go, but also the trip wouldn't be too expensive and I wanted him to meet Pilmanden and hear him tell for us. Olrik had nothing against that so we went in the morning to Viborg and from there by day coach to Gjedsted. It was apparently quite amusing for him to try that type of transportation.]

Olrik's experience with a ghost at the manor farm Lerkenfelt is one of the best known stories about Danish folklorists:

Fra Gjedsted tog vi til Lerkenfeldt, efter at vi først lige havde været inde hos Jakobsens i Vesterbølle. Der vilde vi ikke lægge os ind for Natten, da de ikke havde Plads til os begge. Jeg vilde jo ikke forlange, at Olrik skulde dele Seng med mig, men paa Lerkenfeldt vidste jeg, der var Plads nok. Vi blev ogsaa vel modtagne og kom til at ligge i det samme Værelse, som jeg før havde ligget i, og hvor det spøjte. Jeg laa i en almindelig Jærnseng i den Side af Værelset, der var længst fra Døren, og han kom til at ligge i en stor gammeldags Himmelseng. Det gik som sædvanligt med mig, at jeg fik kun lidt Søvn. Om Morgen, da vi var staaet op, spurgte

jeg ham, hvordan han havde sovet. “Aa, ikke videre godt.” Han var vaagnet hen paa Natten, maaske ved Midnatstid, og da havde han set en lille Mand pusle omkring henne ved Kakkellovnen. Det undrede han sig jo meget over, men Skikkelsen var da forsvunden igjen, og han forestillede sig nu, at det var en Drøm, han havde haft. Jeg sagde intet til dette, og da jeg ikke med et eneste Ord havde ymtet til ham om, at det efter Folkensnakken spøjte her i Værelset, saa kunde jeg ikke lade være at have mine egne Tanker ved det, han der fortalte. (MO vol. 3, 181).

[We went to Lerkenfeldt from Gjedsted after we had been in to visit the Jakobsens in Vesterbølle briefly. We did not want to stay there for the night, because they did not have space for both of us. I did not want to ask Olrik to share a bed with me, as I knew there was plenty of room at Lerkenfeldt. We were well received and wound up sleeping in the same room that I had slept in before and where there was a haunt. I lay in a normal iron bed the furthest from the door and he wound up sleeping in a big, old-fashioned canopy bed. As usual, I only got a little sleep. In the morning, after we had gotten up, I asked him how he had slept. “Oh, not so well.” He had woken up during the night, perhaps around midnight, and then he had seen a little man rustling about by the potbelly stove. He was quite puzzled by that

but the figure had disappeared again and he imagined that it had been a dream. I said nothing and as I had not hinted with even a single word that there was a great deal of talk that the room was haunted, I could not help but have my own ideas about what he told me.]

Olrik never made it to Ersted because his feet were sore, so Tang Kristensen continued on alone and, after visiting Jens, returned home:

Jeg gik nu ind til Aarestrup By og laa hos Lærer Hjort om Natten, og næste Dag gik jeg hen til Jens Kristensen i Ersted, som baade fortalte for mig og sang for mig, og det, jeg fik skrevet hos ham, var helt igjennem gode Ting. Det var nu helt morsomt, at Jens altid lod, som han ikke kunde noget videre, og han vilde give det Udseende af, at der heller ikke var noget ved det, han fortalte. Hans Kone forsvandt som sædvanlig, naar jeg kom, og Jens begyndte, saa det var øjensynligt, at hun ikke kunde lide at høre paa dette, og godt var det, hun gik, for saa havde vi bedre Ro til at drøfte Sagerne. Hun gik i By, og jeg saa hende saa ikke mere, mens jeg var der. Fra Ersted tog jeg saa hjem igjen, og saa blev den Tur ikke til mere. (MO vol. 3, 182-3).

[I now went to Aarestrup town and stayed at Teacher Hjort's place for the night and the next day I went over to Jens Kristensen in

Ersted who both told stories and sang for me, and the things I wrote down there were altogether good things. It was quite funny the way Jens would pretend that he did not know anything else and he would also give a look as if to say that there was nothing behind the things he did tell. His wife disappeared as usual when I came, and Jens began, and so it was apparent that she did not like to listen to that stuff and it was good that she left because then we had more peace and quiet to discuss things. She went to town and I did not see her anymore while I was there. I went home again from Ersted, and then that was the end of that trip.]

By Tang Kristensen's standards, the trip was short, and the only significant collecting he did was with Bitte Jens.

Session Four—August 1895

Apart from Tang Kristensen's very last visit to Bitte Jens, in August 1895, when he and Peter Olsen photographed him, Tang Kristensen made only one more visit to Bitte Jens. This visit took place on June 26, 1889, and was part of a trip that Tang Kristensen made with the painter Viggo Jastrau. On the trip, Tang Kristensen interviewed nine informants. Describing this trip, Tang Kristensen wrote:

Vi drog saa videre og kom endelig op til Skjörping Station. Her fik vi Mad, og saa gik vi derfra hen til Skjörping Kirkegaard, hvor han tegnede Bolværket og Pengebøssen af

ved den hellige Kilde, som den Gang endnu stod der i sin gamle ærværdige Skikkelse. Inde i Vaabenhuset stod endnu en hel Del Krykker og gamle Kjæppe og oppe paa Vaabenhusloftet laa der ogsaa en hel Bunke. Jeg havde jo før været der og set det hele, og derfor ville jeg gjerne have Jastrau derop og tegne Kilden af. Degnen var med os der oppe, og han viste os, hvad der laa paa Loftet. Da vi var færdige med Tegningen, gik vi ned til Degnens, og han gav os Mad og tilbød at ville kjøre os til Støvring, hvor vi skulde overnatte. Vi kjørte saa, og det var noget for Jastrau, da han absolut ikke kunde holde ud at følge med mig. Han var jo noget svær og spiste dygtig, hvor han kom. Han havde anskaffet sig et Par Turistsko, men de klemte ham, saa han ikke kunde gaa i dem, og saa kunde han heller ikke godt komme op om Morgen. Jeg var da allerede kjed af det Følgeskab, og vore Samtaler, mens vi fulgtes ad, var heller ikke egnede til, at vi skulde være særlig glade ved hinanden. Ikke saadan at forstaa, at vi gik og skjændtes, men vi havde saa vidt forskellige Anskuelser om meget. Det var jo ret kjedeligt for mig at gaa og høre paa, men han mente det vist heller ikke saa slemt, som han sagde det. Hans Tegning af Skjörping-Kilden tog han ligeledes med sig, men jeg har siden faaet den af ham. Baade Bolværk og det hele er nu forsvundet, alt er jævnet med Jorden. Godt var det da, at jeg fik Kildebogen reddet. Jeg meddelte Arkivar Saxild i Viborg, at jeg

havde set den, og bad ham drage Omsorg for, at den kom til Arkivet, og det har han ogsaa gjort. Paa Kjøreturen til Støvring saa vi Buderupholm og Buderup Kirke, som stod der saa ensom paa Bakkehældet. Det gjorde et ret sært Indtryk paa mig. Vi var ogsaa inde paa de Volde, hvor Røverslottet fordum laa, idet vi stod af Vognen og gik derhen. Da jeg kom hjem fra min Rejse, sendte jeg den rare og gjæstfrie Lærer en af mine Bøger som en Erkjendtlighed. Næste Dag gik vi saa over Gravlev til Aarestrup, idet jeg gjerne ogsaa vilde have Jens Kristensen tegnet. Men nu var Jastrau træt. I Støvring var jeg inde hos gamle Mosbæk om Morgen og fik ham til at fortælle noget for mig, og i Aarestrup gik jeg samme Morgen hen til Jens Kristensen i Ersted. Da Jastrau endnu ikke var staaet op, og jeg ikke havde Tid til at vente efter ham, bad jeg Karl Hjort hilse ham fra mig og sige ham Farvel, hvis han vilde blive her en Dags Tid og hvile ud, hvilket han havde ladet sig forstaa med. Vi skiltes altsaa ad her, men ikke som Uvenner, vi kunde blot ikke følges ad. (MO vol. 3, 259-60).

[We continued on and finally got to Skjörping Station. We got food here and then we went from there to Skjörping cemetery, where he drew the bulwarks and the collection box by the holy spring which at that time still had its old, worthy form. There were still a large number of pots and

old wooden sticks inside the vestibule and there was also a whole bunch of them in the vestibule's attic. I had been there before and seen all of that and so I wanted Jastrau up there to sketch all of it. The parish clerk was up there with us and he showed us what was up in the attic. When we were done with the drawing, we went down to the parish clerk's house and he fed us and offered to drive us to Støvring where we were going to spend the night. So off we drove and it was really something for Jastrau, since he absolutely could not stand accompanying with me. He was a bit hefty and ate well wherever we went. He had acquired a pair of tourist shoes, but they pinched his feet, so he could not walk in them, and he could not get up in the morning either. I was already sick of his company and our discussions, as we walked along together, were not conducive to us being terribly happy with each other. That is not to say that we went along arguing, but we had such different opinions about so many things. It was quite annoying for me to walk along and listen to this, but he did not mean it as badly as he said it. He took his drawing of the Skjørping spring with him, but I got it from him later. Both the bulwarks and everything has now disappeared, everything has been leveled with the ground. So it was good that I managed to save the spring's visitor book. I notified Archivist Saxild in Viborg that I had seen it and I asked him to make sure that it

got to the archive, and he did that as well. We saw Buderupholm and Buderup Church on the drive to Støvring, it stood there so alone on the hilltop, and it made a real impression on me. We also went in to the ramparts where the robber fort had been as we got off the wagon and walked there. When I got home from my trip, I sent the nice and hospitable teacher one of my books out of gratitude. The next day we walked to Aarestrup via Gravlev, as I also wanted him to draw Jens Kristensen. But Jastrau was tired. In the morning, I visited Old Mosbæk in Støvring and got him to tell for me, and that same morning I went over to Jens Kristensen in Ersted. As Jastrau had not yet gotten up and since I did not have time to wait for him, I asked Karl Hjort to greet him from me and say goodbye to him, if he wanted to stay there for a day to rest as he had indicated he wanted to do. We split up there but not on unfriendly terms, we just could not accompany each other.]

It is disappointing that Jastrau was too tired to draw a portrait of Jens.

Notes

¹ In a similar move, Jens's father Christen later abandoned the patronymic Pedersen, and took the name "Tved" after the place where he was born and raised.

² Most place names ending in “-sted” are prefixed with a personal name, here the early Danish name Erre (Various 1995). Local archaeological finds from a limestone quarry reveal indications of settlement dating back three thousand years.

³ The policy was in effect an early Danish version of the U.S. “GI bill” that allowed tens of thousands of WWII veterans the chance to buy houses.

⁴ The *gårdmand* annotation was used for smallholders (*husmand*) who had land as opposed to the landless *indsidder*.

⁵ Villeinage was not abolished until 1850 although, by 1848, parish imposed work had been eliminated (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 99-100).

⁶ Quite apart from everything, this fact seems to undermine the notion that his nickname “bitte” did not refer to his size but rather was a nickname that had been in the family for generations. There is no reason that a nickname with a long family history cannot refer to stature, as height is a genetically inherited trait. According to one source, the nickname referred to a relative who served as a soldier for twenty-two years in the Thirty Years War (Various 1995), and should be spelled “Bette” rather than “Bitte.” There are several other examples of the nickname “Bette” being used in the Årestrup area, including a journeyman miller named Jens at Nørvad Mill, seven kilometers to the south of Ersted, who was also a well-known fiddler (*spillemand*). He went by the name “Bette Jens” in the 1860s and 1870s (Unknown 1995a: 7).

⁷ Bundgaard is not necessarily a place name, and is common in Northern Jutland. It might date back to the time of the Skipper Clement Peasant Revolt in 1534. At that time, the free peasant farms were known as “bundgårde.”

⁸ It is difficult to ascertain whether Niels Peter and Ane Cathrine Margrethe were in fosterage in Gravlev, since there

are no census records between their birth and their reappearance in the census records living with their parents. The 1870 census, however, does show that Marie Kirstine (spelled Maren Kjerstine) lived with her grandparents.

⁹ In *Minder og Oplevelser*, Tang Kristensen spells his name “Hjort.”

¹⁰ The first extant translation of Saxo into Danish was by the Danish folklorist Anders Sørensen Vedel, in 1575. Another translation by Sejer Schousbølle came out in 1752. More important were Grundtvig’s translation in 1818-22, along with his translation of Snorri’s *Heimskringla*, over the same years, and his translation of *Beowulf* in 1820 (Lauring 1984, viii-ix). Grundtvig’s *Nordens mytologi* (Nordic Mythology), based on Snorri’s Edda, had appeared in 1808.

¹¹ Søren was an elderly lodger at the farm.

¹² Niels Peter was a part of the same network of fiddlers (*spillemand*) to which Peder Johansen and Jyde Peter belonged.

¹³ See also the chapter on Ane Margrete Jensdatter.

¹⁴ J. Vestergaard is presumably farm owner Jens Sørensen Vestergaard from Årestrup, a member of the *Venstre* party.

¹⁵ See discussion of the railway in Mejlbj in the chapter on Ane Margrete Jensdatter.

¹⁶ This was not an unusual work pattern. See, “Fremstillingen af træsko” (The Manufacture of Clogs) in *Østjysk hjemstavn* (1946).

¹⁷ Although potatoes had arrived in Denmark in the early eighteenth century, it was not until the mid to late nineteenth century that they became an important vegetable crop, quite suited for planting on the heath that surrounded Årestrup. Niels Peter again reveals his forward thinking with the amount of work he spends on cultivating potatoes.

¹⁸ In *Interpreting Legend* (Tangherlini 1994, 83), I noted that Jens sang twenty-six ballads; this is clearly a misprint, and

should be adjusted downward to sixteen. I also wrote that his repertoire consisted of fifty-five legends, twenty descriptions, two jokes, two sayings, seven folktales, and sixteen ballads. Including the ballads and melodies collected by Karl Hjorth that were not incorporated by Tang Kristensen boosts this number significantly. A different accounting of Bitte Jens's stories and songs, including the two or three stories collected by Karl Hjorth, but published by Tang Kristensen, leads to a different count, in part due to differences in underlying descriptions of genres, and in part due to discovery of additional materials in Tang Kristensen's field diaries and at the Danish Folklore Archive. These discoveries increased the total number of records in his repertoire from one hundred twelve to one hundred forty.

¹⁹ Tang Kristensen has the location of the statue wrong: although the original idea was to place the statue at the Copenhagen city hall, the monument was constructed as part of a large fountain at Langelinie, not Grønningen, in 1908, after Bundgaard was named in 1899 the winner of an 1898 competition sponsored by København Kommunes Kunstfond (Copenhagen's Municipal Art Foundation).

8

Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter: Between Farm and Smallholding

Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter was something of an anomaly among Tang Kristensen's informants. She came from a relatively well-to-do family although she, like so many other daughters of farm owners, married down into the cotter class (*husmand* or smallholder). Despite her economic step down, she always kept her eye—and her thoughts—on the farm owners, and was keenly interested in social advancement and economic class distinctions. Tang Kristensen notes, significantly, that one of her daughters, Dorteia Kirstine, took the teacher's exam. Becoming a teacher was one of the few opportunities for a person—particularly a woman—to move out of the clearly defined bounds of the farming classes. By the end of the nineteenth century, teachers were considered more to be public servants (*embedsmand*) than members of the local farming economy. That Kirsten Marie mentions her daughter's achievements to Tang Kristensen can also be read as a gesture toward newly emerging gauges of individual success: Kirsten Marie's children were not only educated, something that was highly valued in the farm owning class, but also successful in their academic pursuits.

The comment also drew an implicit connection between her and the schoolteacher Tang Kristensen.

Tang Kristensen wrote a short biography of Kirsten Marie during his last visit, which he expanded on later in *Jyske almueliv*:

Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter er født den 27. oktober 1827 i Bodholm i Nielstrup, Rud sogn, sønden for Rud kirke. Faderen var fra Nielstrup fra noget, der kaldes Sahule. Stedet blev af bedstefaderen flyttet ud fra byen og op til Sahulested. Moderen er født i det sted, der endnu er lige ved kirken. Senere købte faderen en gård i Villendrup, som Kirsten Maries Broder (Rasmus Kjær Pedersen) endnu har, og derfra er hun bleven gift. Sine historier og sagn har hun fra moderen, der atter havde dem fra sin fader, som også var fra Nielstrup. Ved gilder kunde han samle alle folk om sig, da han var så udmærket til at fortælle. Kirsten Marie blev gift med Niels Møller, og de boer endnu (1895) på Hornslet mark vesten for stationen. En af hendes døtre har taget lærerindeeksamen.¹ (JAT vol. 6, 865)

[Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter was born the 27th of October, 1827 in Bodholm in Nielstrup, Rud parish, south of Rud church. Her father was from Nielstrup from a place called Sahule. The buildings had been moved by her grandfather from the town and up to Sahulested. Her mother was born at the house, which is still right next to the

church. Later, her father bought a farm in Villendrup, and Kirsten Marie's brother (Rasmus Kjær Pedersen) still has it, and she was married off from there. She has her stories and legends from her mother, who had learned them in turn from her father who also was from Nielstrup. At parties, he could gather everyone around him because he was an excellent storyteller. Kirsten Marie married Niels Møller, and they still (1895) live there on Hornslet Mark, west of the station. One of her daughters has taken the teacher's examination.]

This biography speaks of Kirsten Marie's close connection to the local area, and a long history for her family as part of the dynamic farm owning class.

Her characterization of her maternal grandfather as an exceptional storyteller echoes descriptions in other informant biographies, in that it proposes a narrative genealogy. The genealogy that Tang Kristensen traces is further echoed in the narrative attributions that Kirsten Marie makes during her storytelling. These narrative attributions serve multiple purposes: they anchor the stories in local geography and history; they emphasize Kirsten Marie's close connection to other farm owners, both contemporaneous and historical; and they confirm her pedigree as a performer. Although she might not rise to the apparent gold standard of her maternal grandfather (a Romantic positioning of the storyteller of yore), she achieves a degree of success as a storyteller by association, or perhaps by self-attribution.

Family Background

Kirsten Marie emphasizes family relationships in many of her stories. Of her one hundred and three stories, cures, spells, jokes, sayings and descriptions, more than twenty percent (twenty-two records) include some mention of a family member. Kirsten Marie was born on October 27, 1827 in Nielstrup in Rud parish, the oldest of four children. Her brother Rasmus Kjær was born six years later, on October 24, 1833, and her twin brothers, Niels and Anders were born July 18, 1842. Sadly, Niels died several days after birth. Their father was Peder Andersen Skriver who was also born in Nielstrup, on March 20, 1796. Their mother, Anne Rasmusdatter, was born in Rud, December 4, 1803. The family moved from Nielstrup to Villendrup in Halling parish in 1843.

Peder Andersen Skriver's marriage to Anne Rasmusdatter in September 1827 was a union that solidified the upward trajectory of both families in the period immediately following the land reforms of the late eighteenth century. Anne Rasmusdatter's father, Rasmus Kjær Nielsen (the namesake of Kirsten Marie's brother), had become a copyholder on a farm, "Sandhule," in 1783. Because of his loyal service as the carriage driver at the manor farm, Clausholm, he was excused from all the burdens of his lease including villeinage. Over the years, using timber given to him by the manor lord, he was able to build a farmhouse on other land that he had acquired as a result of the land reforms. By 1801, he was listed as a cotter with land (rather than a copyholder), and was well on the way to becoming an independent farmer. Anne Rasmusdatter was, accordingly, a daughter of a family whose social and economic trajectory was on a sharp upward curve.

Peder Andersen Skriver's own trajectory was headed in a similar direction. His father, Anders Pedersen Skriver, had received a copyhold on a farm after his father's death in 1794, soon after he had married Kirsten Christiansdatter. After Anders died, the farm was parceled out into four lots in 1812. Yet an interesting thing happened soon after his death that may have been tied to the future economic prospects of the farm, and his widow Kirsten's aspirations for her children. It was fairly common practice for people to remarry quickly after the death of a spouse, because running a farm required far more work than a single person could handle. Consequently, legally binding betrothal agreements prior to an actual wedding became common. Kirsten entered into such a contract soon after Anders died, but apparently thought better of it before making it to the altar. Church records include a document dissolving the betrothal agreement between her and Jens Rasmussen, a local bachelor. The witnessed dissolution states, "at de for splid og modbydeligt for hverandre, er lige tilbøjelige og opsat paa at de ikke vil forenes ved kirkens baand, men at tillysningen til deres ægteskab herved skal være ophævet eller tilbagelyst" [because of discord and a deep dislike for each other, they have agreed and decided that they do not want to be united with the church's bonds, but rather that their engagement shall hereby be dissolved] (Rud Kirkebog 1812). Through the dissolution, Kirsten dodged this personally—and almost certainly economically—unfortunate alliance, and maintained control of her farm. Despite this evasion, she soon moved to another farm along with her son Peder Andersen, who had managed to purchase a smallholding in Nielstrup known as "Bokjærhus."²

Peder Andersen now began his march out of smallholder obscurity and into the ranks of *boelsmænd* and farm owners.³ In 1827, at the age of thirty-one, he acquired a second

smallholding, “Boeholm,” and thus could combine his two smallholdings that had been split in the earlier reapportionment of farms.⁴ By 1843, he had amassed enough capital to purchase Villendrup Nørregård, in part by selling off one of his two smallholdings to Christen Lassen Nielsen.⁵ The apple never falls far from the tree, and Peder Andersen, as his mother before him, was keenly aware of the need to keep acquired wealth in the family: he eventually deeded the other smallholding to Kirsten Marie’s niece, Nicoline Pedersen (Rasmus Kjær’s daughter) in 1875.

The purchase of Villendrup Nørregård was a watershed event in the family’s history, and marked a decisive move up from the smallholder class onto the bottom rungs of the farm owning class. The first mention of Villendrup Nørregård is found in “field books” in 1683.⁶ The farm was already an independently owned enterprise, at the time held by Peder Nielsen, with a *hartkorn* valuation of 8-4-0-1. It had been handed down through three generations of the same family, with Niels Pedersen taking control of the farm in 1716, and his sons Peder and Mogens Nielsen taking the reins in 1731. Mogens was unable to make a go of his part of the farm, and was forced to leave it. At that point, the farm became a copyhold and, in 1736, Rasmus Andersen from Villendrup acquired the copyhold. The farm once again changed hands in 1753, when another victim of bankruptcy was forced off the land. The successor, Simon Nielsen, held the farm for seven years until he too was forced from the land because of poverty. By that time, the farm’s valuation had risen to 9-4-1-5/6, a fairly high valuation, but with a staggering annual payment (*landgilde*) of 10 rixdollars, 4 marks, 12 shillings.⁷ Despite this heavy burden, a soldier by the name of Jens Christensen acquired the farm. After his death in 1786, his wife married Jens Jensen, who took over the farm. When he died in 1797, his wife, Zidsel, maintained possession of the

farm and ran it with the help of her children, Peder and Niels. The two boys bought their mother out of the farm in 1808 and split it into two lots—Niels took the western part of the fields and built a new set of farm buildings north of the town (Villendrup Nørregård), and his brother took the remaining eastern part of the fields and the old farm buildings.

The history of the two halves of the farm diverges slightly at that point. In 1830, Niels Jensen sold his farm to Peder Chr. Møller, who sold it soon thereafter to Mikkel Jensen. In 1843, Peder Andersen Skriver, Kirsten Marie's father, acquired the farm, and moved the family there. The valuation of the farm at that point was 4-6-0-0, a little more than half of its original valuation. Kirsten Marie was a young woman of sixteen, and her social and economic prospects were good.

The other half of the farm has a more convoluted history. In 1834, Peder Jensen sold this part to his brother Niels Christian Jensen who immediately sold one parcel to the local school district and another parcel to the local teacher Serup. Apart from raising money for Niels Christian, the sale reflected the rapid growth in local schools—the school law required that each teacher have a residence with land because teachers were expected to supplement their otherwise meager wages with (exemplary) farm work. Although the parish's purchase of land was to comply with the law, the schoolteacher clearly intended through the second purchase to further augment his growing land holdings. In 1850, Niels Christian sold the remaining parts of the farm to his son Niels Christian Nielsen. However, this son died in 1856 unmarried and without children. Consequently, his sister Pedersine inherited the farm. Ten years later, Kirsten Marie's brother, Rasmus Kjær, married Pedersine and effectively took control of the farm. Two years later, when Peder Andersen Skriver died, the two Villendrup farms were reunited after fifty years as two separate farms. With the two halves of the

farm reunited, Rasmus was on the cusp of becoming a large-scale farmer (*proprietar*). Rasmus's daughter, Nikoline, eventually took over the farm with her husband Rasmus Poulsen. He in turn took over Halling Højgård after his father's death in 1895. Rather than run two large farms, he sold off Villendrup to another family.

Kirsten Marie, by virtue of being a woman, did not share in the considerable wealth that her brother was able to consolidate during the last decades of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, she did not suffer an abrupt change in social standing when she married. She remained close to her brother, and one can only assume that he kept a close and helpful eye on her, both economically and socially. Like many of her farm owner class cohort, Kirsten Marie waited until her mid twenties to marry. She finally married Christen Nielsen (b. 1826) on April 15, 1853. She was twenty-five and a half, and he was twenty-seven. Christen was the son of Niels Jensen Selling (b. 1794) and Karen Jensdatter (1795-1850). Niels Jensen owned a small farm, most likely a *boelsted*. He had been married several times and, at the time of the 1834 census, a very large extended family and a single farmhand lived under a single roof, an indication that the farm was a reasonably large undertaking. One of the clearest distinctions between smallholdings and farms up through the nineteenth century was that farm owners had the means to hire labor, whereas smallholders often had to hire themselves out as labor.⁸ Since the older children living in the household in 1834 were Niels's stepchildren and not in line to inherit from him, it is likely that his oldest son, Christen Nielsen (Kirsten Marie's future husband), was given the farm when his father partitioned his holdings. By the 1845 census, Niels Jensen was listed as the parish bailiff (*sognefoged*), a position of considerable local importance.⁹

Soon after Kirsten Marie and Christen wed in 1853, they moved onto a smallholding on Hornslet Mark, with a valuation of 0-2-3-0, and began raising a family.¹⁰ They eventually had eight children, but tragically three of them died in infancy or childhood. The first child was a son, Niels Christensen, born in 1853. Their second son, Peder Christensen, was born the following year; he emigrated to the United States in 1882, and was followed soon after by his much younger brother, Niels Knudsen (b. 1866). Carl Christensen, born in 1858, barely made it to his first birthday before dying, probably succumbing to influenza or one of the childhood diseases that claimed huge numbers of children in the middle part of the nineteenth century. Kirsten Marie and Christen's first daughter, Ane Caroline, born in 1861, also died in childhood, but not until she was eleven years old. They named their next son, born in 1863, Carl as well; he fared much better than his namesake. They had three more children: Dorthe Kirstine, born April 1865, who died several months later; Niels Knudsen, born 1866, who followed his brother to the United States, apparently in 1886; and Dorthea Kirstene, who was born in 1869. Just as her older brothers had before her, Dorthea Kirstene petitioned to have her last name changed to Møller in 1905, a petition that was approved in September of that year. It is she who eventually became a schoolteacher. Kirsten Marie lived to be seventy-six and a half. She died on August twelfth, 1904 and was buried five days later in the Rud church cemetery. Christen outlived Kirsten Marie, dying on March sixth, 1915.

The Local Environment

Hornslet Mark, where Kirsten Marie and Christen had their smallholding, was a small village approximately six

kilometers to the west of Villendrup, and ten kilometers southeast of Nielstrup, the two villages where she grew up. Nielstrup and Villendrup were in Rud parish in the Galten district, while Hornslet Mark was in Hornslet parish in Øster Lisbjerg district; both districts were in Randers county.

The southeastern part of Hornslet parish is characterized by rolling hills, in particular a series of hills leading down to the bay (Flinthøj 77m., Bihøj 75m, Assenbakke 67m) (Trap 1958, 1038). There are several hills in the southwestern corner of the parish, including the highest point, Tyvhøj (94 m) (Trap 1958, 1038). The agricultural land in the area is good due to glaciation thousands of years ago. There are several large forests in the parish, including Sophie Amaliegård forest in the west, parts of Rosenholm forest in the northwest, and Rodskov forest in the south.

The main town in the parish is Hornslet, and first mention of such a town appears in 1310. There are several other, smaller settlements in the parish, including Tendrup, Rodskov, Eskerød, and Krajbjerg and several named groupings of houses, including Rosenholm mark, Damsgård, Havhuse, Frankrig, and Krajbjerg hede. There are several large farms in the parish, including the manor farm Rosenholm, with a valuation of 38.8 barrels of *hartkorn*, Teglvang (9.6 barrels *hartkorn*), Elkærgård, Rævholt, Rodskovgård, Rodskov Strandgård, Sophienlund, Sønderholm, Skrald, and Solgård (Trap 1958, 1039).

Rosenholm was one of the two large manor farms in the area. Originally, it was named simply *Holm*, a word that means island, probably because the main building was built on a small island. It was first mentioned in 1349. After the Reformation, Rosenholm became part of the royal estates and, in 1559, it was deeded by the Danish king, Frederik II, to Jørgen Ottesen Rosenkrantz. He changed the name from Holm to Rosenholm, built a new main building, and acquired

numerous surrounding lands to develop the property into a significant manor. His son transformed Rosenholm into a center of learning for young noblemen, a tradition that continued into the next generation. During the eighteenth century, the manor changed hands numerous times, but was made into an entailed estate (*stambus*) in 1743, a privilege that allowed the manor a great deal of autonomy and control over the local peasants. By that point, the estate's land was valued at 67 barrels of *hartkorn*, with associated lands valued at 521 barrels. Earlier, in 1574, a district court (*birketret*) with unusual reach had been established at Rosenholm: its jurisdiction included the areas of Skovlkær, Hornslet, Tendrup, Rodskov, Krajbjerg, the farms Kirkholt and Segalt, Lindå and Balle in Todbjerg parish, Krannestrup in Mejlby parish, as well as Karlbu and Skørring. In 1668, the district (*birk*) was expanded to include Mørke, Bale and Balskov. By 1820, the bailiff for Øster Lisbjerg district was also the bailiff (*birkefoged*) for Rosenholm's district court, and the district assembly (*birketing*) was relocated to Randers. Finally, in 1856, as with all *birk*, Rosenholm's *birk* was eliminated and its former jurisdiction placed under the various districts it had touched—Rougso, Sønderhald and Øster Lisbjerg (Trap 1958, vol. 7.2, 1042-5).

Hornslet church is first mentioned in 1355, as “Vor Frue og alle helgeners kirke i Hornslet” (Our Lady's and All Saints' Church in Hornslet), a name that was changed in 1516 to “Skt. Nicolai sognekirke i Hornslet” (St. Nicholas Parish Church in Hornslet), to reflect its expansion. Jørgen Rosenkrantz of Rosenholm (d. 1596) built or rebuilt large parts of the church from 1560 onwards. The church is still the burial church for the aristocratic Rosenkrantz family, and accordingly has many inscriptions and other memorials to the family (Trap 1958, vol. 7.2, 1039-42). It also highlights the close connection up through the mid nineteenth century between the local aristocracy and the church.

Hornslet was not only a major center for the Rosencrantz family, but also an important town in the local economic landscape. A train spur, Århus-Ryomgård, was built through Hornslet in 1877, and the station was placed in the northwestern part of the town.¹¹ Up through the early twentieth century, Hornslet was connected to the greater economic spheres of both Randers and Århus, a market center that was quickly becoming the major trading and cultural center for all of Jutland.

Hornslet Mark, however, had little prominence in Kirsten Marie's stories. In the fifty-three stories that included some form of geographic referent, Hornslet Mark appears only twice. While it is likely that Kirsten Marie used her stories as part of her understanding of the general local geography—and the changes wrought by social transformation, demographic shifts, and legislative reform—the frequent references to Nielstrup and its immediate area suggest a persistent historical return to the landscape of her childhood. Nielstrup thus stands in a contrastive, and perhaps normative, relationship to Hornslet Mark in her storytelling. She mentioned Nielstrup, for example, in eighteen stories, or nearly twenty percent of her entire repertoire.

Nielstrup (Rud parish) was first mentioned in records in 1445, appearing in records as Nielstorp. The town has always been small but that did not mean it had little import in the surrounding area—quite the contrary. For instance, a cooperative dairy was established there in 1888. There are several large farms in Rud parish, including Alstrupgård (24 barrels *hartkorn*), Ruddalsgård, Højholt and Skovlund. The farmland is good, and the glaciated landscape rises toward the southwest, where the highest point, Stobdrup mound, stands eighty-two meters high (Trap 1958, vol. 7.2, 817). Perhaps of more importance is the proximity of the imposing manor

farm Clausholm in the neighboring parish of Voldum (first mentioned in 1428 as Wollum).

Voldum parish also plays a notable role in Kirsten Marie's repertoire. Like Rud parish, the farmland in Voldum is good, but the parish also has several forested areas, the largest of which belongs to Clausholm manor. The manor was at one point the largest estate in the area by any measure. At its high point, its total valuation including land that tithed to it approached 1100 barrels of *hartkorn*. By the end of the nineteenth century, it was more comparable in size with Rosenholm, with a valuation of 55.6 barrels for the estate, and 121.2 barrels for the associated farms, not including Schildenseje, a farm under the direction of Clausholm with a valuation of 30 barrels. Clausholm belonged in 1368 to Lage Ovesen, who was a member of the Jutlandic revolt in 1350 against King Valdemar IV Atterdag. The estate remained in the family until 1500. By the mid sixteenth century, the manor included eighty-three farms and small farms (*boel*), and three mills. The estate was transferred to Chancellor Conrad Reventlow of the Reventlow family in 1686, at which point its holdings were valued at 95 barrels.¹² These holdings also included five churches and associated farms valued at 1028 barrels of *hartkorn*. A baroque castle was built in the 1690s according to the plans of Ernst Brandenburger on a man-made island to replace an earlier main house. The entire estate was sold in 1718 to King Frederik IV, who had kidnapped Anna Sophie Reventlow from Clausholm several years earlier, and to whom he was "married to the left hand."¹³ After the king's death, Anna Sophie was banished to Clausholm where she died in 1743. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the manor belonged to the Huitfeldt family, and later was transferred into the Holstenhus baronship (Trap 1958, vol. 7.2, 811-2). Barons were notoriously conservative politically.

Hornslet Mark and Nielstrup were both part of Randers county, a bastion of the farmers' party, *Venstre*. An overview of the parliamentary representatives for the various districts of Randers reveals an overwhelming majority of *Venstre* representatives. Two exceptions to this were the market district of Randers (predictably overwhelmingly *Højre*) and the Ebeltoft district, which was evenly split between the two parties from 1849-1869, when the communal reforms solidified the power of *Venstre* in that part of the county as well. For most of the nineteenth century, the only newspaper in the county was *Randers Amts Avis*, founded in 1810. The newspaper unabashedly promoted the conservative political agenda of the party *Højre* [Right]. In 1870, however, the political pendulum began to swing toward *Venstre* [Left], in part because of the work of C. Berg and I. A. Hansen, both firebrands who argued for the rights of the farming class. In 1874, the newspaper *Randers Dagblad* (Randers Daily) was founded, and this *Venstre* dominated newspaper offered a counterpoint to the more conservative *Randers Amts Avis* (Randers County Newspaper). By the 1880s, the Social Democrats had also begun to make inroads in the county. Their magazine, the *Socialdemokraten for Randers og Omegn* (The Social Democrat for Randers and Surrounding Area) established itself as an independent outlet in 1899. By the last decades of the century, the political landscape was far more diverse, and significantly more polarized than it had been in the decades leading up to the elections for the constitutional assembly in 1848 (Trap 1958, vol. 7.2, 559).

As in many other parts of the country, numerous folk high schools (*folkehøjskoler*) were established in the wake of the promulgation of the constitution and the attendant increase in political awareness among the general population. These folk high schools included Voldby (1868), Hadsten højskole in Galten (1876), Dalbynder (1884), Rønde (1894),

Djurslands folkehøjskole in Lyngby (1897), and Vivild (1903). The best-known folk high school in the county was Mellerup, founded in 1880 by Jens Bek. Bek, who came from Hørning, had been educated at Lyngby teachers' college by M.A.S. Lund. He married a daughter of H. Laurent, one of N. F. S. Grundtvig's closest friends. Even during his early career as a teacher, he was interested in adult education. By the time he moved to Mellerup to begin his folk high school, he was a well-known speaker, and the school became one of the most popular in Denmark. Mellerup was a community at the bleeding edge of political reform. Apart from the folk high school, which was denied economic support because of its overtly political nature, the town also supported a free school (*friskole*) and a church congregation with an elected minister (*valgmenighed*).

Although the Grundtvigian movement was well established in the districts of Støvring and Gjerlev, both in the northern parts of Randers county, the Inner Mission attracted a large following in the eastern part of the county (*Djursland*) and the southwestern districts of Øster Lisbjerg (where Kirsten Marie and Ane Margrethe Jensdatter lived) and Sønderhald. In fact, the Inner Mission was able to take control of the folk high school in Rønde in 1897. Along with various religious movements such as the Inner Mission, the temperance movement (*afholdsbevægelse*) also gained a strong foothold, particularly in the larger towns and cities, including Randers and Mariager in the northern part of the county. The success of the temperance movement led to the establishment in 1881 of Denmark's Absolute Temperance Society (*Danmarks Totalafholdsforening*).

Village Administration

Local politics—and the reaction of local political institutions to larger regional and national trends—played an increasingly significant role in the day-to-day life of farmers and smallholders during the last decades of the nineteenth century. While the “Assemblies of the Estates of the Realm” (*stænderforsamlinger*) of the earlier part of the century were crucial in bridging the gap from a centrally controlled absolute monarchy and manorial system to an increasingly open, and democratically controlled modern, capitalist and industrial society, most of the earliest political capital was concentrated in the hands of the land owners, and the larger land owners at that. Along with the freedoms guaranteed by the constitution, the loosening of restrictions on voting rights and changes in the standard voting method from “show of hands” to secret ballot, led to an increasing level of participation among farm owners and smallholders in both national and local politics. The communal reforms of 1867, however, were perhaps the most important factor in the development of local democratic institutions and the participation of a much wider group of people in the political process.

Women, despite all the reforms and the burgeoning women’s rights movements across the Nordic countries in the 1870s and 1880s, were excluded from the political system, at least overtly. They did not acquire the right to vote in national elections until 1915. This late date for women’s suffrage was not for lack of trying—already in 1888, the *Danske Kvindesamfund* (Danish Women’s Society), established in 1871, presented a petition with 20,000 signatures asking for the right to vote in local elections. Not until 1893 did women get the right to vote in elections for church councils, followed by the right to vote in local elections in 1908, and finally full

suffrage in 1915. Although excluded from the polling place, women probably had some influence on decision-making, particularly in regards to local politics. Local politics were focused on parish and church councils. Since women in the community knew the players and were well-informed through their informal social networks, they could acquire the necessary information to participate, albeit informally, in the political process, despite being disenfranchised. Their incentive to participate in the informal aspects of the political process was bolstered by the fact that any local decisions would directly affect their daily lives. Kirsten Marie's storytelling had a significant local political component to it, and it may well have been that storytelling was one of the forums that women could use to comment on aspects of local political debate. Because of women's powerful local social networks, and because of their equal engagement with local issues, the resistance to women's suffrage was probably most vigorous on the local level as well.

One of the most important developments in rural political life during the latter half of the nineteenth century was the increasing role of the parish council in deciding local affairs. Up through much of the first half of the nineteenth century, the local minister, who was in many ways a representative of the central administration of Copenhagen, controlled most of the decisions that did not fall under the immediate purview of the manor lords or the crown (Nørr 1981). As the power of the manor lords decreased subsequent to the systematic dismantling of the manorial system, ministers were able to concentrate more and more local control in their office. In the wake of the constitutional reforms, however, the local minister lost control of most of the local governing boards and councils. At the very least, the ministers now had to share decision-making power with locally elected officials (Nørr 1994). As Nørr notes, "præsten

ikke længere skulle være sognepave, men kun menighedens tjener” [the minister was no longer to be the parish pope, but rather simply the congregation’s servant] (1994, 78).

The diminution of the power of the minister started already in 1841, when people were released from the requirement to attend church in their local parish. The minister’s power was further diminished by a series of reforms that transferred control of budgetary decisions concerning the schools, poverty assistance, and other communal expenditures to the parish director’s office (*sogneforstanderskab*), and later by the parish council (*sogneråd*).¹⁴ The juridical organization of the rural districts was fundamentally changed with the dissolution of the special judicial districts (*birkere*), beginning in 1848. These privileged jurisdictions had allowed the landed aristocracy to appoint their own judges and subsequently to enforce laws capriciously and to their advantage. The latter half of the nineteenth century thus saw the transfer of local control from the hands of the aristocracy and the centrally appointed church ministers to the hands of the increasingly powerful farm owners. That is not to say that the previously powerful groups lost all their say in political decisions; rather, politics had now become the stomping ground of a much greater number of people. Farm owners, millers, and schoolteachers had become players on this ever-widening field.

The parish council was the focal point of local political action. While the actual purview of these local administrative boards was limited, and mostly constrained to decisions concerning the schools, the poor and the roads, even those topics could become flashpoints for debate. Membership on the parish council often led to positions on other, newly forming committees, including those governing the local savings association (*sparekasse*) and, in the 1880s, the newly forming cooperatives. Foremost among these cooperatives

were the dairy cooperatives (*andelsmejerier*) and the purchasing cooperatives (*brugsforeninger*).¹⁵ During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the folk church lost even more control over its parishes with the establishment of church councils (*menighedsråd*) and elective parishes (*valgmenigheder*).¹⁶ Members of the local parish council often played critical roles on these new councils. Furthermore, representatives to larger, regional committees, such as the railway commission, were almost always chosen from the members of the parish council. Finally, membership on the parish council could be used as a launch pad for national political office, such as parliament.

Despite the seeming allure of parliament, ambitious local political figures were often happy to consolidate power on the parish level. By the end of the nineteenth century, the phenomenon of the *sognekonge* or “parish king” was a well-known one. These parish kings were individuals who had managed to consolidate virtually all local power in their own hands, and had gained a stranglehold on local decisions in much the same way that some manor lords had had during the manorial period. The power of these local figures was significantly greater than that of ministers in the earlier part of the century, because most decisions taken by the parish council, the board of directors of the local savings bank, and the local cooperative boards were final, and did not need to be vetted by others. The resume of a parish king from Ugilt parish underscores how an ambitious and politically active farm owner could control essentially every aspect of a parish:

Medlem Ugilt sogneraad 1895-1901 og
1907-1937; Formand 1907-1937; Medlem af
skolekommissionen siden 1898; Kasserer for
Linderum andelsmejeri i 20 år; Medlem af
bestyrelsen for Hjørring amts
sognerådsforening fra 1908, Formand 1910-

1937; Medlem af Hjørring amtsråd 1910-28; Medlem af bestyrelsen Hjørring amts andelsslagteri 1914-1927 og fra 1931 (Formand 1924-1927); Landvæsenskommissær til 1942; Formand for Hjørring amts og bys sygehus til 1935 samt Medlem af bestyrelsen for Hjørring-Hørby banen 1913-1938; Medlem af representantskaberne for Fællesforeningen for Danmarks Brugsforeninger og for andelsbanken 1923-1925; Medlem af andelsbankens bestyrelse fra marts 1925 til dens lukning; Medlem af andelsbankens representantforeningernes ulykkesforsikring fra 1925 og Formand for selskabet fra 1929; Medlem af centralbestyrelsen for Nationalforeningen til Tuberkulosens Bekæmpelse fra 1926; Formand for Hjørring og omegns afholdskreds 1908-1924; Medlem af hovedbestyrelsen for Danmarks Afholdsforening 1919-1925 (Ugilt 1980, 18-19).

[Member of the Ugilt Parish Council 1895-1901 and 1907-1937; Chairman 1907-1937; Member of the School Commission since 1898; Treasurer for Linderum Cooperative Dairy for 20 years; Member of the Executive Committee of Hjørring Amt's Parish Council association since 1908, Chairman 1910-1937; Member of the Hjørring Amt Council 1910-1928; Member of the Executive Committee of Hjørring Amt's Cooperative Pig Slaughterhouse 1914-1927 and from 1931 (Chairman 1924-1927);

Agricultural Commissioner through 1942; Chairman of Hjørring Amt's and City's Hospital through 1935 and Member of the Executive Committee of the Hjørring-Hørby railway 1913-1938; Member of the representatives to the shared Committee for Denmark's Cooperative Stores and for the credit union 1923-1925; Member of the credit union's executive committee from March 1925 until its closure; Member of the credit union's representative's association's accident insurance from 1925 and chairman of the company from 1929; Member of the central executive committee of the National Society for the Fight Against Tuberculosis from 1926; Director of the Temperance Society for Hjørring and environs 1908-1924; Member of the central executive committee for the Danish Temperance Society 1919-1925.]

While this degree of control was a little unusual, it does reveal the extent to which the parish council members influenced the contours of daily social and economic life.

Along with the chairman (*formand*) of the parish council, the parish bailiff (*sognefoged*) was one of the most powerful figures in the local political landscape. While some parish council chairmen also served as parish bailiff, the offices were usually split. Christian VII had established the position of the parish bailiff at the end of the eighteenth century. In an ordinance promulgated on November eleventh, 1791, he required that, “*duelige Mænd af Bondestanden [skal beskikkes] til at være Sognefogder*” [capable men from the peasant class shall be chosen to be parish bailiffs] (Poulsen og

Jørgensen 1940, 95). Because it was often difficult to find men willing to take on the duties of the parish bailiff, the king further declared, “Sognefogderne skal anses som de mest agtede af Almuens mænd og sidde øverst til Bords. De skal være fritagne for Indkvarteringer og en del offentlige Arbejder, og de skal for hver Udpantning de foretager, have 12 Skilling, der kan pantes hos de skyldige” [The parish bailiffs shall be considered the most respected of the peasantry’s men, and shall sit at the head of the table. They shall be excused from quartering soldiers and certain public work, and for each levy they enforce, they shall be given twelve *skilling*, which shall be charged to the party on whom they are serving the levy] (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1940, 95). The parish bailiff soon became charged with most local law enforcement duties and acted more as a sheriff than as a bailiff. These duties included censuring people who disturbed the peace, arresting criminals, making sure that the “foreign poor” spent no more than one night in the parish, overseeing the maintenance of the local roads (particularly snow clearing during the winter), protecting against trespassers and, during epidemics, acting as the public health official, limiting access to the sick and insuring quick and proper burial of the dead. The parish bailiff also acted as the process server, collections officer, and inspector. Consequently, the parish bailiff was one of the most powerful people in the parish (and often quite feared). It was this office that Rasmus, Kirsten Marie’s brother, occupied in the neighboring parish, Rud.

Although public decisions of a local political nature were concentrated in the hands of men—and particularly in the hands of farm owners—one must be careful not to overstate the one-sidedness of this system. To be sure, the farm owners on the parish council made the decisions concerning budgets and local projects. But none of these men would have survived long if they had made decisions that did not align

with the general sentiment of the majority of people living in the parish. And even though men may have controlled the public political sphere, and along with it the extra-domestic space, women controlled the domestic space. Their work and their opinions must have had some impact in the political behavior of their husbands. Women were also well-connected in other types of networks, including work, social and church-related networks. Ideas developed and debated in these networks would have been yet another forum in the greater parish landscape for the development of “public opinion.” It would be simplistic to say that women’s voices were not heard. While there was a great need for additional reforms regarding women’s access to political institutions, if women had not played any role whatsoever in the political process—even if that role were informal and “away from the table”—the very real reforms that took hold in the latter part of the nineteenth century would never have been realized.

Farmers’ Wives

That said, many women occupied a marginal situation similar to that of cotters and day laborers, and had little time to dedicate to questions of local, regional and national politics. Life on a farm, from the smallest smallholding to the largest *proprietar* farm, relied on a well-established division of labor, and required significant contributions of labor from both men and women.¹⁷ Perhaps on the very largest manor farms, the owner’s wife could play more of a managerial role, if any at all. But on the majority of farms, the farmer’s wife was intimately involved in the daily work, and oversaw all of the hired women and girls. On smallholdings such as Kirsten Marie’s and her husband’s farm, the farmer’s wife not only

played a crucial role in insuring the success of the farm, but did so by working from morning until night, year round.

Food preparation—and proper food storage—took an inordinate amount of time. It was not until 1856, when reforms of the commerce laws began to be enacted that small grocery stores (*bokere*) were allowed to open outside of market towns. Prior to that period, nearly all foodstuffs had to be produced locally. The opening of the small grocer stores made certain wares more available, but did little to change the way food was made on the farms. This local production meant, in effect, that almost all farms did their own baking, slaughtered their own animals, and brewed their own beer. The few vegetables that were to be had were grown in small kitchen gardens. It was mostly specialty goods that were purchased at the grocers (sugar, salt, etc.).¹⁸ With the advent of rural bakeries, certain breads such as French bread and cakes that were difficult to bake at home (particularly in smaller quantities), were also bought at these small stores. Even with the establishment of the cooperative stores (*brugsforeninger*) in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, most food production remained in the house.

Because of problems related to food storage, meals differed according to the time of year. They also differed greatly dependent on the economic class of the family. Farm owners and the more prosperous cotters were usually able to feed their families and their workers consistently; in many of the cotter families, the food was poor in quality, varied greatly in quantity and was relentlessly the same, consisting mostly of bread. The only upside to this sorry state of culinary affairs was that the food was easy to prepare. On the larger farms, there were more mouths to feed and, with a greater variety of available foodstuffs, food preparation, almost exclusively the task of women, was more laborious. During the summer months, people ate four to five meals a day. Many meals

consisted of *malkemad*—cheese, butter, sour milk and milk porridge (Graves 1921, 65). Salt herring, which could last up to a year when stored properly, was bought in large barrels and was a frequent side dish at mealtime. Along with cow's milk, sheep's milk was also a frequent supplement. Sheep were plentiful because of the extensive reliance on wool for clothing. An overview of the animal herds in Mejlby, a nearby parish, shows that in the 1870s, the number of sheep in the parish was almost as high as the number of cows. Over the course of the next several decades, the cow herds grew rapidly while the sheep herds declined, essentially disappearing by the 1930s (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942).

During the harvest, people were fed better, both because the work was arduous and because the harvest was a festive occasion. Beef was added to the soups that were a staple of the diet, and dishes based on rice—*risengrød* and *risenvalling*—along with omelets and sweet dishes such as sweet soup (*sødsuppe*) were served (Graves 1921, 66). Harvest time also meant that the baking could begin again. By St. Olaf's day (July twenty-ninth), people were often running low on grain, and they had to supplement their rye with barley and even potatoes to get enough flour with which to bake (Graves 1921, 68-9).

Baking was one of the most labor-intensive endeavors in rural food production, and it required the help of men as well. Several days before a farm was going to bake, rye would be driven to the local mill. Most farms including small cotters' cottages had their own baking oven, and it was usually the men who were in charge of firing the oven, and warming it up to baking temperature. Baking, just as brewing, usually took place early in the morning because people did not want to interrupt the day's normal work with these additional tasks (Graves 1921, 70). The dough was prepared the day before, and the sourdough starter was added; the dough then sat

overnight. In the morning, more flour was added and it was kneaded several times while the oven warmed to the proper temperature. Small breads, known as *skoldkager*, were often baked on the front part of the oven in order to bridge the gap between being breadless and the new baking. Once the bread had been baked, rye was placed in the oven to dry, because dry rye could be milled finer, and finer milled flour gave better bread. The newly baked bread could last for three to four weeks, at which point the process would have to begin again.

At the onset of winter, several animals would be slaughtered—pigs, sheep and geese—and the fat from these animals was used through the winter months instead of butter. Much of the meat from these animals was saved for occasions such as baptisms, weddings and funerals (Graves 1921, 67). Milk production was generally low during the winter months because of the cows' poor diet, consisting mostly of hay. During the winter, the daily fare turned away from porridge and *malkemad* and more toward soups. Pork stock was often used as a base, to which was added cabbage and peas. By the middle of the nineteenth century, potatoes had become a staple of the Danish diet, helped along by an economic crisis from 1818-1828. Prior to that, despite repeated attempts by government agencies to convince farmers throughout the Nordic countries to plant potatoes, the potato had never gained much popularity. Since milk was scarce during the winter months, beer was often used as a substitute, particularly for cooking porridges.

Brewing beer was almost as labor intensive as baking and, like baking, was usually done once a month. Malt was milled at home in a mechanical grinder, rather than at the local mill, as it did not need to be ground as fine. Also, millers did not want the malt to be mixed with other grains milled at the mill (Graves 1921, 70-1). Hops grew wild in many places, and

people simply used wild hops for their brewing (Graves 1921, 68). A large tub was used for brewing. The malt was mashed in the tub, and boiling water was poured over it. Hay was used to form a sieve in the bottom of the tub and, after an hour, the wort was tapped from the tub into another container. The wort was cooled, and then yeast was added to it. The next morning, the yeast was skimmed from the top of the beer and the hops were added. The yeast was wrapped in a cloth and placed on dry ash; once it had dried, it was saved for the next brewing. The beer was put into wooden kegs that had been carefully washed and dried to remove any remaining yeast from the previous brewing and sterilized with boiling water (Graves 1921, 71). Beer was as much a food as it was a drink. The alcoholic content was low, perhaps only two or three percent, and it figured prominently in many porridge recipes, the best known of these being *ollebrød*, a porridge made from beer and bread.

The job of caring for small domesticated animals, such as chickens, also befell women. Even more time-consuming were tasks related to dairy production. Many farms made their own rennet for cheese, and butter churning, as long as there was milk, was a constant part of the workday. Milking was done three times a day during the months that the cows were grazing. Once the cows were brought inside in the late fall and had begun to eat hay, the milk production dropped markedly. At this point, the cows were only milked once or twice a day.

Milk production jumped in the last decades of the century when fodder beets became a staple of the cows' diet, replacing hay during the winter months. At the same time, cooperative dairies came storming onto the scene. The advent of the cooperative dairies meant that most butter and cheese production was taken out of the home. The workload at home did not diminish, as dairy herds grew rapidly, and the

amount of milking grew accordingly. In the last three decades of the century, for example, the dairy herds in Mejlby grew by nearly 70% even though arable land increased by less than 5% (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 156).

Along with food preparation, and animal husbandry, making clothes was an important domestic task. Clothes were made both from wool and from flax. Women would card wool and spin both wool and flax into thread. The thread would then either be brought to a weaver to be made into cloth or, in the case of wool, be made into yarn for use in knitting. Women's work at the spinning wheel generally started at Michaelsmas (*Mikkelsdag*), once the sheep had been sheared (Graves 1921, 84). Informal social networks between farms and cottages were reinforced by this work, because women from the community often gathered for carding parties (*kartegilde*), where a good carder could card a pound of cleaned wool in an evening. According to Graves, these get-togethers "gik lystigt med Snak, Skemt og Sang, men der maatte sandelig ogsaa arbejdes" [were merry with lots of talk, fun and songs, but one had to work hard as well] and therefore stood as one of the obvious contexts for women to tell stories to one another (Graves 1921, 84). Unfortunately, there are no ethnographic descriptions of any of these get-togethers. If any of the thread or yarn was to be dyed, it was sent to a dye works in the local market town.¹⁹ While many women (and men for that matter) did their own knitting, weaving was usually sent out to specialized weavers (such as Ane Margrete Jensdatter). Otherwise, women sewed most of their family's clothes in the home (Graves 1921, 90). Local or wandering tailors would come by to sew more elaborate clothes or to do finish work on the rough sewing that the women had done.

Women were also critical in the fields at planting and harvest time. During harvest, women would wake up first and

take care of the milking and other household chores including preparing the first morning meal. The hired girls would head out to the fields, while the farmer's wife would stay at home to prepare the midday meal and make food to be brought out to the fields for the in-between meals (Graves 1921, 112). Out on the fields, the men would lead the way, mowing with their scythes, while the women would follow along behind, gathering and binding the sheaves. A strict hierarchy governed the order in which people worked in the field—the head farmhand would lead, and the head hired girl would gather behind him, and so on down through the farm's hired hands and day laborers. During other times of the year, women could be pressed into service to help with the preparation of the fields for planting, the actual planting itself and, once beets became common, the endless weeding that they required. At least, at the end of the harvest, there was always a big party. And people would always tell stories at these parties.

Overview of Kirsten Marie's Repertoire

Kirsten Marie sang no ballads, preferring instead to tell stories. Many of the stories she told were legends and descriptions of local beliefs and practices. Like Margrete Jensdatter, she was also skilled at telling folktales (Holbek 1987, 128-9). The positive outlook of the fairytale genre influenced her legend telling as well. Her legends, unlike that of other members of the farm owning class, tended to be resolved positively (Tangherlini 1994, 252). Kirsten Marie's perception of herself as a member of the farm owning class also influenced her storytelling. In an analysis of her legends, it is clear that land, farm buildings and tools related to farming occur with greater frequency than would be expected.

Unlike most farm owners, who narratively favored cunning folk as mediators of supernatural threats, Kirsten Marie favored, albeit only slightly, the minister (Tangherlini 1994, 252).²⁰

First Meeting—1890

Tang Kristensen first visited Kirsten Marie in May of 1890, during a trip to what he labeled “Østeregnet,” or eastern Jutland. The trip, which lasted for three weeks, from the first through the twenty-fourth of May, took him on a looping path up through the eastern regions of northern Jutland and brought him into contact with a large number of informants (MO vol. 3, 311-17). The places he visited are easy to determine but, given the length of the trip and the imprecise nature of some of his notes, the dates of those visits are much more difficult to determine. His initial interest in Villendrup was with Kirsten Marie’s brother, Rasmus. At first, Tang Kristensen had a hard time finding him, but he finally located him, describing this first meeting as follows:

Nu gik jeg over til Villendrup for at tale med Rasmus Kjær. Der blev strags sagt, da jeg kom ind i Gaarden: Manden er ikke hjemme. Men da jeg udforskede videre, viste det sig, at han blot var gaaet ned i Engen for at se til sine Folk, der var ved at grave Grøfter op. Han fulgte dog snart hjem med mig, og saa fortalte han en Del for mig og var i det hele meget flink. Jeg fik ogsaa Mad hos ham. Han mente nu, at det var bedst, jeg kom hen til hans Søster, der boede i Hornslet, for hun var meget bedre til at fortælle end han, og

jeg besluttede mig da til at besøge hende med det samme (MO vol. 3, 312).

[Now I went over to Villendrup to talk with Rasmus Kjær. As soon as I came into the farm, someone said: He isn't home. But when I researched the matter a bit, it turned out that he'd simply gone down to the meadow to see to his workers who were digging ditches down there. Soon I accompanied him home, and then he told me some things and was quite nice to me. I also was fed there. He thought it best that I go out and visit his sister who lived in Hornslet, because she was a much better storyteller than he was, and I immediately decided to visit her.]

Tang Kristensen caught a ride with Rasmus the next morning and met with his sister, Kirsten Marie, for the first time:

Nu slog jeg mig til Ro foreløbig hos Søsteren Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter, og det var heldigt, jeg kom til hende, for hun var den bedste Kilde for mig af alle dem, jeg traf paa denne Rejse. Jeg var endda vidt omkring og i mange Byer og Steder. I det hele maa jeg sige, at naar jeg undtager Kirsten Maries Ydelser, gav denne lange Rejse et meget magert Udbytte (MO vol. 3, 313).

[Now I settled down for a while with the sister, Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter, and it was fortunate that I had come to her because she

was the best source I met on this trip. I had been widely about and in many towns and farms. On the whole, if I exclude Kirsten Marie's performance, that long trip yielded meager results.]

The meeting broke over two days, because Kirsten Marie had so many stories to tell. In fact, between his visits with Rasmus and Kirsten Marie, Tang Kristensen, over the course of three days, recorded well over a third of what he managed to collect during the entire, lengthy trip.

Kirsten Marie's first session is one of extraordinary scope. Over the course of two days, she told more than sixty-two different legends and jocular tales, and described local custom, dialect and other aspects of folk belief. Even though her genre range was very broad, she did not sing a single ballad. This is somewhat surprising, given Tang Kristensen's zealous efforts to wring ballads from his informants. One can discern several preoccupations in her stories, including an abiding concern with beggars, gypsies and wanderers. She was also quite interested in supernatural threat, particularly when it appeared in the guise of ghosts and witches.

Tang Kristensen's first day of collecting from Kirsten Marie probably ended with story 1.25, confirmed by a solid line across the page in the field diary. Elsewhere, I have pointed out how narrators often ended their sessions with a series of humorous tales (Tangherlini 1994, 262). About that evening, Tang Kristensen wrote, "Om Aftenen gik jeg ind til Stationen og opsøgte Læge Feilbergs Bolig—nu var han nemlig bleven Distriktslæge der, og saa fik jeg Nattely hos ham" [In the evening, I walked down to the station and looked up Feilberg's house—he had become the district physician there, and I got lodgings at his place] (MO vol. 3, 313). The next day, his collecting was equally successful, and

he managed to collect another thirty-seven stories from Kirsten Marie: “Næste Dag gik jeg igjen ud til Kirsten Marie og fik atter en Del skrevet op, og det var gode Ting, hun kunde. Det var i det hele et rart Sted at komme, og Manden og Datteren var ogsaa flinke imod mig” [The next day, I walked once more out to Kirsten Marie and managed to record some more things, and they were good things she knew. All in all, it was a pleasant place to visit, and the husband and daughter were also nice to me] (MO vol. 3, 313). It is interesting to note that the events in Kirsten Marie’s stories were usually located in the immediate community, and many of them included a transmission link that brought the story into her immediate family—brother, father, uncle, grandparents, or the like.

Second Meeting—1892

Several years went by before Tang Kristensen was able to visit Kirsten Marie again. In mid October 1892, however, he returned to Hornslet Mark. The trip was short, as he describes in *Minder og Oplevelser*:

Jeg tog først til Aarhus, og derfra gik jeg ud til Skejby. Det var d. 9de Oktober. Her fik jeg først Snedker Møller og siden Rasmus Elgaard til at fortælle for mig, og det gik helt godt med at tegne op. Derefter gik jeg over til Hasle, hvor Mette Marie Povlsdatter fortalte noget for mig. Derfra gik jeg tilbage til Aarhus og tog med Banen til Hornslet, for jeg havde Mod paa igjen at komme ud til Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter der ude paa Marken, og saa fik jeg jo besøgt Læge

Feilberg med det samme. Hun kunde endnu en hel Del, og Feilberg ymtede spøgende, at hun nok var min særlig gode Ven. Fra Hornslet gik jeg saa op til Hvilsager, hvor jeg besøgte Pastor Andresen. Han fortalte selv lidt og hjalp mig godt til Rette. Baade Ras Thomsen og Peder Thomsen fortalte for mig, og derfra gik jeg saa til Rasmus Hornbæk i Bendstrup, som var en helt god Fortæller. Saa kom jeg til Karlby, hvor jeg besøgte Lærer Nielsen. Hos Peder Kristian Kristensen fik jeg da en Del at vide. Efter at denne Rejse havde varet nogle Dage, rejste jeg saa hjem igjen, da jeg tænkte paa at gjøre en længere Tur op til Vendsyssel og helst maatte komme derop, inden Dagene blev alt for korte, og Vinteren maaske indfandt sig (MO vol. 3, 346).

[First I went to Aarhus, and from there I walked out to Skejby. It was October ninth. Here I got Cabinetmaker Møller and then Rasmus Elgaard to tell stories for me, and things went well with the recording. After that, I walked over to Hasle, where Mette Marie Poulsdatter told some things to me. After that, I walked back to Aarhus, and took the train to Hornslet, because I had decided that I wanted to come out to Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter out there on the field, and so I managed to visit Dr. Feilberg right away. She could still tell quite a bit, and Feilberg teased me that she was now my special friend. From Hornslet, I walked up

to Hvilsager, where I visited Pastor Andresen. He told some things himself and then helped me to get set up well. Both Ras Thomsen and Peder Thomsen told some things to me, and from there I walked up to Rasmus Hornbæk in Bendstrup who was a good storyteller. Then I came to Karlby where I visited Teacher Nielsen. I also learned quite a bit at Peder Kristian Kristiansen's place. After the trip had lasted for several days, I went home again, as I had started to think about making a longer trip up to Vendsyssel, and had better get up there before the days got too short, and winter perhaps began.]

In his description of this trip, Tang Kristensen made little mention of Kirsten Marie, apart from Feilberg's joking. Tang Kristensen was apparently fond of Kirsten Marie and her family—particularly the warm reception he was given there. Part of this fondness may be because Kirsten Marie was better off than many of his other informants. In other notes in his memoirs, it becomes apparent that, while he felt the best materials were to be collected from the very poor (a notion not borne out by his actual collection), he was much more comfortable collecting from people who lived in reasonably clean, dry and warm houses (Tangherlini 2002).

Kirsten Marie continued to be an excellent storyteller, although she told far less on this second visit than she had during her first encounter with him several years earlier. Of the nineteen stories and descriptions she told, the majority were legends. She had told several of the stories to Tang Kristensen before, and this offers excellent comparative material for the consideration of variation over time.

Third Meeting—1894

Although Tang Kristensen visited Kirsten Marie a total of four times, the fourth visit was part of his first photographic odyssey with Peder Olsen in August of 1895 and he collected no stories during that visit. Describing that trip in *Minder og Oplevelser*, he wrote:

Den første Tur omfattede kun fire Mennesker og var da egentlig at betragte som en Prøvetur. Vi gik over til Villendrup og tog Billede af en Gaardmand der, Rasmus Pedersen, som havde fortalt mig nogle Sagn. Saa gik vi til Mejlby og tog Margrete Jensdatter. Paa hende blev der ofret 2 Plader. Saa gik vi til Hornslet Mark og tog Rasmus Pedersens Søster, Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter, og endelig kom vi til Torsager, hvor vi overnattede hos Provsten, som var meget elskværdig imod os. Jeg husker, at Olsen om Aftenen sad og fremsagde Digtet Terje Vigen, som han kunde uden ad, og det kom han ualmindelig godt fra. Saa gik vi ned til Rostved og fik Anders Jørgensen Sams taget. Det var et særlig godt Billede, vi fik af ham, og saa tog vi hjem (MO vol. 4, 71).

[The first trip included only four people and was actually considered a test trip. We walked over to Villendrup and took a picture of a farmer there, Rasmus Pedersen, who had told me some legends. Then we went over to Mejlby and took Margrete Jensdatter.

Two plates were used for her. Then we walked to Hornslet Mark and took Rasmus Pedersen's sister, Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter, and finally we came to Torsager, where we stayed the night with the Dean, who was quite nice to us. I remember that Olsen sat there in the evening and recited the poem "Terje Vigen," which he knew by heart, and he was quite successful with that. Then we walked down to Rostved and took Anders Jørgensen Sams. It was an especially good picture we got of him and then we went home.]

The third visit with Kirsten Marie, in late January or early February 1894, was his last collecting visit with her, and took place during a long collecting trip that stretched until February nineteenth.²¹ Describing the motivation for this trip, Tang Kristensen wrote: "Vi fik Meddelelse om, at Fru Feilberg i Hornslet var død lidt hen i Januar, og saa tænkte jeg paa at komme der om ad, da jeg skulde ud at rejse alligevel, og min næste Tur gjaldt Østereggen, særlig da Eggen omkring Grenaa" [We got the news that Fru Feilberg in Hornslet had died in early January, and so I thought about going by there, because I was going to go out traveling anyways, and my next trip was to be to the eastern districts, especially the district near Grenaa] (MO vol. 4, 3). Tang Kristensen provided no start date for the trip, mentioning only, "Min Fødselsdag holdt jeg dog hjemme" [I celebrated my birthday at home however] (MO vol. 4, 3). The earliest he could have left, then, was January twenty-fifth. Even though the trip stretched over many days, he did not collect from many informants and provided little in the way of a summary of the trip's outcome. Kirsten Marie was, nevertheless, one of

the most prolific storytellers that he encountered on the trip. During this last meeting, she told another twenty stories, descriptions, sayings and provided him with several recipes. She paid special attention to local area customs, including detailed descriptions of celebrations.

Notes

¹It is unclear where Tang Kristensen found this additional biographical material, although he may have supplemented her comments with archival research of his own.

²The farm is listed as “Boelkjærdsholm” in the 1834 census.

³A farm valued between one and two barrels of *hartkorn* was commonly known as a *boelsted* (*bolsted*), and the farmer as a *boelsmand*. The term (O.Ic. ból) derives from the earlier organization of rural areas, in which some villages were divided into *bol*, each with an equal amount of land, forest and grazing commons (*overdrev*); a *bol* could consist of a single farm but, more commonly, several farms together comprised a *bol* (often with a half *bol* and several quarter, eighth and twelfth *bol*). A farm could belong to more than one *bol*. In 1682, the size of a *bol* was approximately 100 acres of land.

⁴Boeholm is listed as “Ploholm Hus” in the 1834 census.

⁵Although the name suggests a possible familial connection (Peder Andersen’s maternal grandfather is Christian Lassen), it has been impossible to confirm any such connection.

⁶Field books or *markbøger* were books that provided detailed descriptions of the dispensation of the agricultural fields in Denmark. These measurements were made between 1682 and 1684, as a result of general dissatisfaction with the *matrikel* of 1662 and 1664, and in preparation for the *matrikel* of 1688.

The descriptions of fields included measurements of the length and width of fields, the area of the field and the valuation of the field, along with the name of the field's owner (Frandsen 1998, 82-3).

⁷ The *landgilde* was an annual payment that a copyholder had to make on their lease. In earlier years, the payment was made in kind, or incorporated into the peasant's villeinage obligations. In later years, the payment was made in cash and could be as high as one quarter of a farm's output.

⁸ By 1860, after all Niels's grown children had moved out, he employed three farmhands and a hired girl. This fairly large group of servants reflected Niels's increasing age, the size of the farm and his stature in the community.

⁹ Kirsten Marie's brother Rasmus Kjær served as *sognefoged* later for a different parish.

¹⁰ The house first came into being in 1854 and so there must have been several months at least between the wedding and their move.

¹¹ The spur was extended to Gjerrild in 1911, and finally to Grenå in 1917. Although the railway stretch Ryomgård-Grenå was eliminated in 1956, Hornslet station is still in operation.

¹² As noted, the Reventlow family was one of the most powerful aristocratic families in Denmark.

¹³ Since divorce was not a possibility, Danish kings who had lovers occasionally married them unofficially. This type of marriage was referred to as "gift til venstre hånd," or "married to the left hand," and meant, among other things, that any children from the union had no inheritance claims on the king, and the wife did not receive the title of queen.

¹⁴ The parish director's office was established by an ordinance August 13, 1841. The parish councils were established by the county reform (*kommunalereform*) in 1867 (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 96).

¹⁵ The *brugsforeninger* or grocery cooperatives were united in 1896 as Fællesforeningen for Danmarks Brugsforeninger (General Society of Danish Grocery Cooperatives), or FDB. Among the many stores currently in operation that are owned by FDB are Irma, Kvickly, SuperBrugsen and Fakta, a reflection of the pervasiveness of the cooperative movement even in contemporary Denmark.

¹⁶ The *menighedsråd* were established in 1856 on the basis of a circular, and the *valgmenigheder* were established in 1868.

¹⁷ A *proprietærgård* was a farm with a valuation of at least twelve barrels of *hartkorn*. A farm with a valuation over twenty-four barrels of *hartkorn* was generally considered a manor farm (*gods*) (Ugilt 1980, 18). Jens Christensen provides an excellent discussion of the change in the status of women in the latter decades of the nineteenth century on different types of farms (Christensen 1988, 387-391).

¹⁸ See Baad Pedersen for a discussion of the role of small grocers (*bøkere*) and grocers in rural Denmark at the end of the nineteenth century (Baad Pedersen 1983).

¹⁹ After the reforms to the commerce laws, dyers could relocate to the rural areas.

²⁰ A more thorough analysis of Kirsten Marie's repertoire can be found in my earlier study of legend tradition in Denmark (Tangherlini 1994, 247-79).

²¹ Notes in *Minder og Oplevelser* suggest that Tang Kristensen may have visited her later on as well. Unfortunately, the records from that possible visit do not appear in the field diaries.

9

Jens Peter Pedersen: Day Laborer and Turner

Jens Peter Pedersen was not so different from many other poor day laborers. He made his living as a hired hand, and as a craftsman. Unsurprisingly, he never amassed enough capital to break the bonds that held the day laborers mired in subsistence poverty and tied to the local area, even after the elimination of the estate bondage (*stavnsbånd*), a system of adscription that required a person to seek permission from the manor lord if they wished to leave the area. Instead, he developed particular skills—lathe turning and clog making—which he could use to supplement the meager income he earned from hiring himself out to local farmers. Making clogs and turning a lathe, in this case to make the parts of spinning wheels, were both skilled labor. Making clogs was a common sideline (*bierhverv*) in wooded areas (see chapter on “Bitte” Jens), but turning a lathe was relatively rare. The craft required knowledge, experience, a steady hand and specialized tools. Indeed, the probate documents filed after Jens Peter’s death provided a detailed inventory of the things he owned, and his woodworking tools were the only possessions that the probate officers described in any detail. Although there were some forests near Ilbjerger huse, the hamlet where Jens Peter lived in Vendsyssel, so that he had access to a large supply of raw materials, the relative isolation of the area must have

presented a very limited market for his services.¹ In fact, Vendsyssel was a historically poor area—its sparse population, poor soil, and harsh climate all contributed to the difficult living conditions prevalent there.

The short biography Tang Kristensen wrote about Jens Peter highlighted his poverty and the harshness of the local environment. In that biography, Jens Peter himself highlighted his close connection to his past, particularly his parents, and his interest in local history. It also reflects, albeit indirectly, his apparent loneliness, a loneliness which might help explain his eagerness as an informant:

Jens Peter Pedersen er født den 1. maj 1836 på Borup mark i Tårs. Hans fader var født i Tranum, Han herred, og han har fortalt ham en hel del af det han kan. Men både fader, moder og moders moder fortalte meget. Den sidste var fra Tårs og var for resten en søster til boghandler Chr. Steen i København, der rømte fra hjemmet, sagtens for at blive fri for tjenesten (?), kom så til København og kom i bogbinderlære. Jens Peter har lært drejerhåndværket i Hjørring og har nu boet i Ilbjærge i et lille hus i 26 år. Han har altid været ugift, og der ser yderst tarveligt ud hos ham. Da vi sidst skiltes, havde han helt ondt ved at sige farvel til mig. Jeg kunde tydeligt se, han gjerne vilde, jeg skulde have blevet hos ham noget længere, da det interesserede ham så overordentlig at få disse ting skrevet op. En aften kom han i øsende regn op til mig i Lørslev skole og sad hele aftenen i de våde klæder og fortalte. Han var vant til hårdhed, og en smule regn

gjorde ham ikke noget, sagde han (JAT vol. 6, 303).

[Jens Peter Pedersen was born May 1, 1836 in Borup Mark in Tårs. His father was born in Tranum, Han County, and he had told Jens Peter quite a bit of the things he (Jens Peter) could tell. But both his father, mother and his mother's mother told many stories. The latter was from Tårs and was, in fact, one of bookseller Chr. Steen from Copenhagen's sisters. Chr. Steen had run away from home to get out of working at other farms, went to Copenhagen and became an apprentice bookbinder. Jens Peter learned how to turn a lathe in Hjørring and he has lived in a little house in Ilbjerge for the last twenty-six years. He has always been single, and his place is quite shabby. The last time we parted he had had a very hard time saying goodbye to me. I could clearly see that he wanted me to stay longer, as he was very interested in getting these things recorded. One evening he came in the pouring rain up to see me at Lørslev School, and he sat the entire evening in wet clothes and told. He was used to harsh conditions and a little rain didn't bother him he said.]

Tang Kristensen's presentation of Jens Peter is self-serving, emphasizing as it did his informant's quiet longing for Tang Kristensen's attention and interest. In a similarly self-serving way, Jens Peter himself did not give Tang Kristensen with accurate information about his background.

This type of creative life history, seen in so many of Tang Kristensen's informants, is unsurprising. It was part and parcel of the informants' storytelling, and a component of an elaborate presentation of self, in which they passed themselves off to this well-known visitor as a bit more accomplished, knowledgeable, experienced or worldly than they actually were.

Family Background

Jens Peter's parents were poor. His father, Peder Christian Pedersen, from Tårs parish, was a landless cotter (*indsidder*), and his wife, Johanne Nielsdatter, came from a similarly modest background. Johanne, who was eight years older than Peder Christian, had met him while he was working as a hired hand in Vennebjerg. Johanne, at the time, was also listed as an *indsidder*, renting lodgings in the area while she too worked as hired help at a local farm. It is unclear exactly how the two met. It is possible they met through work but it is more likely that they met at one of the many festive gatherings (*lejestuer*) that were the main sources of entertainment for young men and women at the time. The age difference between the two was a little unusual, as women tended to marry earlier than men, with an average age of first marriage of thirty-one for men, and twenty-eight for women (Johansen 1979, 60). Johanne may have been unlucky in love or she might have been married previously.

Jens Kristian, Jens Peter's older brother, was an early arrival for his father, who was only twenty-two when his first son was born in 1827. Jens Peter's sister, Inger Katrine, was born five years later in 1832. In a pattern typical for young day laborers, the parents were married in 1833. Jens Peter came along several years later in 1836. He was baptized at

home on May second, 1836, one day old, and baptized a second time several months later in the local church.² Baptism at home shortly after birth was a common practice as it allowed for the immediate registration of the child in the church books and, more importantly, protected the child from any spiritual or supernatural threat.

It is unclear what happened to Jens Peter's older brother Jens Kristian, as he no longer appears in census records after 1834. This suggests that he may have died, because he would have been but thirteen years old in 1840, the low end of the age scale for moving away from home. He had certainly died by the time Jens Peter died in 1900, as his sister Inger Katrine was listed as his only surviving relative. Jens Peter never left home for any great lengths of time and he continued to live with his father until his father's death on April fourth, 1876. His mother had died sometime in the 1860s and the living arrangement may have been one based in part on economic expediency and in part on family closeness. After his father's death, Jens Peter lived alone although he took in lodgers to supplement his otherwise meager income.³ Fortunately, he had inherited the small house in Ilbjerg Huse from his father.

In the 1845 census, the year that Jens Peter was vaccinated against small pox, his father Peder Christian was no longer listed as a carpenter, but rather with the catchall designation of day laborer, an annotation that probably reflects greater laxity in the census collection than any real change in status. By that time, the family had moved in with Inger Christensdal, in an *aftægt* arrangement, acquiring her house in return for providing her food and lodgings in her old age. By 1850, Peder Christian had moved again to another of the Ilbjerg huse and through another *aftægt* agreement, this time with Inger Jensen, managed to acquire a (very) smallholding: the house had just enough land to support his family, but only barely. Even though the tax valuation for the

Ilbjerger huse was 2-2-0-0.5, it was divided over eleven houses, producing a range of valuations from 0-0-0-0 at the low end (a house with no land), to 0-4-2-1.25 at the high end.

In 1851, Peder Christian's fifteen year-old son Jens Peter was confirmed, and the minister noted "udmærket godt" [excellent] for knowledge, a very high grade, and "meget godt" [very good] for behavior. By 1855, the situation at home had changed: the *aftagtskone* had died, and only Jens Peter and his parents lived in the house. In 1860, Jens Peter was still living at home, although soon thereafter, at the age of twenty-four, he moved to Ulstrup in Sct. Olai parish, to work as a hired hand. Ulstrup was a small manor farm with a valuation of 5.6 barrels of *hartkorn*, just west of the larger Spangerhede (15.75 barrels of *hartkorn*), and several kilometers north west of Ilbjerger Huse. By the time Jens Peter moved back home, his mother had died.

Jens Peter's story gets a bit murky after he moves away from home. He apparently worked at the manor farm for four years, presumably both as a hired hand and a woodworker. His skill with wood can probably be traced to his father's profession as a carpenter. An early interest and experience with woodworking made it easier for him to get more formal training in lathe turning, a skill he probably learned in Ulstrup, since there are no other documented periods away from home. Ulstrup was close enough to Hjørring that he could say that he had learned his craft there, as he did in his short interview with Tang Kristensen. In any event, Jens Peter had clearly acquired his expertise between 1860 and 1870, since that later census listed him as a turner (*dreier*).

In 1864, according to the departures list (*afgangsliste*) for Sct. Olai parish, he moved from Ulstrup to Vidstrup, a village just to the north and west of Hjørring, again presumably to work. Hired hands could "move" twice a year—in May and

November—and it was also at this time that most weddings took place. In that regard, Jens Peter was no different than many of his cohort, and he married in November 1864. The church records for Ugilt parish recorded that Jens Peter, a hired hand in Ulstrup, Sct. Olai parish, married Mariane Christiansen, who worked for her father in Lørslev, after having visited the church together to confer with the minister on the sixteenth and thirtieth of October.

Mariane was born in 1844, the oldest of four girls. Mariane's parents, Christian Mikkelsen and Maren Sørensdatter, enjoyed a much higher economic and social status than Jens Peder's family. Mariane's father, Christian, was listed in census records as a *gårdmand*, an annotation that indicated that his holdings included some land. The number of hired hands at the farm confirms this, and suggests that the farm was a relatively large undertaking, probably with an assessment of several barrels of *hartkorn*. Given their age difference, along with the economic gap, it is unlikely that the two had known each other in childhood, even though they both grew up in Ugilt parish. Not even church would have brought the two together, as she was confirmed in the neighboring Tårs parish.⁴ They probably met in much the same way that Jens Peter's parents had met—a local celebration or a *lejestue*. Oddly, soon after their marriage, Mariane disappeared from all public records, not appearing in the 1870 census, even though there was no notation of her death in the church books during the intervening years. In later census records, Jens Peter appeared as unmarried (*ugift*).⁵ Jens Peter did not help clarify matters either since, in his discussions with Tang Kristensen, he indicated that he had never been married. Later biographies confound matters even more. So, for example, in the second edition of *Gamle Kildevald*, the editors have omitted the annotation that Jens Peter had not been married, providing instead the scant

information that exists about Mariane. The most likely explanation for Mariane's disappearance, if she did not die, was parental involvement. Since Mariane's parents were farm owners, they would presumably have gone to great lengths to annul or otherwise dissolve her marriage to Jens Peter, as a means to protect their wealth, particularly if a better prospect had presented himself.

The case of the disappearing wife was not the only unsolved mystery in Jens Peter's life. When he died on May twentieth, 1900, he left behind a surprisingly complex series of obligations and debt, as well as a son, Laurids Peter Pedersen.⁶ In the mid 1850s, the local minister noted in his records that more than ten percent of all children born in the parish were born outside of marriage (Munkholt 52), and so the out of wedlock birth of Laurids Peter was not anomalous. After a court resolution from April ninth, 1889 established both Jens Peter's paternity and his obligation to the child, he did what was right and supported the child with annual payments of forty crowns, which were to continue until the boy reached his fourteenth birthday. In contrast to Jens Peter's first wife Mariane, Laurids's mother, Jensine Larsen from Stoksted was very poor. This fact, coupled to Jens Peter's advancing age, may have prevented any thoughts of marriage if that had ever been their intention. According to other parish records, Jensine was unable to support Laurids by herself, as she received poverty assistance.

The court order that stipulated Jens Peter's child support payments also included an interesting clause that read: "Ligesom Bidraget kan forhøjes eller nedsættes af Amtet, saaledes kan Faderens Forpligtelse til at bidrage til Barnets Underhold og Opdragelse, saafremt dertil findes Grund, ustrækkes til Barnets fyldte 18 Aar" [Just as the contribution can be raised or lowered by the county, the father's required contribution to the child's upkeep and upbringing can, in the

case that there are reasons for such, be extended until the child reaches eighteen years of age]. Since the provision made no mention of what should happen in the event of Jens Peter's death, Jensine sent a letter on June twenty-eighth, 1901 to the Vennebjerg district offices requesting that the annual payment continue until 1905. This request was approved and it burdened the already small estate for an additional two hundred crowns. Given the modest size of the estate, the detailed paper trail left in the wake of its settlement seems unusual at first. The competing interests of several parties who had an interest in the estate might help explain this level of detail. In addition to Jensine, both the local parish, who had paid Jens Peter old age assistance, and Jens Peter's sister, Inger Katrine, who had moved to the United States, were eager to wring what little they could out of the estate. In a letter to Inger Katrine requesting a power of attorney for her brother-in-law to represent her interests in probate, a local attorney, Valdemar Bosk indicated that the estate was likely to be very small. Amusingly, in that same letter, he asked her to use six-cent stamps on her return letter, as these stamps were rare in Denmark and Valdemar apparently had a philatelic streak in him.⁷ Valdemar was, of course, correct in assuming that the estate was miniscule and barely worth pursuing at all. Even the six-cent stamp turned out to be a poor investment.

Jens Peter's possessions were valued at a scant one hundred sixty-four crowns and eighty øre two days after his death, and sold at auction for two hundred twenty-eight crowns, thirty-eight øre. The most valuable possessions were his wood working tools (forty-two crowns), his workbench and its accessories (twenty-six crowns), and his lathe (twenty crowns). He also owned a roll top desk (five crowns) and a pot bellied stove (three crowns). After various fees related to the auction of his possessions, the total income from the sale

was one hundred eighty-three crowns and thirty-five øre. The entire estate including other outstanding obligations was finally valued at two hundred seven crowns and twenty-one øre. This included two crowns and thirty øre in loose change found in his effects, and fifteen crowns paid back to the estate from a voided contract for one hundred seventy-five crowns to purchase a small house in Lørslev (Matr. number 21d). This last agreement between Jens Peter and the house seller, Christian Jakobsen, was convoluted: Jens Peter refused to move into the house until he had been given a purchase agreement, and Christian Jakobsen refused to give him the papers until he moved in. After Jens Peter's death, Christian not only kept the original deposit of forty-five crowns but also kept the house! The terminated agreement also tells a rather sad tale: After years of toil and frugal living, Jens Peter had enough money to buy a real house, rather than the huts that went by the name of "houses" at Ilbjerger huse. With this new house, he would have pulled himself that much further out of the pit of rural poverty. But the manipulative nature of the seller and his own untimely death conspired against him, making even this most modest of all steps toward economic security a step too far.

By the time probate ended in March 1902, numerous fees had been deducted from the estate: thirty crowns for his burial (including fifteen crowns for a casket and burial clothes, eleven crowns for clothing the body, pall bearers and a small reception for those who attended the funeral and four crowns for grave digging); three crowns to Carl Holmen for loss of service of a spinning wheel that Jens Peder was repairing for him at the time of his death; and forty-six crowns fourteen øre in additional probate costs. Laurid's mother, Jensine, had been paid eighty crowns in child support from the estate and still had an outstanding claim of one hundred and twenty crowns against it. The value of the estate was now only forty-

eight crowns and seven øre. The end result of settling Jens Peter's estate was that his sister Inger Katrine (who was out several six cent stamps) and the parish inherited nothing, and Jensine came up seventy-two crowns short.

Jens Peter's death triggered a search for his one living heir, his sister Inger Katrine.⁸ The results of this search are interesting, as her life reflects many of the problems confronting young men and women in the poor rural areas of Vendsyssel. Among Jens Peter's effects, the parish bailiff discovered two nearly illegible letters from Inger Katrine sent from the United States. The conventional wisdom in the village was that she had emigrated, and the discovery of the letters confirmed this. She had married the brother of a local butcher in the late 1860s, and moved in the 1870s first to New Jersey and later to Michigan. The letters were clearly treasured by Jens Peter and his father. Even though they had been read and reread, they were always carefully refolded along the creases, and placed back in their envelopes.

The letters reveal several interesting things. First, they make it quite clear not only that Inger Katrine could write, but also that her brother and her father could read. The handwriting also offers a glimpse of how reading and writing were used by the rural poor: her script is nearly incomprehensible and many words are spelled phonetically.⁹ In the second letter, there is some indication that she had moved to the United States to pursue her new found Mormon faith. The passage is ultimately unclear, and may simply be musings on her own observations of the rising number of Danish Mormons in the United States. The Mormons had made significant inroads in Vendsyssel in the decades immediately after the passage of the Danish constitution. But even if Inger Katrine was not a Mormon, she was keenly aware of the connection between the Mormon Church, Vendsyssel and emigration to the United States. In

any case, the letters offer a small window into Jens Peter's personal life and the impact of an increasing globalization on that small corner of Vendsyssel.

The Local Environment

Ugilt parish is flat, although a series of hills runs along the eastern border of the parish, with Munkholt at ninety-one meters the tallest of these. The landscape is deeply glaciated, and a large moraine runs just east of the parish church. The western part of the parish is much flatter, and is the result of the seabed rising. In the midst of this flat area is a small moraine, Ilbjerger, and it is alongside this moraine that the small collection of houses known as Ilbjerger huse sat. In the southern and southeastern part of the parish, there were some small forests that covered hilly terrain. These forests were a boon to the local economy. Otherwise, the soil was inconsistent if uniformly bad, in some places sandy and in other places clay.

The first mention of Ugilt dates from 1436, with reference to a settlement called Vggilt. In 1474, it was referred to as Wgell. Other towns in the parish also date back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: Lørslev is first mentioned in 1408 as Lødhersløf; Linderum is first mentioned in 1395, with the appellation Lyndrom; and the town of Glimsholt is first mentioned in 1340 as Grumsholt, and later Glymsholth (1532). These towns all lie along an east-west axis, with Lørslev in the west and Glimsholt in the east. Many of the small collections of houses and farms in the parish are also named: Bollermærk, Hejselt, Rughaven, Burskov, Drastrup, Fårbjerg huse, Åsholm, Skærshede, Lørslev Østerhede, Ilbjerger huse, Tranehus, Spangerhede Mærk, Lørslev Vesterhede, Egebjergstavn, Tægefæld,

Krathuse, Sigtenborg, Søndermark and Arndal, and reflect the diffuse settlement of smallholdings throughout the parish (Trap 1958, vol. 6, 184). Along with the neighboring parish of Tårs, Ugilt parish was long considered one of the poorest in the entire country (Munkholt 50).

Linderumgård was the largest manor farm in the area, dating back to the early fifteenth century. The other large manor farm was Egebjerg, although there were a number of large farms that did not reach the level of manor farm or *proprietar* farm, including Spangerhede, Mølskovgård, Mølgård, Søndenaen, Knudsholm, Tange, Ajstrup, Dalsager, Rogntved, Melbæk, Vormstrup, Højbjerg, Nålmoose, Munkholt, Stadshede (the forest ranger's farm), Gildeladen, Smørkrogen, Skajbjerg, Kringelborg, Snapholt, Horsevad, Bukholt, Stensodde, Romholt, Koldborg, Hornbjerg and Oven Ugilt (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 184-5).

Linderumgård belonged in the early fourteenth century to Stig Pedersen, the leader of the Vendelbo jurisdiction. In 1665, the manor farm came under the control of Erik Rosenkrantz of Rosenholm (see the chapter on Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter). The manor changed hands numerous times up through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, primarily because of the insolvency of some of its owners. By 1800, the farm was valued at 45.5 barrels of *hartkorn*, a considerable valuation. After repeated sales, bankruptcies, litigation over ownership, and the inevitable sale of various parts of the property, the farm was sold in 1881 to Bartholomæus Hasselbalch for 127,000 crowns, at which point the farm was valued at eighteen barrels of *hartkorn*, a drop of nearly two thirds in its original valuation. While this decrease meant a concomitant drop in the power of the manor farm, it meant a far higher rate of land ownership for everyone else in the parish (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 186-7).

Egebjerg was already a manor farm in the Middle Ages, built according to local legend in 1300 by Niels Stigsen. His great grandson, Niels Pedersen, killed the priest in Ugilt some time in the mid fifteenth century. By 1688, the farm had a *hartkorn* value of nearly fifteen barrels, with approximately 136.5 acres of land under plow (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 185). The farm changed hands numerous times during the eighteenth century, and by the early nineteenth century, when it was sold once again, this time to Anders Nielsen Ræbild, it was valued at twenty-three barrels *hartkorn*. By 1905, when it was sold yet again, its valuation had declined to a little less than eighteen barrels (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 186). The change in valuation over the years was a function of small parts of the estate being sold off rather than any change in the quality of the fields. The shifting valuation accordingly reflected the gradually increasing level of land ownership among the lower classes. Land ownership in these areas was to a large extent a “limited good”—only heath reclamation could increase the amount of land available and then only incrementally (Foster 1965).

Mølgård, one of the other large manor farms in the area, was parceled out in 1818 by a new owner, who kept the main parcel for himself (valued at nine barrels). Another large farm, Mølskovgård, was an outlier of Linderumgård. It too changed hands numerous times during the early nineteenth century, and by 1898, it had a valuation of a little more than ten barrels. Spangerhede had an equally convoluted history and, by the mid nineteenth century, had been acquired by a Copenhagen merchant, T. G. Pedersen, who handed control of the farm over to his son. The other large farms in the area were on the smaller side and had significantly less interesting histories (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 187-8).

The parish had several areas of historical or archaeological interest. At one point there was a “holy spring”

in the forest, but by the early twentieth century, it had dried up (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 188-9). In addition to the old spring, twelve ancient mounds have been preserved in the parish, eleven of which are on the Linderumgård estate. There are also three Iron Age burial sites at Egebjerg. At Linderumgård, other archaeological finds include a burial site where swords and clay pots from the Celtic Iron Age were found. Also, a sword from the early Bronze Age was found in Uggerby River, near Rogntved plantation on the western border of the parish (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 189).

Although there were numerous large farms in the overall region, transportation to and from the region was difficult. This was particularly true along the western side of Vendsyssel. Frederikshavn, on the eastern coast, had, since the seventeenth century, been an important harbor, and roads connecting Frederikshavn to the south were established early on. A major road connecting Frederikshavn to the market town of Hjørring was an important artery through northern Jutland. The majority of transportation, however, was focused on the sea and small boats plied the coast putting in at the various fishing villages that dotted the shoreline. This maritime focus changed in 1871 with the establishment of the Nørre Sundby (Aalborg)—Frederikshavn railway. The rail corridor, however, continued to favor the eastern part of the region.¹⁰ In the late nineteenth century, the transportation infrastructure in central and western Vendsyssel was poor and this reverberated throughout the economy of the isolated region. Even changes in local power after 1849 did little to improve the economic infrastructure of the area.

The politics of Hjørring county were conservative up through the late nineteenth century. In the Hjørring electoral district, where Ilbjerger Huse was located, the representatives to parliament were almost all from the conservative party, *Højre*. It was not until the last decades of the century that

several of these representatives changed their party affiliation to the more farmer-oriented *Venstre*. By that time, however, *Venstre* was no longer the liberal party it had once been. Neither the Social Democrats nor the smallholders' party, *Radikale Venstre*, made any significant in-roads into the political landscape of the district despite the crushing poverty that reigned there. It might well have been that the electorate was too poor to care about national politics, dedicating their time and energy to finding food, earning money, and staying warm.

As a reflection of the politics of the area, there were only two newspapers at mid-century, and both of these were organs for conservative points of view. *Hjørring Amtstidende* (Hjørring County Times), founded in 1843, and *Frederikshavns Avis* (Frederikshavn Newspaper), founded in 1853, had a consolidated hold on the print media up through the end of the nineteenth century. The one break in this otherwise close control over public opinion was the more liberal *Vendsyssel Tidende* (Vendsyssel Times), which was founded in 1872 by a group of *Venstre* politicians. Much later, in the early twentieth century, a more radical newspaper, the *Vendsyssel Venstreblad* (Vendsyssel Left Paper), was published, but only from 1912-1958 (Trap 1958, vol. 6.1, 43).

Although Hjørring county was hardly a hotbed of political activism through the latter part of the nineteenth century, it was a center of considerable activity on the religious front. Earlier in the century, rationalist ministers had taken control of the folk church, as they had through much of the country. These ministers focused on bettering the material lives of their parishioners. Through their efforts, progress was made in the care of farm animals and the productivity of farms up through the first half of the century. From 1536 until 1892, Ugilt and Tårs constituted a single pastorate, with Ugilt as the main parish. Accordingly, a

chaplain in Tårs assisted the minister for Ugilt until the official split of the two parishes into independent administrative units. Many of the ministers in the pastorate stayed at their positions for an unusually long period: from the Reformation until 1892, there were only seventeen ministers in the pastorate, with an average length of service of twenty-one years (Nørrelykke 1974).

One of the main areas of church influence was the development and control of the local schools. The schools in Ugilt and Tårs developed together, largely because the two parishes were under a single pastorate. In 1859, one hundred ten children were enrolled in the school, and in 1871 the school was expanded. By 1891, additional schools were built in Nørre and Søndre Tårs. There is little of note in the school history of the parishes, but given the history of political strife in the pastorate, one can surmise that the schools were subject to the same small town politics.

The history of the pastorate in the early nineteenth century, and the later developments in the ecclesiastic direction of the pastorate, was closely tied to Hans Hansen Boye, a young man of considerable means, who purchased Hvidstedgård and the churches in the pastorate in 1778. He married Helene Charlotte Justdatter Schandorff, the daughter of his predecessor, but died soon after taking over the estate. His widow married Erik Jessen Trap, an intriguing character who actively fought the widespread discrimination against "*rakkerne*," the untouchables of Danish rural society. Trap also did a great deal to advance the congregation's economic well being (Gaardboe 1968; Hansen 1952). After Trap's death, Helen Charlotte chose her son, Hans Boye, to succeed Trap as minister. Boye eventually stepped down in 1826. By then, the progressive foundations for the pastorate had been established.

Andreas Listø Høeg, Boye's successor, was an advocate for the local poor, an important, progressive position to take given the poverty of the area and the nascent national debate concerning poverty assistance. During his seventeen-year tenure as the lead parish administrator, he oversaw the implementation of clearer and more consistent rules governing care for the indigent. He eventually stepped down in 1843, at which point Peter Neergaard replaced him. Although isolated, these parishes were hardly cut off from the political and cultural currents of the day, as Neergaard's activism attests. Neergaard was as close to a secular minister as one could find: he was a rationalist, deeply engaged politically, and particularly interested in agricultural advances. In fact, he was accused several times of missing important church functions (weddings and funerals) because he was too busy with his farm work. He worked diligently to eliminate "pligtarbejde" (*hoveeri*) or villeinage for the smallholders in Hjørring county. He was also a member of the bank board and, from 1856 to 1862, a member of the county board. Yet despite his work on behalf of the smallholders, he considered himself a member of the *Højre* party, standing for election to the constitutional assembly for that party in 1848. Although he was defeated, he later won election to parliament for the Frederikshavn electoral district as a member of the *Højre* party.¹¹

Neergaard was replaced by H. A. Krøyer, who remained in the pastorate for ten years without much lasting religious or political influence. His successors through the remainder of the century, however, were involved in a fairly dramatic series of developments, which brought to the fore the tensions between the Inner Mission and the Grundtvigians. Ulrik Peder Christian Nissen, who had spent nearly twenty years in Greenland as a missionary minister, came to the pastorate in 1873. With his white hair and chiseled features,

he looked like an old seaman, and became the center of a Grundtvig inspired community (Munkholt 60). Nissen and pastor Heiberg from Vrejlev attempted to broaden this sense of community and, on a quarterly basis, held joint services, a practice that lasted for four years. These joint services helped bring the communities from all three local parishes—Ugilt, Tårs and Vrejlev—closer together. The practice, however, stopped over a political disagreement between the two ministers. The local Grundtvigians soon abandoned Nissen in favor of Heiberg, and church attendance plummeted. In 1883, Nissen was replaced by J.V. Tørslev, who was far more involved in the Inner Mission movement, changing Ugilt into a center for Inner Mission activity. Tørslev was also the last minister for the joint Ugilt-Tårs pastorate.

Although the Inner Mission dominated the parishes in the eastern and northern parts of the county, they were also active in Ugilt parish. The Inner Mission was powerful enough to establish a folk high school in Horne in 1891, approximately seventeen kilometers to the north of Ilbjerger Huse. Pastor Tørslev was instrumental in starting the “Ugilt meetings,” a series of Inner Mission meetings held in the Ugilt parsonage from 1887 to 1892. This turn toward the Inner Mission also found expression in the building of the Tårs Mission House in 1896. By the time Tørslev left the pastorate in 1892, church attendance was once again high but, more importantly, the Inner Mission had become a considerable cultural and political force in mid Vendsyssel.

Tørslev’s successor in Ugilt was another Inner Mission minister, Jens Krogsbæk. Krogsbæk continued Tørslev’s work, and was deeply involved in the various revivals that were common throughout Vendsyssel in the 1890s. While the Inner Mission dominated in Ugilt, the Grundtvigians dominated in Tårs, as they did in much of the south and west of the county. In the local area, several articulate ministers

had been in charge of the pastorate in the mid nineteenth century and once again, in the 1880s, they found in P. C. August Kristensen (1854-1915) an excellent ambassador. When Tørslev, the Inner Mission minister, took over the pastorate in 1883, the pastorate's chaplaincy was filled by August Kristensen. Although he had been born and raised on Bornholm, he had made his way, through Vallekilde Højskole, to Jutland. He was, by all accounts, an outgoing and friendly man who, along with his wife Laura, was deeply engaged in the social life of his congregants. One of the lasting legacies of his work was a relative rapprochement between the Grundtvigians, who found in him an articulate defender, and the Inner Mission folk, who had the bully pulpit of minister Tørslev on their side. In 1892, the pastorate was split, Tørslev left for Sengeløse parish, and August became the minister of Tårs parish.

August's politics were supportive of *Venstre*, and it was with his support that one of the first secular meetinghouses in Vendsyssel was built. Because political meetings could not be held in churches or schools, there was an acute need for public gathering places. August's social and political engagement, however, also led to what some dubbed "the war in Tårs" (*krigen i Tårs*). At the time, various progressive rural parties were in the making, among them the "Dansk Landarbejder Forbund" (The Danish Rural Workers' League). Some of the local farmers felt that this party was too left leaning—almost socialist—in its ideology. They were afraid that the organization was really a socialist cotter's group that wanted to overthrow the existing economic order, and many of them felt that August's politics had veered even further to the left than *Venstre*. They also believed he was the leader of this new movement. The confrontation between August and the farm owners led to a series of meetings in the meetinghouse in Tårs. Ultimately the meetings had a far

different outcome than the farm owners expected: August convinced them to establish a medical insurance plan (*sygekasse*) for the local smallholders, a radical, almost socialist departure from the far more conservative norm. Successful in the short run, the long-term fall-out of the confrontation proved insurmountable for August and, in 1896, he moved to Vrejlev parish, taking many of the Grundtvigian followers with him.

Hjørring county was not only a focal point of the two main warring, evangelical factions in the Danish Lutheran church, the Grundtvigians and the Inner Mission. Already in the 1850s, in the immediate aftermath of the constitutional reform guaranteeing the freedom of religious choice, numerous international missionary movements began attracting followers there. The Mormon Church was successful in finding converts, and many of these converts emigrated to the United States. The Mormons' missionizing in Hjørring was stopped short by one woman, Kirsten Marie Larsdatter, nicknamed Skov Kirsten, the daughter of a local farm owner (Munkholt 54-9). As a child, she had suffered a permanent injury to her arm in a sledding accident and, consequently, she had few prospects for employment or marriage. At first, she resigned herself to a life as a weaver, but soon discovered another calling. Although she had toyed with being baptized as a Mormon in the early 1850s, she became disillusioned with the Mormons and soon decided to focus instead on the teachings of Grundtvig. She eventually developed a reputation as a Grundtvigian proselytizer, and became close friends with Grundtvig's wife Asta. Despite some run-ins with the bishop of Aalborg, and criticism from local ministers who felt that a woman should not be engaged in the type of lay preaching that Skov Kirsten did, the church eventually realized that she was a helpful and articulate spokesperson for the needs of local congregants, and an

excellent defense against the proselytizing of the Mormons. Because of her proselytizing, the Grundtvigian's were able to get a stronger foothold in the area, and Mormon missionary activity decreased noticeably over the course of the 1860s.

Other missionary groups included the Baptists and, in the 1870s and 1880s, the Adventists, who also began attracting significant groups of converts. The Adventists were most successful in the Hvetbo and Børglum districts, both in the sparsely populated and isolated southern and western parts of the county. The Methodists managed to attract enough followers in the larger towns to be able to build churches in both Hjørring and Frederikshavn. All these groups contributed to the lively religious landscape that was a hallmark of late nineteenth century Vendsyssel, and an important part of the cultural environment in which Jens Peter lived, worked and told his stories.

Day Laborers and Small Craftsmen

The life of a day laborer was difficult. Even with the land reforms and repeated state sponsored incentives to increase home ownership during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the majority of rural Danes remained landless.¹² For them, joining the ranks of the poor land owning *husmand* class was often an unattainable dream. Even though the *husmand* were poor, they at least owned their houses and their land. Pure day laborers (*daglejere*), in contrast, lived in rented houses and rooms; lived with their parents or relatives; or had their lodgings at the farm where they served. In the latter case, the workers were bound by contracts renewed semi-annually or annually and would have been considered hired hands (*tjenestekarl*, *tjenestedreng*, *tjenestepige*, etc.), rather than day laborers. *Indsiddere* (*Inderste*) sat somewhere between the

husmænd and the itinerant *daglejere*: they usually owned their house or part of a house, but had no land to go with it.

The economic differences between these groups were at times minimal. It would be misleading to put the categories along a rigid scale. Even though the economic and social gap between the wealthiest *husmand* and the poorest day laborer could be enormous, most people found themselves somewhere along that continuum. Some of the day laborers who rented houses were far better off than some *husmænd* who owned both house and land. Since day laborers were usually paid in seed, *husmænd* occasionally had to borrow seed from them, an inversion of the normal flow of goods.

The categories were loosely applied by census officials as well, and were often influenced by local usage. Instead of describing a person's profession, the labels as used in the census tended to describe both employment and land ownership. Accordingly, a person might have appeared in the census records as "husmand og daglejer" or "indsidder og daglejer." These labels described stages in a person's life as well: a recently confirmed young man (*konfirmand*) might hire himself out as a hired hand (*tjenestekarl*). Later, he might acquire enough capital to buy a small house (*indsidder* or *husmand*) yet, to make ends meet, might continue to hire himself out as a day laborer (*daglejer*). In fact, almost all *husmænd* and *indsiddere* had to hire themselves out as day laborers at one time or another, either out of sheer fiscal necessity or because day labor was included in the original purchase contract for their house. Given the tiny size of many smallholdings, the income from day labor could far exceed the income that a *husmand* could eke out from his meager plot. In the worst cases, the income earned from day labor was used to pay the expenses related to owning the smallholding, rather than supplementing that income.

Work as a day laborer was uneven, and followed the rhythms of the agricultural cycle. Although the advent of machines for certain tasks such as harvesting (mowing, gathering, binding), threshing, and chaff cutting reduced the demand for day labor by the beginning of the twentieth century, there were other equally important tasks such as thatching, fertilizing, and building drainage that still required huge amounts of manual labor. Even the advent of the steam-powered threshers in the waning years of the nineteenth century did not obliterate the need for day laborers during the winter months. Prior to the introduction of these machines, threshing offered day laborers a steady, albeit mind-numbing and physically demanding, source of income throughout the winter months. Threshing continued at many farms well into the planting season of the early spring. Steam threshers, by contrast, could take care of a farm's threshing in a matter of days. But the thresher required a large number of workers to operate it, offering day laborers an opportunity for concentrated work. These machines were also not adopted by all farms, as the smallest farms did not have harvests large enough to justify renting one of these behemoths.

Once the threshing was completed, farmers shifted the work of day laborers to other tasks. The goal of farmers was to increase output and efficiency, and extra workers were always needed. The low price of labor up through the end of the nineteenth century and the "lumpiness" of this work (it was not spread evenly throughout the year) helped sustain the market for day laborers. Also, because of this low price of labor, many farms were slow to mechanize. The initial capital investment to purchase machines was a barrier to entry for many small farmers and, coupled to a pervasive suspicion of these new technologies, most farms made the transition to mechanized farming slowly. It was not until the inter-war

period in the early twentieth century that the mechanization of Danish farms was completed (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 420).

The largest need for day laborers was during harvest time. A photograph from 1888, for example, taken at the manor farm Avnsøgaard in Holbæk amt, shows at least fifty people gathered for the harvest, many of these local *husmand* and *indsiddere* hired as day laborers for the occasion (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 425). Harvesting involved both men and women. The men would mow the fields with long scythes, and the women would follow behind, gathering the sheaves (*neg*), and binding them. These sheaves would be driven back to the farm, where the threshing would begin. While some of the harvest would be threshed immediately, the majority would be stored and threshed during the following months, the steam thresher notwithstanding. Usually, barley was the first grain to be harvested, in mid August, and the other grains followed. The harvest usually lasted through September. Poor weather could interrupt the harvest, and smallholders pressed into service at larger farms to assist in the harvest often had their hands full trying to harvest their own fields as well.

Day laborers were also in high demand during the planting season. Already in the early spring, farmers would need assistance in driving fertilizer—phosphor and animal manure—out onto the fields. If a farmer had decided to use marl, day laborers were hired to help dig the marl pits, to drive the marl to the fields, and to work it into the soil. When the planting started, the fields were plowed, the seed was spread by hand, and then the fields were rolled. Once fodder beets and turnips had become important crops as part of the shift in agricultural production from grains to animal products, day labor was needed for the constant weeding these crops required. On days when day laborers did not have any paid work, or at night after they had returned home, they usually worked at various secondary jobs if they had the

necessary skill, such as carding and spinning wool, making clogs, weaving, and knitting. The products of this piecework either supplied their own family with necessary goods, or were sold to others on surrounding farms. Some of these goods such as homespun or clogs could make their way to the local market towns.

Pay for day labor was uniformly low. Frequently it was paid in seed and cloth, rather than money. Pay for threshing, for example, was based on the amount threshed—threshing three barrels of rye, for example, would result in the payment of one measure of the same grain (Graves 1921). Even though many day laborers did not have fields on which to sow this grain, it could be exchanged as barter in the low-level economy that existed at the time. While the general economy was fully monetized, this secondary rural economy was only partially monetized. Pay for other types of work was often in money, and the size of these payments was dependent on the time of year: from Michaelmas (*Mikkelsdag*, September 29) until midsummer (*Skt. Hans*, June 24), standard day labor wages were fifty øre, and from midsummer until Michaelmas, twenty-five øre (Graves 1921, 121). The winter pay differential was often made up by the extra in-kind payments received for threshing. The wages also included meals, a small but important consolation for the people surviving on otherwise meager wages.

Jens Peter was more fortunate than many day laborers in that he had mastered the highly technical craft of turning the various pieces of spinning wheels that, given their constant use during the winter months (usually from Mikkelsdag until Gregorius, March 12), often required repair or replacement. The craft afforded him a degree of independence as he was not entirely at the mercy of the fluctuating day labor market, and this placed him somewhat higher than most other day laborers on the economic ladder. Even though rural

craftsmen (*landhåndværkere*) like Jens Peter had an economic advantage, competition could be intense and the market was strictly regulated, particularly outside of market towns. Laws dating back to Christian V's Danish Law (*Danske Lov*) and to earlier privileges granted to market towns during the reign of Christian II, put strict limits on the type of crafts that could be practiced outside of market towns. Up through the mid nineteenth century, craftsmen, with very few exceptions, were required to live and work in those towns. Standing exceptions to this law were granted for smiths, weavers, butchers, rye bread bakers, wheel makers and brewers. With the permission of the county commissioner (*amtmand*), several other crafts were allowed to work outside of the market towns as well: carpenters, coopers, tile makers, potters, tanners, saddle makers, glaziers, painters, watchmakers, cobblers, tailors, French bread bakers and spinning wheel part turners (Dagligliv II, 529). Craftsmen who received this permission had to stay outside an eleven and a half kilometer radius of market towns, and not engage in commerce with the inhabitants of the market towns. This latter regulation constrained the market share available to rural craftsmen. Certain other craftsmen were always required to work in the market towns, including all those who worked with shipping (sail makers, compass makers, etc.), all those who worked with metal (goldsmiths, coppersmiths, pipe makers, etc.), all those who worked in the construction crafts (joiners, plasterers, masons, etc.), all those who worked producing foodstuffs (sausage makers, distillers, etc.) and then various miscellaneous craftsmen, including tobacconists, tanners, printers, binders and the like (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 529).

The craftsmen who worked in the market towns were organized into guilds (*læng*), which had strict rules governing membership. These membership restrictions allowed the guilds to have strict control over the market and the quality of

goods produced. An 1857 reform of the commerce laws relaxed the restrictions on craftsmen considerably. When the law was finally implemented in 1862, all craftsmen were allowed to live and work outside of market towns, a huge concession to the demands of farmers and rural craftsmen alike who felt that their access to the crafts market was overly regulated. In a return concession to the craftsmen in the market towns who feared the competition of rural craftsmen who had lower overhead and, in many cases, better access to raw materials, a seven and a half kilometer radius was established around market towns, and rural craftsmen were not allowed to work within this radius.¹³ The change in regulations governing crafts resulted in two major developments in the economic landscape: First, the rural population got far greater access to a far greater array of craftsmen. Second, the competition in the crafts increased dramatically, since journeymen who had formerly been restricted to the market towns were now able to establish their own shops outside of town. These journeymen could then compete on a slightly more equal footing with their earlier masters, who had otherwise dominated the markets. This change was hugely beneficial to the rural craftsmen, coming as it did at the same time as changes were underfoot on farms related to the reorganization of agricultural production (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 555). At least for a little while, rural craftsmen had a great deal of work. This shift in the markets and the relative rise in wealth among rural craftsmen may also help explain why Jens Peter's heirs thought that his estate might be worth fighting over.

Unfortunately for most crafts, including crafts like Jens Peter's, this market reorganization came too late to foster sustainable growth. Increasing industrialization and the availability of manufactured goods such as clothes and shoes, coupled to the increased competition in the crafts and the

attendant drop in prices from the formerly closely controlled and regulated markets, placed many crafts on an accelerating downward spiral toward oblivion (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 557). Much like the musicians (*spillemand*) whose popularity was eclipsed by the advent of the radio and the phonograph, only the craftsmen whose skills could translate into the newly industrializing production environment (smiths becoming bicycle smiths for example) or whose skills translated into a new growth industry (printing for example) were able to survive. Even though the reformed commerce laws were intended to diffuse the concentration of craftsmen in towns and cities, increasing urbanization led many craftsmen to move back to the market towns.

Overview of Jens Peter's Repertoire

Jens Peter's repertoire consisted almost exclusively of legends and descriptions of local topography, beliefs and practices. Of particular interest is his frequent, almost insistent use of place names in these stories, linking the narratives to the local geography. He attributed few of his stories to people he knew, although at times he noted that a story was one that his father could remember. Since the two lived together, it is not surprising that Jens Peter cited his father as a source. In most of his stories, Jens Peter assumed a somewhat detached narrative position (Tangherlini 1994, 285). There are a few statistically significant anomalies that appear in Jens Peter's repertoire given his age, gender and class status. Ministers, for example, appear with greater frequency than would be expected, (31% versus 14.8%), as do female folk healers (cunning folk) (7.8% versus 2.9%). Reading through Jens Peter's repertoire, one gets the sense of a narrator deeply interested in local history, and eager to

explain the complexities of local community life during the past century.¹⁴

First and Second Meetings—1893

The first time that Tang Kristensen met with Jens Peter, there was little in his performance that suggested that he was soon to become one of Tang Kristensen's most prolific legend informants, since he only told nine stories. Nevertheless, in *Minder og Oplevelser*, Tang Kristensen referred to him as an "uudtømmelig kilde at øse af" [a bottomless well from which to draw] (MO vol. 3, 486), an evaluation that could only have been made in retrospect.¹⁵ Even though Jens Peter told very little to Tang Kristensen during their first meeting, Tang Kristensen returned to Ilbjerger later during that same trip and collected from him a second time. In *Minder og Oplevelser*, he mentioned the second meeting briefly, noting, "At jeg ogsaa denne Gang søgte op til Jens Peter Pedersen i Ilbjærge, kan ikke undre nogen, og det var en meget rig Høst, jeg ogsaa denne Gang fik hos ham" [That I made my way up to Jens Peter Pedersen in Ilbjerger that time as well should not come as a surprise to anyone, and it was a very rich harvest that I got from him that time as well] (MO vol. 3, 500).

Jens Peter's second session was nearly twice as long as the first. Since the two sessions took place only several weeks apart, it is likely that the first visit jogged Jens Peter's memory, and encouraged him to tell more of the stories that he knew. He probably also realized that in Tang Kristensen he had a willing audience for his stories, and that through these interactions his own status as a person knowledgeable about

local history would increase. This increased attention might translate into increased business: perhaps people would think of him if they needed their spinning wheel repaired or a new pair of clogs.

Third and Fourth Meetings

Although Tang Kristensen met with Jens Peter a total of four times, the third meeting was during one of Tang Kristensen's photographic excursions with Peter Olsen, in August of 1895. The fourth meeting occurred several years later, in June of 1898. This trip was again one of Tang Kristensen's longer forays, and took him, over the course of nearly three weeks, from Taps, near Kolding in the south, to the very northern tip of Jutland, Skagen. As with the trip in 1893, this trip was unusually productive. Tang Kristensen met and collected from forty-three informants, whose records spanned a total of one hundred and seventy-four pages in his field diaries. Amazingly, nearly one eighth of those pages can be attributed to Jens Peter.

When Tang Kristensen made it to Ilbjerger Huse where Jens Peter lived, he was not sure that he would be able to meet with his star informant, since Jens Peter was not at home and the weather was bad. Tang Kristensen continued on to Lørslev, and the skies opened up once again. In *Minder og Oplevelser*, he wrote that Jens Peter showed up nonetheless:

Derfra gik jeg over til Lørslev og tog Vejen om ad Rokkedrejerens Jens Peder Pedersen, men han var ikke hjemme. Jeg fik dog talt med et Kvindfolk der oppe i et af Husene og bad hende sige til ham, at jeg gik ned til Lærer G. P. Andersen og vilde gjerne tale

med ham. En Tid efter, at jeg var kommen til Lørslev, kom han virkelig, og det var endda øsende Regnvejr, og han var gennemvaad (MO 4, 163).

[From there, I went over to Lørslev and took the road past spinning wheel turner Jens Peder Pedersen, but he wasn't home. I did talk to a woman up there in one of the houses and asked her to tell him that I was going down to Teacher G. P. Andersen and wanted to talk to him. A little while after I'd gotten to Lørslev, he really showed up, and it was still pouring rain, and he was drenched.]

Despite being soaked, Jens Peter did not miss a beat with his storytelling, and Tang Kristensen later wrote:

Nu begyndte han at fortælle, og jeg skrev, og saadan blev vi ved til langt ud paa Aftenen. Ja, han var utrættelig. Det var ligefrem forunderligt, som den Mand kunde fortælle. Jeg blev hos Andersen om Natten og tænkte meget paa Jens Peter. Jeg frygtede ligefrem for, at han skulde faa en Sygen paa Halsen, men han klagede sig ikke (MO 4, 163).

[Now he began to tell, and I wrote, and we kept up like that long out into the evening. Yes, he was tireless. It was downright strange how that man could tell. I stayed the night at Andersen's place and thought quite a bit about Jens Peter. I was downright

worried that he'd get a throat infection but
he didn't complain.]

Tang Kristensen's last remarks are interesting, as they reveal his ever-increasing concern with the storytellers as individuals. Jens Peter was remarkably talkative that day, telling nearly fifty legends.

Notes

¹ The earlier spelling of Ilbjerger huse was Ilbjærge huse, and Tang Kristensen used this spelling in his notes, recordings and memoirs.

² The church baptism was recorded as taking place on November 6, 1836.

³ The 1890 census listed two other people living with him: Jens Christiansen, age 86, and his wife Inger Marie Hansen, age 83.

⁴ She managed to get identical grades to Jens Peter: "udmærket godt" [excellent] in knowledge, and "meget godt" for behavior.

⁵ Although the annotation "enkemand" [widower] was used in census records, its use was inconsistent and widowers were often listed as "ugift."

⁶ Laurids was born March 25, 1887.

⁷ The stamps in question must be the six-cent Garfield stamp, which were less common in the United States as well. Forty-five million of the six-cent stamps were issued compared to the five billion one-cent stamps issued at the same time.

⁸ Or so many thought—Laurids, his son, was obviously his closest heir, and had the most legitimate claim to the proceeds of the sale of his property.

⁹ This latter feature makes interpretation of the letters difficult.

¹⁰ Hjørring was not added to the railway net until 1913, and Hirtshals had to wait even longer, until 1925. A private railway, from Hjørring to Hørby, along with the Hjørring-Åbybro line, was also established in 1913—this line went through Lørslev and Tårs, but was abandoned in 1953.

¹¹ His son, Niels Neergård, later the leader of *Venstre*, was briefly the prime minister of the country during the Easter crisis of 1920.

¹² The first of these major incentives came on the heels of the Three Year's War, when returning veterans were offered smallholdings at favorable rates. The next incentive was based on the pressing need to increase arable land by converting former heath to fertile soil. Plots of land on the heath were once again sold at favorable rates, with the stipulation that the purchaser had to work the land for several years before selling. The cotters' law (*busmandslov*) from 1899 was an important piece of legislation that made the transition from pure day laborer (*daglejer*) to cotter (*busmand*) significantly easier, yet did not guarantee a concomitant rise in economic status with the acquisition of property. As in previous programs, state loans were offered to rural dwellers to establish new smallholdings, on as little as four to eight acres of land; twenty thousand of these so-called national smallholdings (*statsbusmandsbrug*) shot up across the country. For the most part, the plots were far too small to support a family, and contributed to the ongoing need for *busmand* to work as day laborers. In 1919, the law was amended to require that any such new smallholdings be able to support a family; as a result of this revision to the law, another eight thousand smallholdings were established.

¹³ This regulation was finally repealed in 1920 (Steensberg 1964, vol. 2, 531).

¹⁴ A more exhaustive analysis of Jens Peter's repertoire can be found in my earlier study of legend tradition in Denmark (Tangherlini 1994, 281-314).

¹⁵ The records from this field trip cover two hundred and fifteen pages in Tang Kristensen's field diaries, and the trip stands as one of Tang Kristensen's single most productive excursions.

10

(Ane) Margrete Jensdatter: Old Age and Rural Poverty

(Ane) Margrete Jensdatter was born poor, grew up poor and died poor.¹ Tang Kristensen provided the following short biography of her in *Jyske Almueliv*:

Margrete Jensdatter er født i Skødstrup nord for Århus den 22. september 1813. Hendes fader hed Jens Hansen og var skomager og husmand. Bedstefaderen var ansat ved hoffet, og hendes fader var legebarn med kong Frederik den Sjette. Så blev han oplært til skomagerprofessionen og rejste på håndværket. Altså kom han også til udlandet, og da det var svære krigstider, kom han med i mange krige. Omsider kom han hjem til Danmark, kom til Århus og bosatte sig så i Skjødstrup. Kammerherren på Vosnæsgård gav ham jord til at bygge på, og så blev han gift med kammerherrens kokkepige. Han stod sig godt med dem på gården, og havde hele tiden deres arbejde. Særlig udmærkede han sig ved at have mange bøger og være så god til at fortælle. Han fortalte så forskrækkelig mange historier om forgjorte

prinsesser og kunde en masse gamle viser. Nu har Margrete boet i Mejlby i 64 år. Hun blev gift, da hun var 30 år, med indsidder Kristen Jensen Ottosen, og har nu (1895) været enke i 26 år. Hun har haft 6 børn, hvoraf de 4 endnu er levende. Endnu er hun så rask, at hun fornylig gik til Randers og tilbage på én dag og var blot dagen efter noget stivbenet. I fjor var hun på høstarbejde 7 halve og 3 hele dage, og i år har hun været ude at luge roer og tage kløver fra. Hun har aldrig været syg undtagen én gang, kolden ryst hende nogle fælle gange, og så forleden år, hun havde influenza. I mange år har hun gået omkring som hvedebrøds-kone, og går stadig på arbejde, når nogen vil have hende. Hun får nu 130 kr. årlig i alderdomsforsørgelse og kommer da ret pænt ud af det. Hendes viser og historier har hun også lært af omstrefjende kræmmere, der kom til den gård, hvor hun tjente, og lå om natten, for der havde de meget deres tilhold. Hun var jo så nem til at lære, og sad og hørte dem fortælle om aftenen, og om morgenen gav de hende desuden 4 skilling for at smøre deres støvler, så hun havde god lige af de folk. Hendes moder, Birte Nielsdatter døde, da hun var i hendes fjerde år. Flere af hendes æventyr er optegnede af Lærer J. Jakobsen i Mejlby og trykte i "Skattegraveren" (JAT vol. 6, 287-8).

[Margrete Jensdatter was born in Skjødstrup north of Århus on September 22, 1813. Her

father was named Jens Hansen, and was a cobbler and a cotter. Her grandfather was employed by the court, and her father was a playmate of King Frederik the Sixth. He was trained as a cobbler and traveled off to ply this trade. He wound up going abroad and, since there were a lot of wars at the time, he participated in a lot of wars. After a while he came back to Denmark, he came to Århus, and settled in Skjødstrup. The chamberlain at Vosnæsgård gave him some land to build on, and then he married the chamberlain's cook. He had good relationships with the people at the farm, and he always got work from them. He was unusual in that he had a lot of books, and was very good at telling stories. He told an incredible number of stories about cursed princesses and knew a lot of old ballads. Margrete has now lived in Mejlby for sixty-four years. She married day laborer (*indsidder*) Kristen Jensen Ottosen when she was thirty years old, and now, in 1895, she has been a widow for twenty-six years. She had six children, four of whom are still alive. She is still so healthy that she recently walked to Randers and back in one day and was only a bit stiff in her legs the next day. Last year, she worked seven half and three whole days during the harvest, and this year she has been out weeding beets and pulling up clover. She has never been sick, except for once when she was racked with shivers, and then the year before last she had influenza. She worked for many years as a

wheatbread woman, and she still goes to work when people want her. She now receives 130 crowns a year in old age assistance and she comes out of that quite well. She learned her ballads and her stories from wandering peddlers who came to the farm where she worked, and they stayed there at night because they often visited there. She was so easy to teach and she sat and listened to them tell at night, and the next morning they'd give her four shillings as well to put fat on their boots, and so she got quite a bit out of those people. Her mother, Birte Nielsdatter, died when she was four years old. Many of her fairy tales were recorded by Teacher J. Jakobsen of Mejlby and published in *Skattegraveren*.]

Margrete's grandfather and father's nested biography, telling of their friendship with Danish royalty, sounds suspiciously like a fairy tale. It should be no surprise that Margrete, like her father, was remarkably adept at telling fairy tales. The closeness she suggests between her father and the six year younger King Frederik can also be seen as a symbolic expression of the warmth that many rural Danes felt for the King, for it was he who eliminated the much-hated *stavnshånd*. It also makes for a good story. Beyond her father's skill at storytelling, it is worth noting his apparently extensive (at least by rural standards) library, an indication that reading was an important part of Margrete's early childhood.

Family Background

To say that Margrete came from poverty and remained mired in poverty her entire life would not be an understatement. But it would also be misleading. Poverty spanned a wide economic range, from the absolutely destitute to those simply getting by, and had many different faces. Margrete was certainly poor for much of her life, but by combining public old age support payments with occasional day labor in the fields and rent from lodgers, the last years of her life were on the more comfortable end of the spectrum of rural poverty. As far as income was concerned, Tang Kristensen felt that, “hun ... kommer da ret pænt ud af det” [she comes out of it quite well]. The same cannot be said for the beginning of her life, which was marked by economic and social uncertainty. Seen retrospectively, then, Margrete’s economic and social trajectory traces a slightly upward curve. However surprising as it may sound, her life can be seen as an example of a best-case scenario for women born onto the lowest social and economic rungs in the mid-nineteenth century. For many others on these lowest rungs, the trajectory was plainly downward.

Piecing together Margrete’s life is difficult, given the scarcity of records concerning her and her parents. But that very scarcity confirms the marginal nature of her existence, a marginality based both on gender and economic class. The best—and only records—that attest to Margrete’s life, apart from Tang Kristensen’s recordings of her stories, are the census and church book records. Like so many of her cohort, without the fortuitous intervention of Tang Kristensen, she would have been utterly forgotten, another one of the many creative yet poverty stricken individuals who lived their lives in anonymity and whose existence was barely recorded by the emerging bureaucracies of the late nineteenth century.

The very beginning of Margrete's life was difficult, born as she was to a single mother. Although "illegitimacy" was not uncommon in Denmark in the early nineteenth century, and did not carry with it overwhelming social stigma for either parent or child, it still meant poorer nutrition and fewer opportunities (later schooling, earlier work) for the child. Most women eventually married the father of their children (or a man who agreed to be named as the father of the children), as did Margrete's mother, and this could mitigate the most pressing aspects of the poverty associated with households headed by single women. In a new age where self sufficiency had become the norm, as opposed to the closely circumscribed communities prevalent during the manorial period a century earlier, it was impossible to run even the smallest household without at least two adults, and so even single parents with children were desirable spouses. Although most single parent households were headed by a woman, the high rate of maternal death in childbirth (a phenomenon that Tang Kristensen had experienced first hand) also meant that there were households in which children lived with a single father. Most men who found themselves in this position quickly hired housekeepers or entered into marriage agreements to bring stability to the household. It is unclear whether Margrete's father followed this pattern when his second wife Bodil died, or whether he soldiered on alone.

Margrete's father, Jens Hansen, was born in 1762, and spent most of his early adulthood as a hired hand. As with all young rural men, he was conscripted into the army, appearing in the 1787 census as both a hired hand and a "land soldat"—a conscript—living at a farm in Råby (Råby sogn, Gjerlev herred, Randers amt). Under the estate bondage (*stavnshånd*), all men living in rural areas between the ages of four and forty were bound to their birth manor, and could only leave with the permission of the manor lord. They had to be listed on

the local enlistment rolls (*lægdsruller*) and young men were conscripted from these rolls into the national militia (*landmiliti*), generally serving six to eight year stints. For every sixty barrels of assessed *hartkorn* value, the manor had to provide one soldier.² During their service, the men continued in their employ at the farms, but were required to muster for military exercises every Sunday at the church, prior to services. The soldiers were commanded by mercenary German officers who were renowned for being cruel and for screaming at their charges in barely intelligible (at least for the Danish conscripts) German.

Jens may have been conscripted as early as age twenty, around 1782, six years before the *stavnshånd* was eliminated. In 1788, the conscription of soldiers changed from one based on manorial tax assessments to a more standard one based on population, but military service was still reserved only for peasants. This reform was part of a larger reform of the Danish military, and the number of conscripts jumped enormously to replace the mostly German mercenaries that the Danish Crown had employed previously to act as the first line army. Despite what Ane Margrete had said in her autobiographical comments, Jens would have escaped anything approaching combat during his six-year army stint, as Denmark was not involved in any major wars until several decades later. The only combat engagement of Danish troops during the last decades of the eighteenth century was in 1788, when the Danes were forced into battle with the Swedes at Kvistumbro near Gothenburg in Sweden. The battle lasted a single day and was the only battle of the war.³

Jens appears again in the 1801 census, at that point married to Maren Sørensdatter, his first wife. Neither the Skødstrup church books nor the Råby church books include a record of their marriage, and so it is possible that the two returned to Maren's birth parish, wherever that might have

been, to get married. Although the census records provide but scant information, Jens is listed as a smallholder without any land (*indsidder*) and a cobbler. Because he is no longer listed as a soldier, one can assume that he was no longer active in the military. Maren is listed simply as his wife. At the time, both were thirty-nine years old and they had no children, an unusual state of affairs for a married couple that old. It is possible, although not terribly likely given Jens's military service, that they had had children who by then were grown and had left home.

If the story that Margrete recounts about Vosnæsgård in her biography is accurate, Maren would have been the cook at Vosnæsgård, and the house that Jens owned would have been the one built on land he received from the manor. Another possibility is that Jens received his land from Vosnæsgård later, perhaps around the time that he married his second wife, Bodil Nielsdatter. His marriage to Bodil probably came soon after the death of Maren, if he followed the prevalent patterns of the time. Unfortunately, it is impossible to ascertain when Maren died. To confuse matters further, it is unclear when and in what capacity Jens served at Vosnæsgård. Since he owned a house when he lived with Maren, he probably worked as a day laborer at the manor, and not as a hired hand. It is also unclear when and how he learned to be a cobbler. He is listed in the census records as a cobbler (*skomager*) and not a clog maker (*træskomand*), a distinction of some importance, since cobblers were only allowed to work outside of market towns with special dispensation from the county commissioner (*amtmand*). Like many day laborers who had a skill, this sideline (*bierhverv*) would have provided him and his family with a crucial second or bridge income, leveling the otherwise uneven cash flow that came solely from day labor.⁴

Vosnæsgård was one of the largest local employers, situated nine kilometers to the east of Mejlby, and

approximately four and a half kilometers north of Skødstrup. It was a largish manor farm, and employed over thirty hired hands in 1845. It figures prominently in several of Margrete's story even though the family background that Margrete proposes—a background that is nearly impossible to confirm, yet one that includes fanciful brushes with not only the aristocracy but also royalty—is suspect, even if parts of it are plausible. The chamberlain (*kammerherre*) who gave her father the land for his smallholding could have been Poul Rosenørn Gersdorff (d. 1810), who was both diocesan councilor (*stiftamtmand*) and privy councilor (*gehejmekonferensråd*). A far more likely candidate benefactor is his successor, Councilor (*kammerråd*) Jørgen Mørch Secher, who purchased the manor in 1808. It was not unusual for a manor lord to give loyal employees land, in an effort to keep them nearby once they started raising families. A cynical interpretation of the partitioning of the manorial fields proposes that the landowners agreed to it in part to keep a large, well trained, yet poor, workforce close at hand. Secher did parcel out many of Vosnæsgård's fields, and this supports the theory that Jens received the land from him. Irrespective of the veracity of this part of Margrete's story, her earliest life history as she tells it should be seen as the narrative refuge of a child—and later an adult—who grew up without her mother amid abject poverty, but was steeped in the tales of an indulgent father eager to entertain his daughter with fanciful descriptions of distant lands, magical encounters, princes and princesses.

(Ane) Margrete was born on September 22, 1813 in Skødstrup town, the daughter of Bodil (Bodild; also called Birte) Nielsdatter and Jens. Bodil died only five years later, on July 17, 1818, at the age of thirty-three, when Margrete was only four years old. It is impossible to ascertain with any certainty when, or if, Bodil and Jens got married (although if they did get married, it was after Margrete's birth), and how

many brothers and sisters—as well as stepbrothers and sisters, if any—Margrete had, as the census skips several important years.⁵ To complicate matters, the church books for Skødstrup parish are incomplete from 1809 to 1814, exactly the years in question.

Margrete's mother Bodil was born and raised in Skødstrup. She had an older sister Maren, who married and settled in Skødstrup, and an older brother Las, who probably died in childhood. By the time she was sixteen, her father had acquired a smallholding with land, probably as a result of the partitioning of the manor farms at the end of the eighteenth century. Her mother, however, was dead, her older sister had married and moved away from home, and her brother was either dead or working in a different district. To get a little extra money, she and her father took in an old, demented lodger, who was supported through the local poverty assistance rolls. One can only surmise that Bodil left home soon after her sixteenth birthday to work at Vosnæsgård as a kitchen girl, where she met Jens. In all likelihood, after the change in owners at Vosnæsgård, she and Jens moved into their new house built on land granted to them by Councilor Secher.⁶ Since they were not yet married (and perhaps never got married), they probably had a legally binding engagement contract, which would allow them to live as husband and wife.

Although it is hard to piece together Margrete's early childhood, apart from the fact that she lived with her father, there are occasional pieces of information that help locate her in the social landscape. In 1828, she was confirmed in Skødstrup church, and was listed there as the "illegitimate" (*uægte*) daughter of cobbler and smallholder Jens Hansen and "the woman" (*fruentimmer*) Bodil Nielsdatter. She received a relatively high grade (*meget godt*) for her knowledge of the catechism, but only a fair grade (*godt*) for her behavior. That she managed to get confirmed suggests two things: first, that

she could read (not surprising since her father apparently owned many books) and second, that she must have been in regular attendance at the local school up through her fifteenth year. The church records also indicate that she was vaccinated against pox in 1818. Childhood vaccination was part of a nationwide effort to use the parish minister's local knowledge and social networks to insure that children were, if not well-cared for, at least protected against the very worst illness for which there was a vaccine, namely small pox. As with most poor girls her age, Margrete immediately entered the workforce after her confirmation.

The next bureaucratic record related to Margrete is a brief entry in the departure list (*afgangsliste*) for 1829 for Skødstrup parish, where the minister recorded that she had left the parish for Brandstrup in Hjortshøj parish; while she does not appear on the arrival list (*tilgangsliste*) for that parish, this is not surprising, as ministers were relatively lax in using these lists. Many ministers felt that the lists were a throwback to the *stavnslænd*, and while they were an important resource for establishing questions of residency, particularly in regards to poverty assistance, the overworked ministers had little motivation for keeping these records as strictly as birth, marriage and death records (Nørr 1981).

Margrete apparently moved around quite a bit within the local district during the next several years, appearing in the 1834 census as a hired girl at a farm in Haarup in Todbjerg parish. Her future husband, Christen Jensen, was, at that time, a hired hand at another farm—this one a copyhold—in Balle, in Mørke parish. By 1840, Christen had moved to a farm in Mejlby, working for the widow Ane Pedersdatter on her farm, while Margrete had moved to the farm “Dyrsgaard” in Mejlby, one of the larger farms in the parish, and worked as one of the six hired hands at the farm. Since leaving home eleven years earlier, she had become a weaver and accordingly, the

census listed her as a weaver (*væverske*) rather than simply as a hired girl (*tjenestepige*). This change in status represented an incremental step up on the lowest rungs of the economic and social ladders, and guaranteed Margrete a source of stable income.

By 1845, Margrete had met Christen, since the census lists her as living in Mejlby along with her son Jens Hansen Christensen, who was born on October 26, 1841. Her housing situation was clearly worse than before. She may have been forced off the farm where she worked once she had become pregnant, because the census listed her as living with a cobbler, his wife and their son who were receiving poverty assistance. It is likely that these two families were housed in one of the local poor houses (*fattighuse*), houses set aside by the parish for people in need as part of the emerging poverty assistance programs. These houses were ramshackle affairs, usually acquired by the parish in the aftermath of bankruptcies or foreclosures. Margrete was still listed as a weaver in the census, but clearly the birth of her child out of wedlock had started her on a downward trajectory even from her fairly low starting point. Importantly, Margrete was able to halt this downwards slide.

In the church records, Margrete indicated that Christen was the father of her boy, a recognition which followed strict dictates requiring women to reveal the identity of the father of a child born out of wedlock. This requirement was primarily intended to prevent these children from becoming the financial responsibility of the parish if at all possible. But this formal recognition also meant that the future for the little family began to look better, and Margrete and Christen were engaged in April 1846, most likely after Christen had been able to save enough money to acquire a house. On June 20, 1846, the two were married in Skødstrup and moved to a small house without land. The 1850 census lists Christen as

an *indsidder*, a term used for tenants and owners of small houses that had no land, and as a hired hand.⁷ By this point, they had had another son, Jens Christensen, also out of wedlock. The church records in January 1846 note, “moderen ugift fruentimmer og væverske i Mejlby, som udlagde den samme ungkarl Christen Jensen som var fader til hendes første drengebarn” [the mother, an unmarried woman and weaver in Mejlby, who identified as the father the same bachelor, Christen Jensen, who was father to her first son]. The two boys were joined in 1849 by a sister, Ane Magdalene Christensen, in 1851, by another brother, Martinus Christensen and, in 1854, by yet another brother, Christian Christensen. Christian died in April 1855, only thirty-two weeks old. In 1857, the church records record yet another birth that, despite some ambiguity, appears to be another son, also named Christian Christensen. He too died, this time after only eleven weeks. While a tragedy for the family, the deaths of these two infant boys were not uncommon in rural Denmark. Poor nutrition, hygiene, and shelter among the poorest families guaranteed that the infant mortality rates would remain high up through the beginning of the twentieth century (Løkke 2002). Even though infant mortality was high, the emotional trauma of seeing one’s children die was immense, and the sorrow associated with these little lives cut short resonates throughout Margrete’s storytelling.

Despite the poverty and sorrow that marked their lives, the house afforded Margrete, Christen and their family a degree of stability, and acted as an excellent base from which the children could step up onto the next higher rungs of the economic and social ladder. The oldest boy Jens eventually became a master joiner, a major increase in his social and economic status. Tragically, the stability that Margrete and her family enjoyed with the house did not last, as Christen died in 1870 at the age of fifty-five. The church records give no

indication of the cause of death, but early death was not uncommon in the late nineteenth century, particularly among day laborers. Again poor nutrition, coupled to exhausting work in harsh weather, pervasive alcoholism, and infection all contributed to this state of affairs (Løkke 1997). By 1880, Margrete was living with her son Jens and his family in a house that he had acquired. It seems likely that her son had sold the house that his mother had inherited from her husband to purchase the new house, and had made a subsequent *aftøgt* agreement with her. Records from the cadastral survey (*matrikelstyrelse*) reveal that, in 1874, Jens established a house with a miniscule valuation of 0-0-0-3/4. The house had a small garden, and the plot of land covered a total area of three hundred three square meters (approx. 3,030 square feet). The house was in the eastern part of the town, just west of the road, and is shown as house 32 (*matrikel 32*) on a map from 1876.

By 1890 Jens and his family had decided to move, perhaps to a more spacious house. Margrete found herself once again living with people who were not in her immediate family, but this may not have been a drastic turn for the worse. Her housemates were a joiner and his family, and it is likely that the joiner was one of her son's journeymen. His residence in Margrete's house probably reflected an incremental increase in her standard of living, since he would have paid her rent. By 1901, things had changed once again. The joiner and his family had moved out, and a day laborer and his family had moved in. At least with this change in lodgers, Margrete had someone her own age living with her, as the lodgers included an elderly widow like herself. Margrete died on May twenty-eighth, 1902, at the age of eighty-eight. According to the probate records, there was nothing in her estate to be distributed. Ownership of the house was not in

question, because her son Jens owned it, the result of the earlier *aftægt* agreement.

The Local Environment

Mejlby (Øster Lisbjerg district, Randers county) is six kilometers west of Hornslet in a hilly area. The highest point in the parish is the ninety-three meter high Bastruphøj, and there are several small forests along its eastern border. Mejlby is the only town of any considerable size in the parish and, at the time Tang Kristensen visited Margrete, even Mejlby was nothing more than a small collection of houses, a church, a co-op, and a few craftsmen. The settlement dates back to at least 1300, when it was named Methalby. The only noteworthy historical aspect of Mejlby is that Erik Ploughpenny's daughters inherited Mejlby as part of a larger estate after his death (~1263). This estate was later deeded to Øm monastery, a large and famous Cistercian monastery (Trap 1958, 1059-61).⁸ Otherwise, Mejlby, like so many other small towns in Jutland, was of little economic, political, historical or religious note: it was neither a station town, nor a particularly noteworthy stop on the mail route; it was not an unusually productive center for agriculture; and it did not play a significant role in any of the myriad political changes that swept the country during the nineteenth century.

There were several large farms in the parish, but nothing approaching the large manor farms found in other parishes in Jutland. The largest farms included the *proprietær* farms Krannestrup (13.5 barrels of *hartkorn*), Ogstrup (13 barrels *hartkorn*), Bygballe (12.9 barrels *hartkorn*), and Kalstrup (between 6.5 and 17 barrels *hartkorn*). This last farm was partitioned in 1915. Other farms included Mejlgård and Dyrsgård. The nearest manor farm (*gods*) was Rosenholm, in

nearby Halling parish.⁹ Vosnæsgård in neighboring Skødstrup parish, however, figured to a much greater degree in Margrete's storytelling.

Vosnæsgård belonged, at the end of the fifteenth century, to Oluf Jepsen. By the turn of that century, the farm had passed into the possession of Ebbe Strangesen and, after his death, it passed into the ownership of his brother Claus Strangesen. In the seventeenth century, the farm came into the possession of the Gyldenstjerne and Rosencrantz families, perhaps two of the most powerful aristocratic families in Danish history. In 1668, Eric Rosenkrantz at Rosenholm was granted an independent judicial district (*birk*) at Vosnæsgård, which continued to hold juridical power until 1819. By that time, the *birk* of Vosnæsgård and Rosenholm had been folded into one large jurisdiction. Vosnæsgård was a large enterprise: when Iver Rosenkrantz deeded the farm to Joachim Gerdendorff, the farm alone was valued at seventy barrels of *hartkorn*. The value of the property that tithed to the manor was a whopping five hundred fourteen barrels. Later in 1808, when it was sold to Secher, this latter valuation had increased to six hundred twelve barrels. As mentioned, Secher partitioned the farm, and when he sold the farm to Ditmar Frederik Ladiges in 1811 for 550,000 rixdollars, the valuation of the farms tithing to the manor had dropped by more than half to two hundred seventy-four barrels.

Together with Todbjerg parish, Mejlby parish constituted a pastorate under the deanship of Øster Lisbjerg. From 1884 until 1914, the dean was Jørgen Gad Olsen Brix, who also served as the minister in Skjødstrup parish. He was deeply involved in questions concerning education, and was a strong and outspoken minister (Grohshenning and Hauch-Fausbøll 1932, 127-8). Although Margrete was confirmed in Skjødstrup, it was long before Brix's tenure. Far less is known about the ministers in the parish who presided over her birth

and christening (Henrik Peter Rattrup, minister 1779-1822) and her confirmation (Barthold Larsen, minister 1822-1835). The same also holds true for Mejlby, a call that seemed to be of little or no attraction. When Margrete arrived in Mejlby around 1840, the minister was Jacob Hee (minister 1828-1853). He was succeeded by Frederik Christian Gleerup Haar (1853-1867), who was succeeded by Carl Peder August Kofod (minister 1867-1881). The town church, old as it is, was of little note and was more or less completely rebuilt during Kofod's ministry. The church was rededicated in 1874. Kofod left Mejlby in 1881, and was succeeded by H. Vilh. Bülow, who left in 1890. Kofod and Bülow were both from wealthy families. From 1890-1903, the minister was H. Andreas Gerhard Gad, a grocer from Helsingør.

Mejlby, unlike many small rural towns, had a school dating back to the early eighteenth century. In 1717 and 1718, King Frederik IV established a series of "cavalry districts" (*rytterdistrikter*) on the royal estates. Each of these districts, in turn, was to have a school for the children of the peasants living on the estate. Since Mejlby belonged to one of these estates (Dronningborg in Randers county), it became the site of one of the two hundred and forty "cavalry schools" (*rytterskoler*). In Dronningborg rytterdistrikt, there were a total of ten schools, the first four established in 1722 (Spentrup, Borup, Gimming and Harritslev), and the next six established in 1723 (Ødum, Voldum, Raasted, Hallendrup, Kristrup and Mejlby) (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 127). The last of the teachers for the local cavalry schools, Jens Sørensen, became the first teacher for the local public school (*folkeskole*) once the school law was passed in 1814. He remained as teacher in Mejlby until 1865, and was followed by Jens Jakobsen, who stayed in the post until 1907.¹⁰ This succession is noteworthy since it means that only two teachers taught all the youth of

Mejlby during the most tumultuous century in modern Danish history.

The constancy of teachers in the school also meant that one of the most contentious issues for most parish boards was essentially absent in Mejlby. In fact, the only real issues that the teachers brought before the board during the course of the century concerned the repair and modernization of the schoolhouse (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 134-8). The local parish board, consequently, could concern itself with other matters.

The parish board, like all parish boards, was established in the wake of an 1841 ordinance that required that local governing boards (initially called *sogneforstanderskab*) be established in each rural community. The Mejlby-Todbjerg board was, like so many of these boards, comprised almost entirely of farm owners. In addition, it had two ex-officio members, Pastor Hee from Todbjerg and Agent Nyholm from Skaarupgård, one of the largest manor farms in Todbjerg parish. Even though the board's opinions were strongly weighted toward the landowners, the discussions and the decisions of the board had significant impact on the contours of daily life for everyone in the parish, including day laborers and craftsmen such as Margrete. She may not have been able to influence the board members directly, but decisions they made on questions of infrastructure, taxation and assistance were certainly felt in her daily life, some for the better, and some for the worse. In turn, her stories reflect an awareness of these decisions, reveal her opinions on these changes in the social and political landscapes and may, to some degree, have fed back into the decision making process. Politicians are loath to ignore the sentiments of their local constituents.

One of the more pressing matters for the parish board—as it was for all parish boards—was the disposition and

organization of poverty assistance in the parish (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 105). The parish districts were largely constrained by national legislation concerning the parameters of local poverty assistance, yet discussions of whom qualified for assistance and the nature of that assistance were often debated by the parish board. The decision of whether to appoint a beggar bailiff (*tiggerfoged*) also accrued to the parish board (Jørgensen 1940). Although protocols from the parish board for the last decades of the nineteenth century were lost in a fire, the protocols for the first three and a half decades, through 1878, still exist. These protocols offer an interesting glimpse into the pressing issues of the day for small towns such as Mejlby and scores like it around Jutland.

On December 2, 1859, the parish board agreed that the total amount of poverty assistance was to be set at four hundred thirty rixdollars or approximately six hundred forty-five crowns. In addition, in-kind donations of grain, the most significant component of poverty assistance in mid-century, were calculated against assessed *hartkorn* value. For farm owners, each barrel of *hartkorn* was taxed one quarter measure of rye and one quarter measure of barley. In addition, it was assessed a monetary tax of three marks. For smallholders, the taxation was set at eight shillings per measure of *hartkorn*. For those who did not have property, the following rules were established: craftsmen and people with other commercial undertakings were evaluated as best possible; for hired hands, farmhands were taxed one mark, hired girls and muckers twelve shillings and hired boys eight shillings (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 100-101). In addition to the local monetary and in-kind collections, Jens Iversen Lang established a fund of five hundred crowns for the local poor in 1844. In 1895, Niels Jensen and his wife established a secondary fund of one thousand crowns. Neither of these funds was significant by itself (even though taken together they more than doubled

the parish monetary set-aside), but the funds did offer the parish flexibility in distributing monetary assistance. Despite the charitable intentions of the donors, the funds also reflected just how small the amount of private philanthropy dedicated to poverty assistance really was, and echoed the general consensus in parliament that private support would always be inadequate to address the needs of the poor.

In mid-century, the board was focused on two major events: first, the quartering of occupying troops, which placed a significant strain on the local farmers, and second, the dissolution of villeinage.¹¹ The local parish board, along with a royal agent, was charged with the valuation of the villeinage and the appropriate monetary compensation to the manor farms for the loss of this work. Other items for the parish board included discussions of noise ordinances since young men and women were apparently disturbing the peace at night (1859), a request from the district that Mejlby purchase firefighting equipment (a request that the parish board denied), and a request by the minister for more sports fields near the schools (1859) (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 100).

The parish board was also charged with the valuation of real property for taxation purposes, an undertaking that led to numerous complaints from local citizens in 1865. The actual taxation of various people in Todbjerg-Mejlby provides interesting insight into wealth distribution in the area—the highest taxed were Forpagter Helms (1900 rixdollars) and Proprietær Kabell at Edelslund (1850 rixdollars) (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 102-3). The miller at Todbjerg mill was taxed four hundred forty rixdollars, the tailor three hundred thirty rixdollars, while the farmers who did not reach the level of *proprietær* or *forpagter*, were taxed in a range from four hundred rixdollars to one thousand rixdollars.¹² These highest taxed individuals were a small handful of no more than seventeen individuals. In 1873, taxation was rationalized and the

previous emphasis on property tax was shifted more toward income tax. Wage earners were taxed at a rate of one percent, while landowners were taxed at a rate of seven rixdollars, two marks per barrel of assessed *harkorn* value (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 103).

Transportation infrastructure was one of the parish board's most important topics of concern. In 1841, national legislation was enacted that led to sweeping changes in the way that roads were built and maintained. Prior to that time, all peasants were required to work on behalf of the local municipalities to develop, repair and maintain the roadways. With the new ordinances, this work was contracted out to the greatest extent possible and, as a result, larger scale and more efficient projects could be attempted. In 1843, the Mejlby parish board decided that many of the local main roads needed significant improvement, and they launched a campaign to widen them, cover them with gravel, clean the drainage ditches and build stone curbs. Along with improvements to the roads such as these, the advent of rail transportation and the extension of rail lines into Jutland represented a major change in transportation infrastructure.

The rail line built north and east from Århus toward Grenå in 1876 passed a good seven kilometers to the east of Mejlby. This routing was not initially going to be the case. In 1874, the parish board was invited to participate in discussions concerning the route for the rail line, and they sent as their representative Minister Kofod. The parish council had offered to pay five thousand rixdollars toward the establishment of a line from Århus to Ryomgård on the condition that a station be built in Todbjerg. In 1875, the rail commission called the first of these obligations, but the Todbjerg-Mejlby parish board responded that they would only pay the promised monies if their conditions were met. Numerous private citizens had also offered funds to the

commission on a similar basis. The rail commission balked at the parish board's request, as they had no intention of building a station in Todbjerg. Interestingly, the private individuals who had pledged funds attended a meeting to arbitrate their dispute with the railway commission, and several of them agreed to fulfill their obligations even though a station was not to be built in Todbjerg (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 104-5).

The decision by these individuals to support the rail line highlights the at times divergent interests of the community versus those of individuals. While it made little economic sense for the parish to support a line that skirted the parish, farmers on the eastern side of the parish might have felt that support of the rail line could still give them a significant economic advantage. It is also possible that the ones who capitulated to the commission's demands were cowed by its authority. The railway commission probably argued that a commitment was a commitment, conveniently overlooking their own breach of trust. In any event, the decision of the railway commission to situate the rail line and the station several kilometers to the east had a long-lasting negative impact on the development of the parish.

Rural poverty

Although only a few miles separated Mejlby and Hornslet Mark, where Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter lived, there was a world of difference between the two women's lives. For much of her life, Margrete was perched precariously on the border between self-sufficiency and real poverty, a borderline that she crossed only once during her life, but one that must have felt ever present.¹³ Even when she could support herself, her standard of living was low. Whether or not she carried the

stigma of being a recipient of parish poverty support, like all day laborers, she was poor.

The life of a single mother, reliant on day labor and piecework was grueling and terrifyingly insecure. Although Margrete did not give a detailed account of her everyday life to Tang Kristensen, one can interpolate from other contemporaneous accounts, particularly the memoirs of Karoline Graves (Graves 1921 and 1978), what it must have been like. The workday started early and ended late—in the summer, it stretched from sunrise to sundown. During harvest time, Margrete would work in the fields, mostly binding sheaves of newly harvested grain. At other times of year, she could rely on work helping with the planting or, once beets had become a common crop, weeding (Østerbye 2000, 53). Though threshing was reserved for men, Margrete could count on a fair amount of work even during the winter months since she was a weaver.¹⁴ Like most weavers, she probably had agreements with several nearby farms, particularly since most hired hands (as opposed to day laborers) were paid primarily in cloth.¹⁵ Margrete only appears to have landed on the rolls of the local poverty assistance board once in her life, a time when she was unmarried but already mother to her first child. The census for 1845 lists her living with an elderly couple and their son, who are listed as “*fattiglem*,” a standard designation for those living on poverty assistance. The house is almost certainly a parish poor house (*fattighus*), and Margrete’s presence there suggests that she had been housed there as well. Interestingly, she was not listed as a welfare recipient (*fattiglem*), and so she was probably supporting herself and her child by weaving, only receiving housing from the parish. Since she had to care for her child, she would have had little opportunity to hire herself out as a day laborer.

Up through the nineteenth century, poverty legislation was a topic of considerable debate in the parliament and the parish boards. One of the main topics of these debates concerned marriage age. Numerous proposals were floated to legislate a minimum marriage age as a means to combat the increasing phenomenon of poor families headed by young men who did not have the experience, capital, or land necessary to support their families. The legislators recognized the delicate balance between the social reality of young men and women falling in love and having children on the one hand, and the inability of young men (primarily) to secure enough capital to buy a smallholding and attain a degree of economic independence on the other hand (Jørgensen 1940). Members of parliament were keenly aware that if the minimum marriage age was set too high by legislation, the rate of illegitimate births would increase, and precipitate a worsening of exactly the problem that they were trying to mitigate. The debates concerning this problem continued long up through the century, with the inadvertent result that the number of illegitimate births remained relatively stable, and the underlying problem of unwed mothers who required assistance was not addressed in a consistent or substantive manner.

Single women with children were singled out as a particularly vexing problem, with almost everyone recognizing that these women needed compassionate and substantive assistance. This recognition of the problem and the subsequent attempts to address it were surprisingly recent additions to the debates over poverty, despite nearly a century and a half of legislation dealing with poverty assistance. Poverty assistance laws were first enacted in 1708. These early laws eliminated the earlier reliance on begging as the primary form of assistance and instituted a new policy of public assistance. But the laws were ineffective as they relied on

voluntary donations and private philanthropy. Nevertheless, the laws did set a precedent for the general contours of poverty assistance up through the early twentieth century. Most important among these precedents was the overriding concept of local assistance for the local poor (Jørgensen 1940, 5).

With the profound changes in economic organization presaged by the land reforms and the elimination of estate bondage, coupled to the increasing call for local input into domestic affairs, the Crown agreed at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the poverty assistance laws needed reform. In 1803, a new poverty assistance law was promulgated. Jørgensen sums up its impact as follows:

Det vedblev kommunens pligt at forsørge sine egne fattige, og man fastholdt at samfundet måtte komme alle til hjælp, der ikke selv kunne ernære sig. Endvidere skaffede man de nødvendige bidrag til denne forsørgelse ved at udskrive en særlig skat, der tilsyneladende var en frivillig gave, men i virkeligheden en tvungen bidrag, hvis størrelse fastsattes af det offentlige, og som kun inddrives ved udpantning (Jørgensen 1940, 40).

[It continued to be the community's responsibility to care for its own poor, and it was established that society had to help all those who could not support themselves. In addition, the necessary funds for this assistance were raised by instituting a special tax. This contribution was supposedly a voluntary gift, but, in reality, it was an

obligatory contribution, the size of which was determined by the authorities, and which could be collected by lien.]

The shift toward taxation as a means for guaranteeing a minimum revenue stream was a significant change, and had an immediate positive impact on the plight of the poor.

This initial law, however, turned out to be inefficient and, during the following decades, it was repeatedly brought up for revision, debate and attempted overhaul first by the assemblies of the estates of the realm (*stænderforsamlinger*) and later by the democratically elected parliament. When the constitution was drafted, the right to poverty assistance was included in the very body of the document: “Den, der ikke selv kan ernære sig eller sine, og hvis forsørgelse ikke påhviler nogen anden, er berettiget til hjælp af det offentlige, dog mod at underkaste sig de forpligtelser, som loven herom påbyder” [Whoever cannot support himself or his family, and whose support does not accrue to anyone else, is entitled to support from the authorities, although on the condition of accepting those obligations that the law sets forth] (chapter 8, paragraph 89). Despite these constitutional guarantees, there was little agreement on how to enact them. On the one hand, there was a widespread willingness to combat the worst aspects of poverty. On the other hand, there was an overly cautious approach to the “free rider” problem, informed by an underlying suspicion that the poor were either out to game the system or suffering from some form of moral or spiritual laxity. Accordingly, the poverty laws were remarkably strict, and often included severe limitations on civil rights in return for the meager assistance that was offered.

One of the earliest, most profound changes to the poverty laws concerned the marriage rights of those who had received poverty assistance. In 1824, on the basis of a divorce

involving a member of the military, the law governing marriage was amended so that any person who had received poverty assistance and had not repaid that assistance, had to seek permission from the local poverty assistance board before getting married. In the words of the law,

...ingen af dem, som ville indlade sig i Egteskab, nyder eller fra den Tid deres Forsørgelse som Børn ophørte, har nydt nogensomhelst urefunderet Understøttelse af Fattigvæsenet, da i modsat Fald Egteskabet ikke kan tilståedes, med mindre den administrerende Direktion for Fattigvæsenet, naar Mandspersonen er forsørgelsesberettiget i Kjøbenhavn, og ellers Sogne-Commissionen for det Fattigvæsen, hvori Manden er forsørgelsesberettiget, erklærer, at der for Fattigvæsenets Vedkommende intet findes imod samme at erindre (Jørgensen 1940, 55).

[...none of those individuals who intend to enter into matrimony who are receiving or, since the cessation of childhood benefits, have received any form of non-refunded support from the poverty assistance board, may enter into such a matrimonial arrangement unless the administrating directors of the poverty assistance board, in cases where the man is eligible for support in Copenhagen, or otherwise the parish commission of the poverty assistance board in the community where the intended man is eligible for support, declares that the poverty

assistance board has nothing against said union.]

If Margrete was a recipient of poverty assistance in 1845, the law would certainly have affected her ability to marry a year later in 1846: either she or Christen would have had to repay the obligation. The law was essentially repealed in 1857, a reform that marked the beginning of a series of debates over poverty assistance in the latter part of the century. These debates eventually led to a more progressive and nuanced approach to the complex problems of both rural poverty and an emerging urban poverty that accompanied the reorganization of the social and economic landscapes.

One of the most important changes to poverty assistance that sprang directly from these early debates in the 1860s and 1870s came at the end of the nineteenth century in the form of the old age assistance law of April 9, 1891 (*alderdomsunderstøttelsesloven af 9. april 1891*). The law was premised on an extension of the existing poverty assistance laws, and its general thrust was that any one over the age of sixty who needed help could receive public assistance without any of the impact on civil rights or property rights that followed from normal poverty assistance (Jørgensen 1940, 209). While Margrete may have missed out on some of the earlier reforms to the poverty assistance laws, she was more or less right in time for this one (give or take eighteen years). As a result, her old age was one that, “hun kom ret pænt ud af” [she came out of quite well].

As Margrete got older, her economic trajectory nudged upward, and she got further and further from the world of the destitute. She was no longer raising small children, but rather running a household along with her husband. As her children grew and left home to work or to learn a craft, the economics of the household stabilized. But the contours of

her daily life probably changed little, and the type of work she did remained constant. She continued to weave during the winter months and assist in the running of a very small farm during the other months. According to her own accounts, she also continued to work as a day laborer during the harvest, planting and weeding seasons.

When her husband died in 1870, Margrete's financial status was thrown once again into turmoil, although her son the joiner clearly came to her aid. It is probably at this time that Margrete took up work as a wheatbread woman (*hvedebroðskone*).¹⁶ As standards of living inched upward, and as the commerce laws were relaxed, bakeries began springing up outside of the market towns. While many of these were associated with mills, others were not, and were established in small villages such as Mejlby. In either case, these rural bakeries had to rely on a distribution network to get their bread and cakes to customers, and this is where the *hvedebroðskoner* came in. By 1885, Mejlby had its own bakery and the need for women to bring the bread and cakes to customers—or to sell it door-to-door—was on the rise. Margrete, who clearly was not afraid of hard work, became one of many women who either supplemented their income or derived all their income from this contract work. Because of her excellent health, she was also able to continue to work in the fields. When Margrete died soon after the turn of the century, she had managed to pull herself out of poverty, support herself and her family, and sidestep an early death, the constant companion of the lowest classes. Still, Margrete's life had no fairy tale ending.

Overview of (Ane) Margrete's Repertoire

Certain features of Margrete's repertoire stand out. She was a prolific teller of folktales, and she is included in

Holbek's study of the fairy tale (1987, 126-7). Many of her stories cross the generic divide between folktale and legend, and it can be difficult to make clear genre distinctions between some of them. She was also a good singer, although her ballad repertoire was by no means extensive.

In her legends, mound dwellers and elves play a prominent role. She also tells several stories that include the helpful guardian spirit, the *nisse*. Witches and ghosts also figure prominently in her stories, and their threat is usually counteracted by the local minister. Margrete also told stories in which cunning folk played a major role, although her attitude toward cunning folk was ambivalent. She told several stories that included extraordinary details about folk beliefs and practices. She did not tell many humorous stories, but rather tended to tell stories that explored aspects of the harshness of life in rural areas. Her fairy tales and stories of buried treasure might have offered her a narrative respite from the conditions of everyday life.

A statistical analysis of the legends in her repertoire reveals only a few departures from what one would expect for an elderly widow from the lowest economic classes of rural society (Tangherlini 1994). In particular, her legends tend to end with a positive resolution with far greater frequency than her cohort (58% as opposed to 37.8%). This positive narrative outlook aligns with the positive resolutions that one finds in fairy tale, the genre which she was most adept at telling. Ministers also appear in her legends with much greater frequency than one would expect (25.8% as opposed to 14.8%). While she used place names less frequently than other legend tellers (but only marginally so), her use of personal names was significantly greater than most (54.8% versus 31.7%). Most other elements appear with a frequency that either is close to that of the repertoires of her cohort, or

so low for all informants as to be hard to measure with any statistical precision.

First and Second Meetings—1889

Tang Kristensen first met Margrete on a trip in late 1889. The trip, which lasted from October twenty-fifth through November twenty-first, was another of his major field trips. Visiting nearly forty-five towns, his route described a rough figure eight along the east coast of Jutland, stretching from Kolding to Århus. He collected from forty-three informants, whose stories span one hundred and eighty-five pages of field notes.

Tang Kristensen was introduced to Margrete by a Teacher Jacobsen in Mejlbj, who had previously sent various recordings from Margrete for use in the journal, *Skattegraveren*. Although Margrete was a good singer and storyteller, she was not the most prolific storyteller that he encountered on the trip. Tang Kristensen did mention that she was pleasant, and that she could sing ballads: “Han var dog meget flink og viste mig hen til den gamle Margrete Jensdatter, der boede i den søndre Ende af et gammelt Hus i Byen. Af hende havde han faaet nogle Meddelelser, som han havde sendt mig, og det var særlig derfor, jeg gik til Mejlbj. Hun var helt flink at have med at gjøre, saa jeg fik af hende baade Historier og Viser” [He was nevertheless quite nice and showed me the way to old Margrete Jensdatter who lived in the southern end of an old house in town. He had gotten some recordings from her that he had sent me, and it was in fact because of that that I had gone to Mejlbj. She was very pleasant to deal with, and I got both stories and ballads from her] (MO vol. 3, 281). His second meeting with Margrete came several days later during the same field trip: “Dagen efter var jeg ude hos Rasmus

Peter Mortensen, der var Røgter paa Dyrgaard i samme Sogn, og han var helt flink til at fortælle, men havde jo ikke godt Tid til at sidde over mig. Jeg kom da tilbage til Byen og var atter inde hos gamle Margrete, der igjen havde en hel Del at meddele mig” [The next day I was out at Rasmus Peter Mortensen’s place, he was a feed master at Dyrgaard in the same parish, and he was quite willing to tell, but he did not have much time to sit with me. So I came back to town and once again went in to old Margrete who once again had a great deal to tell me] (MO 3, 281).

The two sessions, separated only by a day or two, represent a fairly exhaustive snapshot of Margrete’s repertoire at the time. The first session encouraged Margrete and, despite a rough start, a rapport developed between her and Tang Kristensen. The second session started with greater ease and Margrete was more talkative than she had been during the first session.

Third Meeting—1894

Five years passed before Tang Kristensen’s third meeting with Margrete in July, 1894. Describing this meeting, he writes, “Derfra gik jeg over til Mejlby, hvor jeg naturligvis var inde at hilse paa Lærer Jakobsen, og saa gik jeg hen til Margrete Jensdatter, der boede i den søndre Ende af et langt Hus. Hun var nu 81 Aar og var helt god til at fortælle. Hos hende fik jeg da nogle Sagn og et Æventyr, samt Træk af Almuelivet” [From there, I walked over to Mejlby where I naturally went in to greet Teacher Jakobsen, and then I walked over to visit Margrete Jensdatter, who lived in the southern end of a long house. She was eighty-one years old now and was a very good storyteller. At her place, I got some legends and fairy tales along with some descriptions of

peasant life] (MO vol. 4, 31). The trip was a short one by his standards, likely because it was during the summer months when people had less time to sit and talk to him, his route describing a small southward loop from Hadsten, south to Århus. The trip lasted no more than a week (MO vol. 4, 31), during which time he visited only six places, and collected from only seven informants.

Fourth Meeting—1895

Tang Kristensen's last meeting with Margrete came during his first photographic excursion with Peder Olsen in August, 1895. It was on this first photographic "shake down cruise," that Olsen and Tang Kristensen also photographed Rasmus Kjær and his sister, Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter. Tang Kristensen made no mention of collecting from Margrete during this visit, but did mention that "paa hende blev der ofret 2 plader" [We sacrificed two photographic plates on her] (MO vol. 4, 71).

Notes

¹ Ane Margrete appears to have dropped the use of the name "Ane," and accordingly she is referred to throughout this chapter as Margrete.

² The original value was twenty barrels of *bartkorn*. This was changed in 1733 with the establishment of the *stavnband* to sixty barrels.

³ The battle took place on September 29, 1788. If Jens Hansen was conscripted in 1782, and only served one six-year stint, he could not have participated in that battle. It was not

uncommon for soldiers to be reenlisted during the *stavnband* for up to twenty years, but this could not have applied to Jens, as the *stavnband* was eliminated by the end of his first tour of duty, and the military regulations were reformed.

⁴ For an additional discussion of the life of a day laborer, and the importance of secondary income, see the the chapter on Jens Peter Pedersen.

⁵ The census was taken in 1787, before Jens was married, again in 1801, and then it was suspended from 1801 until 1834.

⁶ Assuming that the story that Jens received land from Vosnæsgård was accurate, and the theory that the land was granted as part of the partitioning of the manor by Secher is correct.

⁷ The annotation of *indsidder og tjenestekarl* is a bit surprising. One would have expected him to be listed as an *indsidder og daglejer*, as most *tjenestekarl* lived at the farm they served.

⁸ See also the discussion of property being deeded to Øm monastery, particularly Fuldbro Mill, in the chapter discussing Peder Johansen.

⁹ See the discussion of Rosenholm in the chapter on Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter.

¹⁰ There is a short autobiography of Jens Jacobsen in *Mejlby Sogns Historie II* (Poulsen and Jørgensen 1942, 146-8).

¹¹ Villeinage was abolished by ordinance on July 4, 1850. However, it took many years for all villeinage to disappear from Denmark.

¹² *Proprietær* was the terms for the owner of a large farm (*proprietærgård*) that did not reach the valuation level of a manor farm (*gods*). A *forpagter* was someone who leased a very large farm.

¹³ Here, I use the term “real” poverty to described those whom the poverty assistance boards deemed to be poor, and in need of assistance.

¹⁴ Weaving usually took place between Christmas, when people had finished carding and spinning, and May first, when farm hands and other hired hands were paid (Graves 1921, 84).

¹⁵ A common wage for a farmhand was six lengths (*alen*) of homespun and six lengths (*alen*) of canvas. One *alen* was approximately two feet. In her discussion of weavers, Graves provides an excellent overview of the process of weaving, and a schematic of a common loom (Graves 1921, 86-9).

¹⁶ Also known as a *bassekone* (Graves 1921).

11

Peder Johansen: Miller, Fiddler, Bachelor Storyteller

At age thirty-two, Peder Johansen was much younger than most of Tang Kristensen's informants, who tended to be at least in their late forties.¹ This skewing toward older informants was a well-known bias of Tang Kristensen and many other nineteenth century folklorists. Much of Tang Kristensen's collecting was informed by the ideas, prevalent among folklorists of the time, that their most important task was to preserve the vestiges of a quickly disappearing folk culture, and that older people—by virtue of their age alone—were closer to this vanishing culture. People such as Peder prove the absurdity of the latter belief.

Tang Kristensen provided the following short synopsis of Peder's life, a portrait patched together from the little scraps of biographical information that he was able to get from Peder:

Peder Johansen er født den 15. april 1855 i Svejstrup. Faderen var møller i Svejstrup mølle, og han er derfor selv bleven møllersvend. Faderens plejefader var en meget bekendt klog mand, der døde 80 år

gammel, da Peder blev konfirmeret, og var allerede da noget svækket. Samme kloge mand var særdeles god til at fortælle, og det er ligefrem umuligt for Peder at huske alt det, han hørt af ham. Nu er han møllersvend i *Fuldbro mølle* og var det også, da jeg første gang opsøgte ham, og han kom til at fortælle for mig. Men i mellemtiden har han været borte derfra en tid. I alt har han været der i en 6 år. En del af hans historier har jeg skrevet op i møllestuen, hvor møllegjæsterne opvartes med en dram og en drik øl. Han er også spillemand, og en gang han skulde spille til en fastelavnslegestue, fik jeg fat i ham et par timers tid, før han begyndte (JAT vol. 6, 310).

[Peder Johansen was born April fifteenth, 1855 in Svejstrup. His father was the miller at Svejstrup Mill, and that's why he became a journeyman miller himself. His father's foster father was a very well known folk healer who died at the age of eighty, when Peder was confirmed; he was already quite weak by then. That same folk healer was a very good storyteller and it is downright impossible for Peder to remember everything he heard from him. Now [Peder] is the journeyman miller at Fuldbro Mill, just as he was the first time I sought him out and he wound up telling stories to me. He has been there for six years in all. I recorded a number of his stories in the mill room, where the mill guests were served a dram

and a beer. He is also a local musician, and once when he was supposed to play for a *fastelavn* party, I got a hold of him for a few hours before he started.]

Although Peder lived a seemingly simple life as a bachelor, eventually sharing a house with his unwed sister, his back-story is far more complicated. Furthermore, his role in the mill was not simply that of a hired hand. He was an important figure in the economic and social life of the mill, interacting with mill guests, caring for the mill's fishery, and keenly aware of which farms were doing well and which were not. Because he was a musician, he was a well-known figure in the local community and, along with his boss the miller, imparted a certain personality to the mill. Like Kirsten Marie Pedersdatter, he hardly fit the image of rural poverty that was implicit in much of Tang Kristensen's descriptions of his informants. When he died in 1928, he left ten thousand crowns to Skanderup church, more than enough to buy the church a new bell. Just as telling stories to Tang Kristensen guaranteed that his voice would live on in the archive, the money he gave to the church guaranteed that his memory—or at least his headstone—would live on in the local environment.²

Family history

Understanding how Peder wound up where he did requires one to go back several generations in his intriguing, if somewhat convoluted, family history. This history explains in part Peder's profession as a journeyman miller, his fascination with books and, importantly, his role as a local musician (*spillemand*). Peder did not grow up in a poor household, and

it would be inaccurate to describe him as a member solely of the day laborer or cotter (*husmand*) class. As the son of a miller, he grew up in a fairly well to do family. In most communities, the social standing of the miller was one that hovered between the farm owners and the local market town merchants. Although Peder's father's mill was modest compared to the much more elaborate and wealthy Fuldbro Mill where Peder spent much of his adult life as journeyman, it was still a mill, and the miller's family was still accorded the social status of other millers. As happened with many young men and women born into the newly emerging rural middle class (farm owners, millers and master craftsmen), their adulthood included an incremental step down into the upper reaches of the cotter class. While they may have lost some economic footing, they carried their social background with them.

Peder's development as a storyteller and fiddler is best traced back to his foster grandfather and namesake, Peder Johansen. The elder Peder was born in June 1788, in Dover parish, the son of a smallholder, Johan Jensen, who originally had a copyhold on a local farm. His mother was Johan's second wife, Maren Sørensdatter. Altogether, the elder Peder had nine brothers, sisters, half brothers and half sisters. Despite the drain that such a large family could place on a household's economy, the farm was profitable enough to support the entire family.

The elder Peder learned to read at a young age, a rare skill at the time since universal schooling had yet to be established. In the first decades of the nineteenth century he became well known in the area around Dover as a folk healer, a career that could be lucrative (Lægdsmand 1954, 130; Rørbye 1976b; Hansen 1960). He owned several important books for folk healers, including Simon Paulli's *Flora Danica* (1648), a seventeenth century precursor to the much larger project of a

similar name that was produced from the mid eighteenth century up through the nineteenth century, and *Henrik Smids Lægebog* (Henrik Smids Doctoring Book), a book from 1577 that was among the most common books in the libraries of Danish folk healers. The elder Peder was relatively well off, perhaps because of his father's status as a farm owner. His early education certainly suggests a degree of economic stability, at least in his youth, and he did quite well with his later endeavors as well. Because of his background and his success, he amassed enough capital to purchase a mill, *Møllergården*, in Svejstrup, just south of Dover. The mill was a water-driven mill, the most common type of mill in Denmark at the time. Along with his work as a folk healer, the mill guaranteed him a steady income, both from milling and the associated fishing rights.

The elder Peder was also well known in the area as a raconteur of fairy tales. But he was even better known as a musician, a *spillemand* (pl. *spillemand*). *Spillemand* played at parties, celebrations, events and other gatherings, and they also took on aspiring students. While many *spillemand* were able to make a comfortable living, being a *spillemand* was but one of the many irons in the fire for the elder Peder. He was no ordinary *spillemand* either. While it was unusual for *spillemand* to learn music any way other than by ear, Peder became adept not only at reading music but also at formal composition and notation (Lægsmand 1954, 130). Both of these skills allowed him to expand his repertoire (without having to be present when the piece was played), and to circulate his own compositions to a much wider audience (and thus expand considerably his audience and reputation).

In 1828, the elder Peder acted as the godparent for the birth of his niece Mariane Sørensdatter.³ Peder's own marriage to Anne Sørensdatter did not produce any children. Anne must have died some time between 1845 and 1850,

since the elder Peder appears in the 1850 census as a widower.⁴ Although Peder and Anne Sørensdatter did not have any children, sometime between 1834 and 1840 they took a young man by the name of Søren Andersen into their house.

Søren was born on August 24, 1819, the son of Anders Rasmussen and Johanne Catrine Sørensdatter from the neighboring town of Brokbjerg in Østbirk parish. It is unclear how Søren had come into contact with the elder Peder, although Lægdsmand proposes that Søren was related to Peder's family (Lægdsmand 1954, 131). Søren became apprenticed to Peder as a musician, most likely after he had been confirmed at the age of fifteen. Søren and Peder soon become a musical pair, with Søren playing second fiddle (literally) to the more accomplished Peder at local parties and gatherings. Søren continued to live with Peder even after Peder's wife's death. In 1854, he married Peder's godchild and niece, Marianne Sørensdatter (Sørensen), and thus solidified the relationship that had already been established between the two (Søren became Peder's nephew-in-law). The arrangement also gave Peder the chance to secure his dotage and his legacy by entering into a secure *aftægt* agreement. Søren took over the mill and, at the same time, guaranteed the elder Peder a roof over his head and food in his belly until his death.

Søren soon became a more accomplished fiddler than his mentor. Just as with the elder Peder, there are numerous stories about Søren's prowess. Among the best known of these tells of a visit he made to Århus. He was watching an orchestra audition at the harbor, when he remarked loudly that the cellist's instrument was out of tune. The director told him to come up and do better if he could and, of course, he did and he could (Lægdsmand 1954, 131). The story is likely apocryphal, as there are no other records attesting to Søren's

ability to play the cello, a skill that was unlikely given the rarity of cellos in rural Jutland. Stories of this nature are widely attested, where the role of unlikely hero is attributed to local musicians. Accordingly, these stories should be viewed as legends that could be deployed rhetorically, at once confirming the abilities of the local musician and critiquing the snobbery of the urban musical elite (Lægdsmand 1954, 131).

To add to his mystique, Søren acquired the nickname “Kat,” although not deliberately. Nicknames were common since many people at the time had similar names. Local figures of some import would almost always have a nickname, and studies of *spillemand* attest to this practice (Lægdsmand 1954; Berntsen 1921). The nickname was related to Søren’s alleged propensity for poaching: he was known to go hunting at the drop of a hat, and to skin the animals himself, a task that was usually left for the socially untouchable nightmen (*natmandsfolk*) and hobos (*rakkere*) (Lægdsmand 1954, 131-2; Gaardboe 1968; Hansen 1952). Among the animals he would kill and skin were cats, hence the nickname. Søren did not like his nickname, nor did his son Peder Johansen, who inherited it from his father.

Søren and Mariane had five children: Kresten, who became a carpenter and moved to America, where he later died; Johanne, who moved to Copenhagen as a young woman, and married a man who later became an assistant director of the police; Kirsten who married a local man; Sørine, who worked as a hired girl in Copenhagen for many years, before returning to live with her younger brother Peder; and Peder, who became a journeyman miller, a musician and a storyteller.

Although Peder (the younger) spent most of his adult life living alone, there is little to suggest that he was particularly lonely. Instead, he was at the center of life at the mill both during the business day, when he took care of the milling, the

mill guests and the eel traps that the miller had placed in the mill sluice, and in the evening, when there were parties and get-togethers at which he would play music and tell stories. Photographs of Peder show a short man with long sideburns, always wearing a storm hat. He enjoyed smoking and Olsen's photograph shows him with a traditional long pipe, his hands resting on his thighs. What the photographs do not show is that Peder was a slob, renowned for paying little attention to his clothes or appearance.

One of the most detailed descriptions of Peder is found in an article written by Karen Plovgaard, a daughter of one of Peder's acquaintances and neighbors, for the periodical *Østjysk Hjemstavn* (The Eastern Jutland Region) (Plovgaard 1956). In her portrait of Peder, she emphasized not only his ability to play the violin, which he called his "Fiol," but also aspects of his personality. According to her, he always wore homespun, high boots and a blue storm hat. He had a booming bass voice, and was articulate yet in a fairly rough way. According to Plovgaard, "Pers tale var drøj og djærv, et Oratorium af stærke Udtryk og slaaende Sætninger, som virkede fængslende" [Per's speech was coarse and frank, an oratory of strong expressions and remarkable sentences that were captivating] (Plovgaard 1956, 109). His penmanship was beautiful and he was also apparently well read (Plovgaard 1956). In her portrait, Plovgaard relates an interaction between Peder and a local teacher that highlights both Peder's learning and his sharp tongue:

En af Egnens Degne, som efter Tidens Skik selv drev sin Embedslod, og som iøvrigt var en lige saa dygtig Lærer som en habil Jorddyrker, kørte personlig sit Korn til Mølle. Han indlod sig gerne i Passiar med Per. En Dag drøftede de et Spørgsmaal, som laa

noget over Dagen og Vejen, og Læreren, der imponeredes af Møllersvendens Belæsthed, følte sig foranlediget til at sige: "Naar man skal se sig til, saa sidder De inde med ikke saa lidt Viden." "Naa ja," svarede Per roligt, "lidt har man vel samlet sig efterhaanden, men min Lærdom takker A nu hverken Præst eller Degn for (Plovgaard 1956, 110).

[One of the area's parish clerks who, following the customs of the time, farmed his own plot and who was, it should be mentioned, just as good a teacher as he was a farmer, drove his grain to the mill himself. He enjoyed discussions with Per. One day, they were discussing a somewhat obscure question, and the teacher, who was impressed by how well read the journeyman miller was, felt prompted to say, "When you take a second look, you're quite learned." "Oh," Per answered calmly, "one learns a bit after a while, but I thank neither minister nor parish clerk [teacher] for my learning."]

This anecdote reveals the role of the mill as a meeting place where people discussed issues of the day, Peder's engagement in those discussions, and his frequent needling of those in positions of authority. Peder was not unwilling to spend money on books, even though he was unwilling to spend money on new clothes, or even to have a tailor sew the homespun that he kept in his chest. Among his prized possessions was *Salmonsens Leksikon*, a well-known, encyclopedic work, which he felt was a better resource than the more narrowly focused *Traps Danmark*: "Trap kan være

god nok; men Salmonsens Leksikon er nu alligevel bedre. Det samme siger Sørine (hans Søster). Der er ikke den Ting, man ikke kan faa Besked om hos Salmonsens” [Trap is fine, but Salmonsens’s Encyclopedia is better. Sørine (his siter) says the same. There’s nothing you can’t learn something about in Salmonsens] (Plovgaard 1956, 110-1).

Although in his stories and in various anecdotes Peder critiques officers of the local parish including the minister, he was nevertheless quite religious. He went to church frequently and, as noted, bequeathed a large sum of money to Skanderup church later in life. He said that the motivation for this bequest was to replace the old church bell, which he said rang false. Given his musical background, he could not stand listening to it. The new bell was to be inscribed “Gud tilhører Magten og Æren i Evighedernes Evighed” [To Him be the power and the glory forever and ever] (Peter 5:11), a sentiment that recognizes the power of God, yet at the same time suggests that worldly power, embodied in ecclesiastic institutions, is of little spiritual importance.

Plovgaard relates another anecdote of the lengths to which Peder would go to attend church, even in bad weather, recounting the events of a particular Christmas evening:

Han havde besluttet at gaa i Kirke. Efter Fyraften begav han sig henved en Mil lange Vej fra Fuldbro Mølle over Bakkerne og gennem Dyrehaven til Skanderborg Slotskirke. Det sneede og var koldt. Han havde en god Dags Arbejde bag sig, men det regnede han ikke. Imidlertid: Gudstjenesten, som havde frydet ham saare, trak ud, Hjemturen tog sin Tid, og det blev langt ud paa Aftenen, før han, tilsneet og træt, naaet hjem til Møllen. Det var saa sent, at han

fandt Huset lukket og slukket. Pigerne, som vel troede at Per havde truffet Kendinge, som havde indbudt ham til Julenadver, var gaaet i Seng. For en Sikkerheds Skyld havde de dog sat en Kavs med Suppe og Kød paa Komfuret til ham. ”Det hele var mænget sammen,” fortalte han, ”men hvad gjorde det? A var jo godt sulten. Og bagefter havde A ”Juleroser”.⁵ Han sad i vor Stue og berettede om sit Julefærd. Nu halede han Heftet frem og bredte det ud paa Bordet til Beskuelse. Det var et skønt Hefte med dejlige Billeder. Vi var alle interesserede i det. Men i mit Hjerte havde jeg ondt af Per, at han havde maattet traske ude i Stormen og Sneen, medens vi andre havde haft Juletræ. Nu forstaar jeg, at han slet ikke var at ynke. Hans Helligaften havde været god nok—bedre, end de fleste nu om Stunder oplever den (Plovgaard 1956, 110).

[He had decided to go to church. After payday, he walked along the six-mile long road from Fuldbro Mill over the hills and through the forest to Skanderborg castle church. It was cold and snowing. He had a good long hard day of work behind him, but he didn't think about that. In the meantime, the sermon, that had given him great succor, kept going, the trip home took a while, and it was late at night before he got home to Fuldbro Mill, tired and covered with snow. It was so late that he found the house dark and locked tight. The girls, who assumed

that Per had met some friends who had then invited him to a Christmas meal, had gone to bed. To be on the safe side, they had put a pot with soup and meat on the stove for him. “It was all clumped together,” he said, “but what difference did that make? I was quite hungry. And afterwards I had ‘Julerosen.’” He sat in our living room and told us about his Christmas journey. Then he pulled out the magazine and spread it out on our table for us to see. It was a pretty magazine with wonderful pictures. We were all interested in it. But in my heart I felt bad for Per, that he’d had to tramp out in the snowstorm while the rest of us had had a Christmas tree. But now I realized that I shouldn’t feel bad for him. His Christmas Eve had been good enough—better than most people these days experience.]

Despite the overtly Romantic tone in Plovgaard’s description of Peder’s Christmas Eve, it does reveal several things about Peder’s personality, in particular his stubbornness, his self-reliance, and his abiding interest in reading. Peder’s reading undoubtedly informed his storytelling, although not as much as the stories that he had heard as a child from his father and from his namesake, the elder Peder Johansen. Even though Tang Kristensen was most impressed by Peder’s storytelling, he was actually better known in the local area for his music just as was the case with his father and his foster-grandfather. According to Plovgaard, Peder’s violin playing was energetic and beautiful, despite that while he played he often sat stone-faced, “urørlig som en Buddha” [motionless like a Buddha] (Plovgaard 1956, 109).

Peder spent his entire life as a bachelor and there is no indication that he ever had anything that approached a long-term relationship with a woman. Later in life, after he had lost his job at Fuldbro Mill, his older sister Sørine moved in with him in a small house in Vrold. Plovgaard recounts one incident that reveals a more sensitive side to Peder, particularly in regards women, than might otherwise be expected from a seemingly otherwise sloppy, macho journeyman miller:

Vi havde hjemme en ualmindelig sød og køn ung Pige. Hun var tillige god af Sind. Engang havde hun faaet en ny Kjole og kom ind i Stuen for at præsentere sig i sin Pragt. Per var tilfældigt paa Besøg og syntes vel, at ogsaa han skulde deltage i den almindelige Beundring. Saa lød hans Bas: ”Naa, hvor mange Hjerter skal du saa have knust ved Hjælp af den Kjole?” – Pigen lo glad til ham: ”Slet ingen!” – ”Saa er du billig, min Pige. Bliv ved med det!” Det var noget uhaandgribeligt smukt ved Situationen. Per, der, saa vidt vides, ikke interesserede sig for kvindelig Skønhed, havde sagt akkurat det rigtige til den unge Pige, der i sit Hjertes Uskyldighed blev lykkelig over den i hendes Øjne alderstegne Mands Kompliment (Plovgaard 1956, 111).

[At our house we had an unusually sweet and pretty hired girl. She also was a good person. One time she had gotten a new dress and she'd come into the living room to model it. Coincidentally Per was visiting and

thought that he should participate in the usual admiring. Then his bass voice said, “Well, how many hearts are you going to break with the help of that dress?” – The girl laughed happily to him, “None.” – “Well, then you are too cheap, my girl. Keep it up!”⁶ There was something inexplicably beautiful with the scene. Per, who as far as was known, was not interested in feminine beauty, had said exactly the right thing to the young girl who, in her heart’s innocence, was thrilled by what in her eyes was the older man’s compliment.]

Again, Plovgaard’s comments are hardly the most trustworthy, yet they reveal both Peter’s seeming disinterest in women and, at the same time, his kindness, revealed through his ability to turn a phrase and make someone else feel good.

Despite his (hidden) kindness, Peder did not suffer fools gladly. He was brusque with the local children when he worked, and he often let fall criticisms of the customers. Plovgaard describes one such encounter:

Han kunde sommetider være skarp i Biddet. Det var han f.Eks. imod en Møllegæst, der klagede over de daarlige Tider og paastod, at det var ham umuligt at svare enhver sit. “Naar det er Tilfældet,” docerede Per, “maa du vel enten være doven eller fattig.” “Jeg er det sidste,” indrømmede Manden. Per, der just var ved at tage en mod Vognfadingen rejst Sæk paa Nakken, drejede Hovedet og kiggede op: “Men er du sikker paa, at det

sidste ikke er en Følge af det første?”
(Plovgaard 1956, 111)

[He could sometimes have a sharp bite. For example, he was once like that with a mill guest who stood complaining about the hard times and claimed it was impossible for him to pay all his creditors. “If that’s the case,” lectured Per, “you must either be lazy or poor.” “Well, I’m the latter,” admitted the man. Per, who was just about to take a sack out of the wagon and put it on his shoulder, turned his head, looked up and said, “But are you sure the last isn’t a result of the first?”]

The quick thinking hired hand with a sharp tongue is a common character in Peder’s stories.

Peder was well known as being less than clean and, at times, downright slovenly. One account suggests that he had a problem with beard lice (Strange Nielsen 1964, 118). He apparently often showed up at peoples’ houses unshaven and with flour in his hair. Plovgaard relates one story that highlights this apparent lack of hygiene:

Een Gang gik hans Malproperhed dog for vidt—syntes min Mor. Det var, da hun og hendes Piger fandt en tygget Skraa i Melet til den store Rugbrødsbagning. Hun paatalte det saaledes: Vi havde bagt Franskbrød af amerikansk Flormel, og da Per kom paa sin sædvanlige Kaffevisit, blev Snitter af det ny Brød budt om. “Sig mig nu, hvad du synes om det!” sagde Mor blidt. “Ja, det var da”,

som Per kunde bande, “noget dejligt Brød.” “I det Mel finder man heller ingen Skraa; det sker sommetider med Melet fra Fuldbro Mølle.” “Det var [Satans].” Men dengang følte Per sig alligevel truffet og blev rød i sit ubarberede Ansigt (Plovgaard 1956, 112).

[One time my mother thought that his slovenliness went too far. It happened when she and her hired girls found a plug of chewed tobacco in the flour for the big rye bread baking. She described it as follows: We had baked french bread from American flour, and when Per came for his normal coffee visit, slices of the new bread were served. “Tell me what you think of it!” said my mother sweetly. “Well that was some,” boy how Per could swear, “wonderful bread.” “One doesn’t find plugs of tobacco in that flour either; sometimes that happens with flour from Fuldbro Mill.” “Well I’ll be damned.” But Per felt he’d been caught that time, and his unshaven face blushed.]

Peder’s slovenliness was too much for the new miller, Søren Jørgensen, who took over Fuldbro mill in 1898 from Jørgen Sejersen for whom Peder had worked. Peder was bitter at being let go, and protested that he had done a good job keeping things clean and in order at the mill. When he left, he said: “Men A siger nu, at A nok har kunnet være mit Mølleri bekendt. I Dag har de gjort rent efter mig. Men efter at have skrabet og skuret i alle Kroge, saa fik de alligevel kun tre Baljer Skidt. Det kalder A it møj, naar det drejer sig om tre Lofter” [But I tell you, I could be proud of my mill. They

cleaned up after me today. But I'd scraped and scoured all the nooks and crannies and so they only got three buckets of dirt. I don't call that a mess when we're talking about three mill lofts] (Plovgaard 1956, 112). Losing his work at the mill marked the end of a period of independence in Peder's life, but it was something that would have had to happen sooner or later. In the 1890s, smaller motorized mills were quickly replacing the old water-driven mills. By the start of the twentieth century, most farms had their own electric powered mills, and the days of the water mills as meeting places drew quickly to a close.

The Local Environment

Fuldbro Mølle (Fuldbro Mill) lies approximately one and a half kilometers north of Tåning and six kilometers west of Skanderborg, on the southern edge of Mos Sø (Mos Lake). The mill was situated at the extreme eastern edge of Skanderborg parish, a parish that was dominated by the large market town of Skanderborg. The mill had a past of its own that stretched far back in Danish history. The earliest records relate that it became a possession of the Crown some time after 1231. Along with the mill were fishing rights at the mouth of Tåning river in Mos Lake. The young King Valdemar Atterdag (ruled 1340-1375) sold the mill to the Cistercian Øm monastery in a property exchange that was sanctioned by King Erik of Pomerania.⁷ After the Reformation, the mill once again became a possession of the Crown, and by 1587, the mill was in service to the Crown at Skanderborg castle. The mill fell into disrepair in the early seventeenth century, and was plundered by the Swedes in 1644. It remained in a decrepit state for much of the late seventeenth century, but was clearly running again by 1699,

since the miller was indicted that year on charges of milling for residents of Dover parish, who were otherwise supposed to use Ry mill.

The mill became part of the Skanderborg cavalry district (*rytterdistrikt*) in 1718. Various leaseholders ran the mill through the early eighteenth century. Interestingly, taxation records suggest that the fishing rights were more valuable than the actual milling. In 1767, the copyholder on the mill, Peder Jørgensen, bought the mill for 3,614 rixdollars at an auction held for the Skanderborg Ryttergods estate after its dissolution. Kaspar Vilh. Munthe af Morgenstjerne acquired the mill in 1800, but shortly thereafter, in 1802, he deeded the mill to Adam Fausing. After Fausing died, his widow, Abigael Siøgaard, continued running the mill and, after her death in 1840, the mill was taken over by their son, Jacob Adam Fausing. He ran the mill until his death in 1874, at which point his widow, Valborg Fausing, took over running the mill. Their daughter, Adamine Marie Kirstine Fausing, married their neighbor, Jørgen Sejersen, who then took over running the mill in 1881. It was during Sejersen's stint as owner that Peder worked as journeyman miller.

Sejersen was deeply involved in local politics and was a member of both the parish and county councils. He was a Freemason and a member of the Skt. Clemens lodge in Århus. He always invited his lodge brothers to a large Christmas celebration at the mill (Strange Nielsen 1964, 120). Given Sejersen's role in the community, and Peder's well-read and outspoken character, it is inconceivable that he and Peder did not discuss local and national politics in their many daily interactions. In 1898, after a failed attempt to start a bakery at the mill in 1896, Sejersen was forced to sell the mill, and it was purchased by Søren Jørgensen. Jørgensen both modernized and expanded the mill, focusing more effort on

the fishing rights and the smokehouse, which were both part of the larger mill complex. He also fired Peder.

The mill was not free from controversy in the surrounding communities, and the mill owner was frequently embroiled in disputes and disagreements with his neighbors. Perhaps the most lasting and important of these disputes was one that went on for close to sixty years and was based on a disagreement over the flood level that the mill was allowed to keep. In 1792, the local farmers filed their first claim against the mill. They were upset that a newly installed flood board, used to control the level of the water in the sluice, was causing local streams to back up and the overall water level of the lake to rise. Consequently, their fields were being flooded, resulting in a loss of use for grazing and, just as importantly, damaging the hay that was grown on the low lying fields. This excessive damming was in direct violation of the Danish Law of 1683, that stated in part: “Mand maa ej giøre Mølle af ny, uden mand haver Dam og Damstæd, og saa at Vandet flyder ej paa anden Mands Eng, eller Ager” [One may not build new mills unless one has both a pond and a pond house and that the water does not flood others’ meadows and fields] (Bk 5, Ch 11, Par 1). Fausing, who was miller at the time, had inherited the problem from the previous owner. Peder Jørgensen, who had bought the mill in 1768, had improved the mill’s waterways, but in so doing had changed the otherwise standard flood levels of the streams and lakes. One of the main reasons Jørgensen wanted a greater water depth in his sluices was so that he could sink eel traps: the eel catch was, as noted, a lucrative side income for the mill.⁸ Jørgensen did not install this deeper flood board only for the fishery. It provided more power to the mill, and this resulted in a finer and faster milling of the grains. The dispute between miller and local farmers continued for many years, and was finally decided in favor of the miller in 1855, with only a few

concessions made to the rightfully angry farmers (Bundgaard Lassen 1933).

Fuldbro Mill was also the site of a small skirmish during the war of 1849 and, because of this, the area became closely linked in the local political imaginary to aspects of a nascent Danish nationalism. The skirmish resulted in the death of a single Danish soldier, Private Jens Simonsen of the 3rd Dragoon regiment.⁹ While tragic for his family—and in particular for his beloved who placed a memorial on his grave inscribed in part “Du for ret og ære stred / og for Danmark sank du ned” [You who fought for law and honor / and for Denmark’s sake sank down]—the skirmish had little import in the overall outcome of the war. It was precipitated by Danish scouting expeditions that were trying to find weak spots in the Prussian defenses, and to ascertain whether attacks along the enemy’s flanks could be successful. The ultimate goal of the Danish military planners was to cut forward enemy troops off from their supply routes to the south. The scouting expedition was successful in one sense, since the Danes soon discovered that the Prussian troops were stretched thin. More importantly for the sake of local history—and the connection of the local area to events of a national character—was the aftermath of this minor engagement, particularly in the rhetorical deployment of the event in the service of a particular national liberal ideology and later in the service of a conservative Danish nationalism in the mid twentieth century. In the late nineteenth century, however, it seems that the skirmish at Fuldbro Mill was more of a local curiosity than any type of touchstone in local political life.

Fuldbro Mølle and miller Fausing were also at the center of a debate over a bridge toll that the miller had originally been allowed to collect from people traveling along the Skanderborg road. In return for the toll, the miller was

expected to keep the bridges in good condition. The miller argued that a new road over Nybro near Skanderborg as part of the Skanderborg–Horsens main road project of 1831 would result in significantly decreased traffic, and that he would then lose money. His complaint—and his request to retain his right to the Fuldbro Mill road toll—was affirmed in 1843. Later, in 1861, a commission from the county rescinded the right to the toll, and paid a small compensatory sum of approximately one hundred ninety rixdollars. In 1880, construction started on a new road from Skanderborg to the mill, passing through Vrold. The construction went slowly, and in 1882 and 1885, numerous complaints were lodged over the near impassibility of the road at the mill, which was still the responsibility of the miller, without any clear resolution of the problem. The mill relied on the transportation infrastructure, yet at the same time the miller was aware of the reliance of the local farmers on the mill. Accordingly, the repeated disputes between miller, farmers and local authorities bring into stark relief the interdependent yet often-conflicting interests of these groups. While the mill may have been a great place to meet and talk, it was also a location fraught with economic and political tension. This tension reflected the deep changes being wrought in social organization by the rapid move toward capitalist modes of production and democratic modes of governance.

Local political life was greatly influenced by the large market town of Skanderborg, with Horsens to the south, Silkeborg in the west and Århus further to the east. The politics of the area was deeply divided between the conservatives of the *Højre* party and the farm owners' *Venstre* party. In the Skanderborg electoral district, the *Venstre* party held sway, with occasional *Radikale Venstre* (Radical Left) and *Socialdemokrat* (Social Democrat) candidates making it into parliament from the area. *Socialdemokratiet* won a greater and

greater following in the southern part of the county, particularly in Horsens, where the local newspaper *Horsens Folkeblad* (Horsens Folk Paper, est. 1866) was the main outlet for the increasingly liberal politics of the area. *Skanderborg Amts Avis* (Skanderborg County Newspaper) was mainly a newspaper of the *Venstre*. Because of this, *Radikale Venstre* established *Skanderborg Amtstidende* (Skanderborg County Times) in 1893.

In 1839, Steen Steensen Blicher began holding popular meetings (*folkemøder*) at the highest point in Denmark, *Himmelbjerget*, in the center of the county, and just north of Dover parish. The meetings, although political in tone, were not directed against the government. Instead, they supported a pan-Scandinavianism that had begun to attract followers. The meetings, however, petered out by 1845. Later political life became focused not only on questions of a national—or even pan-Scandinavian—nature, but also of a decidedly local and regional nature. This shift in focus was particularly true in the wake of the military defeat of 1864 and the district (*kommunale*) reform of 1867. Unlike Vendsyssel, the two main spiritual and religious movements in the area were the indigenous Grundtvigian movement and the Inner Mission. The Grundtvigians were particularly powerful in the area, and their folk high school (*folkehøjskole*) in Gjedved was a local bastion of Grundtvigianism.¹⁰

Peder spent most of his childhood in Dover parish in the Hjemslev district of Skanderborg county. Dover was primarily a church site and not much of a town at all. Numerous other towns dotted the parish including Ry stationsby. Skanderborg lay on the main Århus-Fredericia rail line, which was opened in 1868, while Ry lay on the secondary Skanderborg-Silkeborg line, opened in 1871. Vrold was situated at the switch for the two lines and, in 1867, one

of the farms in the town was forced to sell close to three hundred thousand square feet of land to the railway.

Other towns in Dover included Alken (first mentioned as Alcken in 1490), Svejstrup (mentioned in 1267 as Sueghestorp, 1554 Sueystrup), Illerup (1317 Egeltorp, 1554 Jllerup), Siim (1338 Seen, 1575 Sim), Boes (1554 Buoos) and Firegårde. There were several noteworthy farms in the parish, including Dover farm (earlier Hvidsminde), with a *hartkorn* valuation of 11 barrels; Højlund (7.2 barrels); Hemstok Østergård (6.2 barrels); Hemstok Vestergård (6 barrels); and Elmely (4.2 barrels); and several smaller farms (Trap 1958, vol. 8.2, 537-9). There was also a large mill in Ry that got its power from Gudenå, Denmark's longest river. Although farmers were assigned a primary mill up through 1862, once milling was deregulated, a healthy competition between mills, and mills and farms, sprang up. Windmills, while convenient, could not provide the reliability or the quality of water mills such as those at Ry and Fuldbro.

When Peder moved to Fuldbro Mølle, he also moved to into the much larger Skanderborg parish, which was broken into three sections: Gram in the east, Vrold in the west, and Forlev in the north. Vrold was one of the oldest settlements in the area, and was first noted as Wraghældæ in 1231. The history of Vrold is closely linked to the land reforms of the late eighteenth century. An unpublished manuscript by Kaj Klostergård provides interesting detail of the history of the town, and also offers a fairly detailed view into the workings of a small village up through the nineteenth century (Klostergård, unpublished ms).

In the 1760s, the Crown decided to disestablish the various cavalry districts (*rytterdistrikter*) of which Skanderborg was one. Accordingly, all of the estate was sold at a large auction in April, 1767. The old castle in Skanderborg was sold to be razed, and the land valued at 6,000 barrels of *hartkorn*

was distributed across twelve main farms and dozens of smaller holdings. All the buildings were typical half-timbered thatched-roof buildings. The large number of landless houses in Vrold—a seeming anomaly—was related to the castle in Skanderborg: the workers at the castle had all lived in Vrold. The annex farm in Vrold along with Fuldbro Mill were sold separately, whereas most of the other farms were sold together, in the first instance to Privy Councilor (*gehejmråd*) Woyda from Skanderborg. Vrold itself was comprised of fifteen farms and thirty-four smallholdings; seven of the farms were so-called “whole farms” valued at 5-6-1-2, while the remainder were so-called “half farms” valued at 2-7-0-2½ (Klostergård, unpublished ms). Over the next several decades Woyda sold all the farms to the copyholders, as well as all the smallholdings and landless houses in the town itself. That meant that the houses in Vrold were still owned by the farmers, who could then lease them to tenants. In 1794, only five of the houses in Vrold were “self-owned.”

The partitioning of Vrold’s fields in 1789 did not follow the normal “star” pattern that was otherwise common in many parts of Jutland. Instead, because of the inconsistency of the quality of the land in the district, most farms were allotted various plots, spread helter-skelter about the area (exactly the type of problem that the reapportionment of lands was supposed to prevent). Not surprisingly, the original partitioning led to a fairly lively resale and trade of fields over the course of the next decade. By the late nineteenth century, the organization of the farms and their fields had long been rationalized. The population of Vrold proper in 1880 was five hundred three, while three hundred one people lived in farms and smallholdings on the surrounding fields. The town, because of its earlier close connection to the castle, had a large number of craftspeople living there—these were all craftsmen who were allowed to work outside of the market

towns.¹¹ In 1880, there were two clog makers, three tailors, nine weavers, a smith, a cooper, a wheel smith, a casket maker, two butchers, two masons and two carpenters. There were also nineteen day laborers, and three people who worked in the local roofing tile factory. There were nine people who received poverty assistance.

Fire was a constant threat for many of these tightly built villages. Consequently, over the course of the nineteenth century, many towns established their own fire departments. In the eighteenth century, increasing attention had been paid to fire prevention and fire fighting in the market towns and the city of Copenhagen. Insurance companies also came to play a significant role in requiring both comprehensive inventories of people's possessions, as well as means and infrastructure to combat fires that went beyond the simple law that everyone was required to help extinguish fires. The rural areas were finally included in the new fire insurance regime in the late eighteenth century, with the promulgation of "den almindelige brandforsikring for landbygninger" [the common fire insurance for rural buildings] in 1792. The parceling of fields and the subsequent removal of buildings out onto these fields had influenced the development of this comprehensive approach to rural fire insurance. With the county reform of 1867, the fire service became one of the responsibilities of the local parish board.

Although there had at one point been a church in Vrold, it was torn down shortly after the Reformation and the materials from that church were used to expand the church in Østbirk. By the time Peder lived in the area, the local church was Skanderup church, high on a hill on the outskirts of Skanderborg. The church at Skanderborg castle was at first to be used only when the king was in Skanderborg, although this cost-saving measure was soon abandoned because of its unpopularity. The castle church was opened once again to the

citizens of Skanderborg (although not Vrold) already in 1699—it is interesting to note that Peder sought out the castle church rather than Skanderup church (where he was eventually buried) on his Christmas Eve foray.

Schools in Vrold were closely linked to the Crown. The first school for the children of the town was one of the so-called cavalry schools (*rytterskoler*), established by Frederik IV; the school itself was not in Vrold, but rather in Skanderborg. The first school in Vrold proper was established in 1761, and was paid for by the dean in Skanderborg out of his own pocket. The school law of 1814 seems to have had little impact on the school in Vrold, as it had already been established. Interestingly, a local private school had also been established by the early nineteenth century in Vrold, and the two schools competed for students. By 1824, the private school had been disbanded, and the local public school was the only one in town. In 1860, the old school building was replaced with a new one; that same year, a private school for girls was also established. In the 1870s, the schoolteacher Ole Dixen began holding night courses for young men and women in the area who had already been confirmed. Similarly, in 1877, Laurs Laursen started a continuation school at his farm in Vrold, which he was able to keep open until 1888 when financial problems forced him to close its doors. This type of continuing educational activity and outreach, along with the folk high schools, resonates with Peder's own interest in reading. While he may not have attended any of these schools or classes, he certainly came into contact on a fairly frequent basis with young men and women who did. Nevertheless, he was a worker, and he made a point of noting that he was largely self-taught and that many of his lessons he had learned in the schoolhouse of life.

Millers

Mills were an important part of the rural economy, and acted as a crucial interface between the farmers and the markets: without the mills, the farmers' grains were essentially useless both for the farmers and for the growing populations in the market towns and cities. The mill also served as an important meeting place for the farmers in the surrounding area. When grain was brought to be milled, the farmer or his hired hand would retire to the mill room where he would have a drink, smoke a pipe, and perhaps have something to eat. Usually, several people would be waiting for their grain to be milled, and the mill room became a natural setting for people to tell stories, exchange information on local events, and debate larger political and economic questions. Tang Kristensen hints at as much in his own descriptions of collecting from Peder. One can surmise that this context was one of the primary contexts for Peder's storytelling.

The social and economic status of millers was high and, because of the nature of their work, millers straddled the divide between the farmers (farm owners and *husmænd*) and the town merchants (particularly grocers and bakers). Through the end of the nineteenth century, many mills opened their own bakeries as a way to take advantage of their easy access to flour and the constant demand for fresh bread: although most farms baked their own rye bread, finer breads such as french bread were mostly baked in bakeries. Fuldbro mill also tried such a venture, but with little luck, probably because of the intense competition from bakeries in nearby Skanderborg.

Millers took payment for their services both in kind and in cash. In 1698, commerce regulations were amended, and the somewhat vague discussions of weights and measures in the 1683 *Danske Lov* were clarified, particularly in regards the

toll vat (*toldkar*) that millers used to measure their share of the milled grain (Bk 5, Ch 11, Par 3). With the new law, the *toldkar* was fixed at one *potte* (0.97 liters). Generally, the charge for milling was one *potte* per measure (*skæppe*) (17.39 liters), or five and a half percent. Slightly different rates applied for the type of grain and the fineness of the milling. By the late nineteenth century, the miller's toll (*tolde*) was becoming less popular, and a standard monetary rate, usually one mark (33 øre) per barrel of milled grain, was instituted at many mills. With reforms in 1917 to the commerce law, the practice of using the *toldkar* was forbidden (Sørensen 1954, 8).¹² Instead, millers were required to accept only monetary payment for their services; by that time, mechanization had become commonplace on many farms, and most windmills and many water mills had lost their place of primary importance in the agricultural economy.

There were two main types of mills in Denmark up through the nineteenth century. The most picturesque, but also the most inefficient, were the large windmills, while the real workhorses of the milling profession were the water mills. Windmills (which have made a comeback in the Danish landscape in the form of high tech mills for generating electricity) only functioned when the weather cooperated. In low wind, they could not generate the power necessary to mill grain, and in high wind, there was danger of damage to the millworks. Furthermore, in rain or snow, the sails could easily be torn or destroyed. There were two main types of windmills, both of which used four mill arms that were set with canvas sails to harness the wind power. The largest of these could have a total span of forty-two *alen* (approx. 28.5 meters), although the most common size was thirty-two *alen* (approx. 22 meters). The most common windmills had a fixed base, and only the upper portion could be rotated to catch the wind.

The entire structure of the other type of mill, the post mill (*stubmølle*), in contrast, could be rotated.

Water mills were more efficient than windmills, and could run around the clock, year round. The speed of the mill—and by extension the precision of the milling—was easier to control in these mills. There were regulations that governed how much water the miller was allowed to hold back, given the impact that the holdback could have on water levels in the surrounding area, but even these laws were open to interpretation. The only thing other than drought that could stop a water mill was ice, but ice could be broken up, and the mill works defrosted with buckets of hot water. The sole advantage that windmills had over water mills was that they did not require access to water. When the windmills did not—or could not—turn, people were forced to make the longer journey to the nearest water mill. Of course, mills were not only used to mill grain: they also provided the power for saws at sawmills.

Peder was not a miller himself, even though his father had owned a mill. But having learned the tricks of the trade at his family mill, he was able to hire himself out as a journeyman. Unlike the miller whose status hovered at the upper end of the social and economic scale, Peder's status as a journeyman put him on economic par with many cotters and the more skilled group of journeyman craftsmen, such as smiths, carpenters and coopers. Socially, he inhabited an intriguing position, as he would routinely come into contact with people from all walks of life, from hired hands and day laborers on up through the social classes to the wealthiest farmers, the cohorts of the miller.

Work in the mill was physically demanding. Although the mills were in use year round, the work was at its height during the period from the end of the harvest through the beginning of the planting season. Most mills, including *Fuldbro*, had their

own landholdings, and the journeyman and apprentices would help planting and harvesting the mill's property. Since the mill was also in use during this period, the work simply diversified to include farming duties, and there was little let up in the pace or the quantity of work. Like many watermills, Fuldbro also had a fairly productive eel-trapping endeavor, and Peder was in charge of tending the traps.

The days at the mill were long and the work relentless. During the busiest part of the year, the mill would also run on Sundays. By the end of the century, threshing machines, particularly steam-powered threshers, were coming into greater use. This mechanization of farm work meant that the steady stream of grain to be milled throughout the winter months, with farmers generally driving to the mill every eight days or so, changed to a more front-loaded process. The frequent trips to the mill were an artifact of the slow and laborious process of hand threshing, and insured that the farmers were generally forced to sell their grain irrespective of market prices. Farmers also had to drive to the mill to mill their grain for the monthly baking—this milling would be coordinated with their other milling. With the advent of more efficient harvesting and threshing, the rhythms at the mill changed, and the months immediately after the harvest became the busiest months. Farmers could now coordinate their grain sales with changing market prices during the course of the winter months, and this market behavior influenced the farmers' decisions when to mill. Nevertheless, the relatively low speed at which grain was milled guaranteed that there would almost always be a backlog.

The workday started early, before the first "guests" (as mill customers were called) arrived. The millhouse floor would be swept, the sluice gates opened to start the mill wheels turning, and the mill yard readied for the arrival of the first wagons, sometimes as early as four a.m. Once the guests

began arriving, the journeyman would be responsible for keeping track of each guest's grain, making sure that they received the proper quantities of the proper grain sorts. There was a lot of opportunity for dishonesty, particularly at large, busy mills, and Peder alludes in his storytelling to the possible tricks one could play, either as a miller or as a guest, to get a little more than was rightfully one's own. Despite the numerous stories and sayings that referred to dishonest millers, such as “‘Kan I ikke lade den tolde, som tolde skal,’ sagde mølleren da han toldede—Konen, svenden og drengen havde toldet forud” [“Can't you let the one toll who is supposed to toll,” said the miller as he tolled—the wife, the journeyman and the apprentice had tolled before him”] (Sørensen 1954, 8), there was a strong corrective against such deceptive practices, namely the reliance of both the miller and the farmers on each other. Since the two parties had an ongoing relationship, there was little incentive to cheat (Tangherlini 1998b).

Viggo Sørensen describes the normal workday in the 1890s at Øresø watermill in western Sjælland, one of the five mills built by King Valdemar Atterdag (1320-1375):

Om morgenen var det mit arbejde - navnlig fra høst til hen i foråret - at "pille" (skalle) to tønder byg. Den ene blev lavet til byggryn og den anden til bygmel, det skulle gøres hver dag, og jeg måtte ikke standse, før det var gjort. Møllersvenden, en ældre mand, som havde været der i mange år, passede grovmalingen i den anden ende af møllen, tog mod møllegæsterne og fik dem ind i møllestuen, hvor de fik øl og snaps og piben stoppet, medens deres korn blev malet. Undertiden, når der var nogen stykker

samlet ved det svære egetræsbord, blev der snapset godt. Når møllersvenden kunne se sit snit, løb han ind og så til dem, og så efter, at der var noget på flasken, tobak i tønden og øl i den store skurede egetræskovs. Men han havde jo ellers nok at gøre med at læsse af vognene, få det malet og læsset igen, lavet et praktisk sæde til møllegæsten på sækkene og sat pishen op, så det var så behageligt som muligt at gå til, når engang de blev færdige med at snapse. Hestene blev jo sat i møllestalden, medens kornet blev malet og kunden beværtet... Der blev intet vejjet, men vi skilte ad saa godt som muligt, når vi hældte anden mands korn på kværnen. Alle sække måtte bæres ud og ind i møllen, men der var dog lidt hejseværk, så sækkene kunne hejses op på kværnloftet. Der var en gammel møllersvend, som hjalp os at bilde kværne. Han havde i sin tid været svend på møllen, og han fortalte, at de forhen måtte bære sækkene op på kværnloftet. I hans tid havde folk også en pige med til mølle, når de skulle have sigtet; det foregik ved håndkraft, og det måtte pigen hjælpe til med. Der var meget at gøre i Øresø mølle dengang. Men værst var det i vindstille, da vindmøllerne ikke dengang havde hjælpekraft. Så kom de kørende langvejs fra med store læs, ja, det skete, at de kom kl. 4 om morgenen for at være først. Der kom også møllegæster langt ud på aftenen og hele søndagen (Sørensen 1954, 4).

[In the morning it was my job—that is to say from harvest on into the spring—to shuck two barrels of barley. One was turned into barley meal and the other barley flour, it had to be done every day, and I wasn't allowed to stop until it was done. The journeyman miller, an older man who'd been there for many years, took care of the coarse grinding in the other end of the mill, greeted the mill guests and brought them into the mill room where they got beer and *snavs* and their pipe filled while their grain was milled. Sometimes, when several had gathered by the heavy oak table, they drank quite a bit of *snavs*. When the journeyman miller saw his chance, he would run in to them and make sure there was something in the bottle, tobacco in the barrel, and beer in the large oak pot. But he had enough to take care of already what with unloading the wagons, milling it, and loading it up again, making a nice seat for the mill guests on the sacks, and putting the whip up there, so it was as comfortable as could be when they were done drinking their *snavs*. The horses were put in the mill stall while the grain was milled and the guests served... Nothing was weighed, but we separated things as best we could when we poured someone's grain into the mill chute. All of the sacks had to be carried in and out of the mill, but there were some pulleys so that the sacks could be hauled up to the grain lofts. There was an old journeyman miller who helped us

sharpen the millstones. He'd been the journeyman at the mill in his time and told us they used to have to carry the sacks up to the grain loft. In his day, people would also bring a hired girl along with them to the mill when they had to have things sifted; that was done by hand, and the girl had to help with that. There was a lot to do at Øresø mill back then. But the worst was when there was no wind, since windmills at the time didn't have any backup power. Then they'd come driving from a long way off with big loads, yes it would happen that they'd come at four in the morning to get there first. Mill guests would come until late out in the evening and all day Sunday.]

Although there would have been small regional differences between the work at Øresø and Fuldbro, the mills were approximately the same size, and the rhythm of the workday was probably similar.

The journeyman was also responsible for keeping the millstones in good condition. In most water mills, the lower millstone was fixed, while the upper grinding stone was turned by a series of gears coupled to an axle that was in turn driven by a gear works turned by the water rushing through the sluiceway. The millstones were made of different materials, although the best stones were the Rheinish stones, since they were porous and soft, and easy to recut, insuring that the grinding surface had a regular shape. Millstones from Skåne tended to be hard and quickly became smooth, making them all but useless for grinding. By the 1880s, artificial millstones were starting to appear. These composite millstones used flint, and stayed sharper much longer. Not

surprisingly, up through the early twentieth century, most mills and home mills had switched to the use of these new millstones. Apart from grinding stones, most mills also had husking stones, used to husk grain such as barley. In Sørensen's description above, the apprentice is charged with the husking, while the journeyman is in charge of the actual milling.

Milling required significantly more skill than simply tossing a bag of grain into the mill opening and waiting for it to come out the other end. The speed of the mill and the condition of the grain all were factors in the quality of the end product. A journeyman would have had to know how to mill to different grades of fineness for all the different grains at different degrees of dryness. He would have had to know how to repair the millstones, keep the sluices in working order, and repair the machinery, including the mill gears and millstone supports. Balancing the millstones so that they turned freely without wobble was an important task, as an out of balance millstone would not only grind poorly, but could also cause serious damage to the millworks. The journeyman would also have had to know how to keep track of the constant parade of customers with varying amounts and varying types of grain to be milled. Finally, the journeyman would have had to make sure that the customers were cared for in the mill room, and that their horses were cared for in the stalls. Add to that the ancillary functions of keeping track of the eel fishery, and it seems amazing that Peder had time to play music, read books, and tell stories.

Spillemand (Local Musicians)

Although a miller by profession, one of Peder's passions was playing music. Local musicians were in considerable

demand throughout rural Denmark, being called on to play at family and community celebrations and the ubiquitous *legestue*—parties that were arranged by young men and women to celebrate seasonal festivals such as Christmas or Carnival (*Fastelavn*). By World War I, different musical rhythms and different styles of dance had begun to win over even rural youth. Consequently, the *spillemand*, particularly those who were not interested in learning new rhythms or new instruments—the piano and drum were moving into places of prominence once held by the fiddle and the accordion—were unable to continue the profession. As the musical landscape changed, the *spillemand* were replaced by traveling orchestras, gramophones and radio.

Few details are known about Peder's experiences as a local musician, apart from the brief descriptions provided by Plovgaard and the passing mention by Tang Kristensen. But details of the life of another *spillemand*, Peder Pedersen (1856-1937), known as "Jyde Peter," provide insight into the *spillemand* tradition of one of Peder's contemporaries. It is very likely that "Bitte Jens" Christensen knew "Jyde Peter," since both of them lived in the tiny village of Ersted, and "Jyde Peder" was roughly the same age as Bitte Jens's children. Similarly, Jyde Peder was only a few degrees of separation away from Peder Johansen himself. Jyde Peter's career as a musician started at a very early age when his parents discovered that the three-year-old Peter could sing along to a melody played on a violin by the local tailor (Nordjysk folkekultur nodehefte 1995, 3). His parents bought him a small concertina, and later, as his musical talents became more developed, a violin.

Jyde Peder came from a modest background. His father was a clog maker and a farmer as were most of the cotters who lived in close proximity to the forest. When Jyde Peter was four years old, his family moved from his mother's foster

father's small house to a house of their own. They had been given a small plot of land by Jyde Peder's paternal grandfather, the smith in Årestrup, on which to build. One day, his maternal grandfather found himself in need of a second fiddle for a large party he was planning and, when he was unable to find someone experienced, he turned to Jyde Peder's parents. Jyde Peder, who was only nine years old at the time, jumped at the chance. According to his memoirs, he performed competently and energetically at the party that lasted through the night, finally breaking up at six in the morning. Parties that lasted through the night were the norm, and it is certain that Peder Johansen played frequently at such all night affairs. Describing these parties, and Jyde Peter writes, "Ballerne kunne være ret livlige. Det skulle helst ende med slagsmål. Nar de et havde været opp at slås, så havde der ingenting været ved ballet" [The balls could be quite lively. It was best if they ended in a fight. If they didn't have a fight, then the ball hadn't really amounted to anything] (Nordjysk folkekultur 1995, 13). By the age of eleven, Jyde Peter had managed to learn how to play the flute, and at a forest dance (*skovbal*) in Hobro, he so impressed the bandleader that he was asked to join the orchestra.

At about this time, Jyde Peter's father became the manager of the large local mill, Røde Mølle, and in an intriguing intersection with Peder Johansen, Jyde Peder became an apprentice miller (his characterization of himself as "2. møllesvend" or second journeyman miller seems a bit unlikely, as he was still only twelve years old) (Nordjysk folkekultur 1995, 9). Despite his work at the mill, he was well on the way to launching a career as a musician. The orchestra leader from the forest dance recruited him heavily, and after a meeting in November in Hobro, Jyde Peter writes, "[jeg] var ... med dem i egnen omkring Hobro til bryllupper og andre fester og legestuer, også alene, og i min egen egn, både

sammen med morbror Niels som jo lærte mig noder til begyndelsen” [I was with them at weddings and other parties and gatherings in the area around Hobro, and also alone and in my own area with my uncle Niels who had taught me to read notes in the beginning] (Nordjysk folkekultur 1995, 9). Working in the mill for his father, and then playing with the Hobro orchestra left little time for school and, as with Peder Johansen, Jyde Peter developed an uneasy relationship with ministers and schoolteachers. The local minister was apparently aware of Jyde Peter’s extraordinary musical talent and, once Jyde Peter was confirmed, wished him luck with what turned out to be a successful musical career (Nordjysk folkekultur 1995, 9). By the time Jyde Peter reached fifteen years of age, his path had diverged dramatically from that chosen by Peder Johansen. Rather than sticking to the mill, Jyde Peter first joined the military to play in their orchestra, and later became a musician in Copenhagen, playing for C. C. Møller at *Folketeatret* (The Folk Theater), Olfert Jespersen at the Copenhagen Zoo, and as the reserve oboist at the Royal Theater under the direction of Johan Svendsen. Back in Jutland, *spillemand* like Peder Johansen continued to play for local dances, parties and weddings.

One of the interesting features of Jyde Peter’s memoirs is a short overview of the local *spillemand* in the Årestrup area at the end of the 1860s and the beginning of the 1870s. This unusual list of twenty-five musicians from six adjacent parishes provides a sense of the number of musicians one could expect to find in an area of this size at the time. He lists a total of nine musicians for Årestrup parish, his own parish, and it might well be that he forgot others from the neighboring parishes. Given this, the implication is that there were nine or ten musicians in each parish who were competent enough to play at local parties. Frequently, *spillemand* played alone but, when the parties were bigger, they

would play as a pair or, in some cases, as a trio, a quartet or even more. In this manner, a network of *spillemand* that crossed parish boundaries developed. The development of such a network is not surprising, and mimics most of the other networks that characterized social life in rural Denmark. A similar network of influence, albeit far more diffuse, also informs the storytelling tradition.

The network of *spillemand* to which Jyde Peter belonged placed him in the general circle with others who had played with and learned from Peder Johansen's father "Kat Søren." In nearby Salten Skov, two of the best-known *spillemand* were "Kren Piesen" and "Carlsen" (Kristiansen 1946, 151). Carlsen, like Jyde Peter, had played in the military orchestra, as well as one of the traveling orchestras of east Jutland. His partner, Kren Piesen, had learned a great deal from Kat Søren but also from another *spillemand*, Wartho, who was also a musician at the *folketeater* in Copenhagen with Jyde Peter, completing this wide circle of influence (Kristiansen 1946, 151). It also creates a link, however tenuous, between Peder Johansen and "Bitte Jens" from Ersted.

Jyde Peter makes another distinction in his list of local *spillemand*, namely that between the "amateur" and the "professional." This distinction has several implications for an understanding of *spillemand* in these small communities. In his list, he mentions only four amateurs. Since all the other *spillemand* are listed with their main jobs, such as "Maler Jakob i Årdestrup" or "Bette Jens, møllersvend i Nørvads mølle," the use of the term "amateur" must refer to the frequency with which they played at parties and the eagerness with which they marketed their services. The implication is that, for the professional *spillemand*, there was a lively, competitive market for their services, and plenty of word-of-mouth advertising. People's experiences at parties must also have played a significant role in this market. Stories that tell of

adept or inept *spillemand* would accordingly have been an important part of this informal market. By Jyde Peter's standards, Peder Johansen would not have been considered an amateur. His musical pedigree and the obvious degree to which he used his music to supplement his income from the mill would have placed him firmly in the ranks of the "professionals." Along with his considerable talent as a fiddler, Peder's ability to make use of stories about his well-known father and foster grandfather would have been useful marketing devices.

Jyde Peter also offers short comments on both the repertoires and the playing styles of other *spillemand*—so, for instance, Hjort Anders from Årestrup played with the bow in his left hand and "omvendte strenge" [reversed strings] (a *spillemand* precursor to Jimie Hendrix), while Kræn Bentsen, a tailor from Årestrup, was "særlig flink til at sekundere" [really good at playing second fiddle] (Nordjysk folkekultur 1995, 7). The repertoires of the *spillemand* were in constant flux, with the musicians adapting as well as they could to new musical influences, incorporating newly written and popular songs, and maintaining a catalog of old favorites. A *spillemand* would have been expected to have a fairly large repertoire with a range of styles including mazurkas, waltzes, polkas, the "hamborger" and the "hopsa." Although most *spillemand* played from memory or from simple "fake" books, Jyde Peder eventually wrote down many of the songs he could remember. In these transcriptions he included annotations to indicate features of the music not usually included in collections of folk melodies such as those collected by Tang Kristensen. These notes included descriptions of tempo, ornamentation and dynamics (Nordjysk folkekultur nodehefte 1995, 4).

Jyde Peter also offers some interesting comments that hint at differences in regional styles of playing, writing, "Alle

hvad boede vest for Årdestrup kendte ikke til harmonie. Men fra Årdestrup og østpå lavede de ganske gode dobbeltgreb ud af hovedet, medens dem vestpå spillede melodier allesammen, lige meget hvor mange de var. De var af denne grund ubehjælpssomme, når de ikke kendte stykkerne samme” [Everyone who lived west of Årdestrup didn’t know anything about harmony. But from Årdestrup and off to the east they could invent quite nice double stops, while those to the west all played the melody together, no matter how many there were. Because of that, they weren’t very helpful if they didn’t know the same piece] (Nordjysk folkekultur 1995, 7). The *spillemand*, particularly the professionals, were keenly aware of what others were up to, whom they had learned from, how they played, with whom they played, and their individual competence. Furthermore, they were also quick to emphasize what they could do that others could not, and eager to build their local reputations through successful gigs. Although Jyde Peter moved to Copenhagen, and continued to develop musically learning other styles and instruments not commonly found in the rural villages, he clearly had an interest in the persistence of the *spillemand* tradition in Jutland. Near the end of his life, he not only wrote his memoirs, but he also wrote down many of the pieces that he had played when he worked as a *spillemand* in Årestrup and Hobro. Fortunately, he managed to record two gramophone discs with these melodies just days before his death. These recordings provide a further window into the *spillemand* tradition that was an important part of Peder Johansen’s life.

Overview of Peder’s repertoire

It is difficult to compare Peder’s repertoire to that of his peers, since so few of his age cohort were included as

informants in the large folklore collections of the late nineteenth century. Similarly, it is difficult to make any definitive statements about his musical repertoire, since no one collected it. Nevertheless, certain features of his legend repertoire—in comparison to that of other legend informants—can be teased out. Peder's repertoire is skewed toward believable stories, both legends and descriptions of the local environment, and folk beliefs and practices (Tangherlini 1994, 210). There are but a few aspects of his legend repertoire that stand out as statistically unusual. Perhaps because of his relationship to the church, ministers appear more frequently in his legends than would be expected (Tangherlini 1994, 210). Not surprisingly, women appear with far less frequency in his stories than would be expected (8% versus 35%).¹³

First Three Meetings—1888

Tang Kristensen met Peder during a two and a half week field trip through eastern Jutland, in February, 1888 (MO vol. 3, 158-62). His route took him on a long p-shaped loop up the length of Jutland, with numerous side trips. His dedication to (or perhaps obsession with) collecting is clear in his description of the trip. In a letter home, he wrote that, because of all the snow, it was difficult for him to get much out of the trip. Yet when he arrived in Horsens, where he received a letter from his wife telling him that his children had the measles (Olaf and Laura were very sick, and Frode was not as bad), instead of abandoning the trip and going straight home, he decided to extend the trip, hoping to salvage his collecting efforts (MO vol. 3, 161). He went on to visit the mother of Teacher Hovgaard in Grejs, who refused to tell him any stories at all, and then decided to walk the long way

to Vejle along the snow-covered Grejsdals road, a distance of well over six kilometers. From Vejle, he continued on to Kolding to conduct business with a publisher, and finally he returned home, not because his children were sick, but because “det saa ud til mere Vinter” [it looked like more winter was on its way] (MO vol. 3, 162).

Despite Tang Kristensen’s negative evaluation of the trip, it did yield excellent records from some truly exceptional storytellers. Besides Peder, he also collected from a pair of storytellers, Michael Hansen and Jens Nielsen Bæk, both of whom were among his best informants. The field trip spanned a total of one hundred and eighteen field diary pages—certainly among the most successful of all his field trips, despite its brevity. Peder, Mikkel and Jens’s stories account for well over two thirds of what he managed to collect.

Tang Kristensen’s first meetings with Peder Johansen took place over the course of several days. Peder was busy both with his work in the mill and with playing fiddle at local celebrations. Consequently, it was difficult for Tang Kristensen to find enough time to quietly sit and record from Peder. Although Tang Kristensen bemoaned the encroachments into the collecting time, these interruptions should be seen as part of the normal performance context. In this manner, Peder’s repertoire, particularly the first three sessions, might reflect a more normal performance than the forced interviews on which Tang Kristensen usually relied. Peder’s performances were not solely for Tang Kristensen, and the flow of the sessions were subject to external disturbances—another customer at the mill, for example.

During the third session, Tang Kristensen implied that Peder was both tired and hung-over, describing his encounters with Peder over three days of collecting as follows:

Man havde fortalt mig, at Peder Johansen, der havde sit Hjem nede ved Østerenden af Mos Sø, var saa udmærket til at fortælle Historier, og jeg maatte da om til ham. Han var rigtignok temmelig ung og ugift, men jeg vilde ikke fortryde at komme til ham, sagde man. Han var ellers Møllersvend i Fuldbro Mølle, men han var ogsaa Egnens Spillemand, saa hans Tid var meget optaget. Efter at have taget Afsked med Lærer Meldgaards gæstfrie Hjem gik jeg saa om forbi Mos Sø.... Da Peder Johansen ikke var i sit Hjem, maatte jeg altsaa op til Fuldbro Mølle. Men han skulde passe sin Gjerning og kunde ikke fortælle for mig uden om Aftenen. Jeg gik saa op til Taaning og besøgte der baade R. P. Randlev og Lærer Hovgaard, og ved Aftenstid gik jeg saa ned til Møllen igjen, og satte mig i Møllestuen, hvor alle Møllegæsterne kom ind paa gammel Maner og fik en Skjænk. Det varede syv lange og syv brede, inden Peder Johansen blev færdig med sit Arbejde og kom ind og fik sin Nadver, og saa endelig kunde sætte sig hos mig. Saadan tilbragte jeg to Aftener der i Møllen. Man bød mig intet til Livets Ophold, men lod mig dog sidde i Fred, og ved Sengetid søgte jeg op til Taaning for der at faa Nattely hos Hovgaard.... Nu havde jeg hørt, at Peder Johansen skulde spille ved et Fastelavnsgilde i en Gaard, der laa midtvejs mellem Lille-Taaning og Taaning By, og saa gik jeg derind og talte med ham i en Pavse og fik ham til at

love mig, at han næste Dag vilde komme ind til Degnens og blive der og fortælle for mig. Jeg fik nemlig for lidt ud af det der nede i Møllen, der var alt for megen Forstyrrelse, og den Dag var han nemlig fri. Han kom ogsaa efter bestemmelsen, men da han havde spillet det meste af Natten og ikke havde faaet sovet ud, var han jo ikke allerbedst tilpas til at fortælle. Dog gik det helt godt, og vi fik meget skrevet op den Dag (MO vol. 3, 158-9).

[They had told me that Peder Johansen, who lived down on the eastern end of Mos lake, was incredibly good at telling stories and that I had to go to visit him. He was, to be true, quite young and unmarried, but I wouldn't regret visiting him, they said. He was the journeyman miller at Fuldbro Mill, but he was also the area's local musician, so he was quite busy. After I took my leave of Teacher Meldgaard's hospitable home, I walked past Mos lake... Since Peder wasn't at home, I had to go up to Fuldbro mill. But he had to take care of his work and couldn't tell stories for me except in the evening. I walked up to Taaning and visited both R. P. Randlev and Teacher Hovgaard there, and in the evening I went down to the mill again, and sat down in the mill room where all of the mill guests came according to the old customs and had a drink. It was ages before Peder finished his work and came in to have his dinner, and then he could finally sit

down with me. I spent two evenings like that in the mill. No one offered me anything, but they let me sit there in peace, and at bedtime, I went off to Taaning to get lodgings with Hovgaard... Now I had heard that Peder Johansen was supposed to play at a Carnival party at a farm that was halfway between Little Taaning and Taaning village, and so I went in there and talked to him during a break and got him to promise me that the next day he would come to the parish clerk's place and tell stories to me there. I was not getting enough down there in the mill, there were far too many interruptions, and he had that day off. He came as we'd agreed, but since he'd played most of the night and hadn't slept enough, he wasn't in the best shape to tell stories. But it went quite well and we got a lot written down that day.]

In the accompanying presentation of Peder's repertoire, each of the three sessions are broken out from the other—the first two were collected in the millhouse, while the third was collected the day after the Carnival party in the local teacher's house.

Fourth Meeting—1895

Tang Kristensen's fourth visit with Peder took place during his final photographic trip with Peter Olsen, in September 1895. This trip took Tang Kristensen and Olsen along the eastern coast of Jutland, between Vejle and Århus.

It is unclear if Tang Kristensen collected any stories from Peder during this visit, or if he returned afterwards to collect these last stories. There are no subsequent entries in *Minder og Oplevelser* concerning Peder, and the field diary entries for the fourth session are interspersed with other notes that Tang Kristensen made during the other photographic trips. It is likely that Tang Kristensen intended only to collect biographies from his informants, and to keep them all within a small section of his field diaries. When he discovered that he had a little extra time—and that Peder had the time to tell stories—he flipped several pages ahead in the field diaries, and wrote Peder's stories there (7131a-7144b). Indeed, there is some confusion in the field diaries from pages 7051a through 7138a; the order of the notes do not follow the order of the field trips, and it appears that Tang Kristensen deliberately left blank pages, perhaps for exactly the eventuality of an informant having time to tell and he having time to listen and write.

Notes

¹ If his best legend informants are any gauge, the median age for his informants was sixty-three years old (Tangherlini 1994).

² It is standard practice in Danish cemeteries to remove the headstones of people whose closest relatives have stopped paying rent on the burial plot. This lapse in payment usually occurs within one or two generations.

³ She was the child of his brother Søren and Søren's wife Kirstine Christiansdatter.

⁴ Lægdsmand's suggestion that he was married to Ane Nielsdatter in April of 1839 appears to be based on a misreading of the church records, since Peder is clearly still married to Anne Sørensdatter in the 1845 census (Lægdsmand 1954, 130).

⁵ *Juleroser* was a magazine that came out from 1881-1944, initially edited by Vilhelm Bergsøe, and included both stories and illustrations.

⁶ The expression, "så er du billig" [then you are cheap] is hard to translate accurately given the meaning of "cheap" in colloquial English. Peder clearly meant that she would easily be able to break many hearts with her dress, but that she was too good a person to do so.

⁷ See the discussion of other holdings of Øm monastery, particularly in the town of Mejlby, in the chapter on Ane Margrete Jensdatter.

⁸ Indeed, by the 1930s, the mill had abandoned milling altogether in favor of fishing, particularly eel. The current mill does no milling whatsoever, but still has a smokehouse producing gourmet eel.

⁹ The skirmish took place on July 16, 1849.

¹⁰ In 1892, Gjedved was joined by Ry folkehøjskole. Founded by Helge Hostrup, this school was also firmly in the Grundtvigian's camp.

¹¹ According to the Danish Law (1683), these were smiths, carpenters, masons, coopers, wheel smiths, potters, homespun tailors, and clog makers.

¹² In a 1907 reform to the commerce law of 1857, the measures *skappe* and *tonde* were eliminated. A *tonde*, or barrel, equalled 8 *skapper* or 139 liters of grain.

¹³ A more exhaustive analysis of Peder's repertoire can be found in my earlier study of legend tradition in Denmark (Tangherlini 1994, 205-45).

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Abbreviations, where used, follow in boldface at the end of each entry.

- 1868a. *Jydske Folkeviser, Toner, Sagn og Æventyr*. Copenhagen: Kr. Eriksen.
- 1868b. *Jydske Folkeviser og Toner*. Copenhagen: Kr. Eriksen.
- 1871–1897. *Jydske Folkeminder, især fra Hammerum herred*. 13 volumes (listed separately below). Copenhagen: Various publishers. **JFm**
1871. *Jydske Folkeviser og Toner, samlede af Folkemunde, især i Hammerum Herred med en efterskrift af Svend Grundtvig*. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 1. Copenhagen: C. G. Iversen. **JFm I**
1876. *Gamle jydske Folkeviser*. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 2. Copenhagen: Gyldendal. **JFm II**
1876. *Jydske Folkesagn*. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 3. Copenhagen: Gyldendal. **JFm III**
1880. *Sagn fra Jylland*. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 4. Copenhagen: Karl Schønberg. **JFm IV**
1881. *Æventyr fra Jylland. 1. samling*. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 5. Copenhagen: Karl Schønberg. **JFm V**
1883. *Aftryk af en Kunstbog. En bog om adskielligt Videnskaber som tilhør Mig Casper Pedersen av Højbærg 1785 den 7. April*. Viborg: Forfatterens forlag.
1883. *Sagn og Overtro fra Jylland*. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 6.

- Copenhagen: Karl Schønberg. **JFm VI**
1884. *Æventyr fra Jylland. 2. samling*. Jydske Folkeminder, volume 7. Copenhagen: Karl Schønberg. **JFm VII**
- 1884–1888. *Danske folkeæventyr, optegnede af Folkemindesamfundets medlemmer og udarbejdet af Evald Tang Kristensen*. Viborg: Forfatterens forlag.
- 1884–1889. *Skattegraveren. Et tidsskrift*. 12 volumes. Kolding: Dansk samfund til indsamling af folkeminder. **Sk**
1886. *Sagn og overtro fra Jylland. Anden samplings første afdeling*. Jydske Folkeminder, volume 8. Kolding: Konrad Jørgensen. **JFm VIII**
1887. *Vindt Mølle og dens Ejere*. Viborg: P. V. Backhausen.
1888. *Prover af jyske landskabsmål*. Kolding: Forfatterens forlag.
1888. *Sagn og overtro fra Jylland. Anden samplings anden afdeling*. Jydske folkeminder, volume 9. Kolding: Konrad Jørgensen. **JFm IX**
1889. *Nogle Efterretninger om Herregaarden Lerchenfeldt (Bonderup's) ældre Historie*. Udg. med Understøttelse af det jyske historisk-topografiske Selskab. Viborg: F. V. Backhausen.
1889. *100 gamle jyske folkeviser*. Jydske Folkeminder, volume 10. Copenhagen: Gyldendal. **JFm X**
1890. *Danske ordsprog og mundheld, skjæmtesprog, stedlige talemåder, ordspil og samtaleord*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal. **Ord**
1890. *Efterslæt til "Skattegraveren."* Kolding: Sjødt and Weiss. **Sk efter**
1890. *Mikkel Skrædders Historier*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.
1891. *Gamle Viser i Folkemunde. 4. Samling*. Jydske Folkeminder, volume 11. Copenhagen: Gyldendal. **JFm XI**
1891. *Mosekonen brygger. Æventyr og Legender saml. af Evald Tang Kristensen, fortalte af Børge Janssen. Med Tegninger af danske Kunstnere*. Copenhagen: I. H. Schubothé.
1891. *Øen Anholt i sagn og sæd efter gamle folks mundtlige meddelelser*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.
1891. *Øen Holmsland og dens Klit, beskrevet, særlig med*

- kulturbistoriske Hensyn*. Viborg: F. V. Backhausen
- 1891–1894. *Gamle folks fortællinger om det jyske almueliv, som det er blevet ført i mands minde, samt enkelte oplysende sidestykker fra øerne*. 6 volumes. Kolding: Sjødt and Weiss. **JAH**
1892. *Kuriose Overhøringer i Skole og Kirke optegnede efter Folkemunde til lærerigt Exempel og megen Fornøjelse for nuværende og vordende Pædagoger*. 1. samling. Århus: Albert Bayer. **KØ I**
1892. *Molbo- og Aggerbobistorier samt andre dermed beslægtede fortællinger*. Volume 1. Viborg and Copenhagen: F. V. Backhausen and Gyldendal. **MA I**
- 1892–1901. *Danske sagn, som de har lydt i folkemunde, udelukkende efter utrykte kilder*. 7 volumes. Århus: Århus Folkeblads Bogtrykkeri. **DS**
1895. *Æventyr fra Jylland*. 3. Samling. Jyske folkeminder, volume 12. Copenhagen: Karl Schønberg. **JFm XII**
- 1895 (editor). *Smådigte af en jysk Bondepige*. Kolding: Forfatterens forlag.
1896. *Danske Børnerim, Remser og Lege udelukkende efter Folkemunde*. Århus: Jacob Zeuner. **Lege**
1896. *Danske Dyrefabler og Kjæderemser*. Århus: Zeuners Bogtrykkeri. **Fab**
1896. *Fra Bindestue og Kølle. Jyske Folkeæventyr*. Første samling. Copenhagen: H. C. Rom. **FBK I**
1897. *Æventyr fra Jylland*. 4. Samling. Jyske folkeminder, volume 13. Århus and Copenhagen: Karl Schønberg. **JFm XIII**
1897. *Bindestuens Saga. Jyske Folkeæventyr*. Copenhagen: N. C. Rom.
1897. *Fra Bindestue og Kølle. Jyske Folkeæventyr*. Anden samling. Copenhagen: H. C. Rom. **FBK II**
1898. *Fra Mindebo. Jyske Folkeæventyr*. Århus: Forfatterens forlag.
1899. *Kuriose Overhøringer i Skole og Kirke optegnede efter*

- Folkemunde til lærerigt Exempel og megen Fornøjelse for nuværende og vordende Pædagoger. 2. samling.* Århus: Forfatterens forlag. **KØ II**
1899. *Vore Fædres Kirketjeneste belyst ved Exempler, optegnede efter Folkemunde med et Tillæg om Præster og Degne og Studenter.* Århus: Forfatterens forlag. **VFK**
1900. *Danske Skjæmtesagn, saml. af Folkemunde af Evald Tang Kristensen. 1. samling.* Århus: Forfatterens forlag. **DSk I**
- 1900–1902. *Gamle folks fortællinger om det jyske almueliv, som det er blevet fort i mands minde, samt enkelte ophylsende sidestykker fra øerne. Tillægsbind. 6 volumes.* Århus: Forfatterens forlag. **JAT**
1901. *Et hundrede gamle danske Skjæmteviser efter Nutidssang.* Århus: Jacob Zeuners Bogtrykkeri. **DSkv**
1903. *Molbo- og Aggerbob historier samt andre dermed beslægtede fortællinger. 2. Samling.* Århus: Forfatterens forlag. **MA II**
1914. *Danske Folkegaader. Efter trykte og utrykte Kilder.* Vejle: Forfatterens forlag.
1917. *Gjellerup Sogns Degnehistorie samt en lille Fremstilling af Skolevæsenets Udvikling der.* Vejle: Forfatterens forlag.
1918. *Ole Veed-Fald. En lille Lærnedstegning.* Vejle: Forfatterens forlag.
1919. *Noget mere om C. A. Thyregod.* Kolding: Forfatterens forlag.
1922. *En Rektorkaldelse i Vejle Skole m. m. Samlingen til jydsk Historie og Topografi.* Århus: Forfatterens forlag.
1922. *Gamle Raad for Sygdomme hos Mennesket.* Viborg: Jens Thomsens Bogtrykkeri.
- 1923–1928. *Minder og Oplevelser. 4 volumes.* Viborg: Forfatterens forlag. **MO**
1923. With Hans Ellekilde. *Evald Tang Kristensens Æresbog.* Danmarks Folkeminder 28. Copenhagen: Schønberg.
1924. *Et lille Bidrag til Jødeforfølgelsernes Historie.* Copenhagen:

Charles Johansens Bogtrykkeri.

1924. *Nogle smaa Bidrag til Vester-Velling-Skjern Sognes Degnehistorie*. Århus: Forfatterens forlag.
1927. *Gamle Kildevæld. Nogle Billeder af Visasangere og Æventyrfortællere*. Viborg: Forfatterens forlag. **GKV**
- 1928–1939. *Danske sagn, som de har lydt i folkemunde, udelukkende efter utrykte kilder saml. og tildels optegnede af Evald Tang Kristensen*. Ny Række. 7 volumes. Copenhagen: Woels Forlag. **DSnr**
1930. *Heden saaledes som den var ca. 1880. Med Ill. efter Malerier af Hans Smidth, N. F. Schiøttz-Jensen og J. la Cour*. Copenhagen: Cai M. Woels Forlag.
1943. With Johannes E. Tang Kristensen. *Evald Tang Kristensen 1843-1943. En Samling Artikler og en Bibliografi*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard.
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1981. With Peter Olsen, Erik Høvring Pedersen, and Johannes E. Tang Kristensen. *Gamle kildevæld. Portrætter af danske eventyrfortællere og visesangere fra århundredskiftet redaktion og kommentarer ved Erik Høvring Pedersen*. Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag. **GKV2**
1981. With Jens Sigsgaard. *Börnerim, remser og lege udvalgt og kommenteret af Jens Sigsgaard*. Copenhagen: Strandberg.
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1991. With M. A. S. Lund. *Steen Steensen Blichers Liv og Gerning. Artikler fra Illustreret Tidende 1882-83. Nogle småbidrag fra "Skizzer og Bladartikler" 1899. Nogle udgivernoter 1918*. Herning: Blicher-Selskabet and Poul Kristensen.
1995. With Vibeke Arndal. *Evald Tang Kristensens Eventyr fra Jylland. Tegninger af Erik Böttzauw*. Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag.
1999. With Jean Renaud. *La cendrouse et autres contes du Jutland*. Paris: José Corti.

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Abbreviations and Measurements

Below are two lists: the first is a list of abbreviations used throughout the book and accompanying digital content, and the second is an explanation of certain units of measurement and currency. Where possible, these units have also been converted to the equivalent measurements in the metric system. The abbreviations refer to archival resources at the Danish Folklore Archive (Dansk folkemindesamling), Evald Tang Kristensen's published collections, and standard folklore indices.

Abbreviations

In the following list, works by Evald Tang Kristensen are identified as by "ETK." Only short book titles are given; for full titles and publication information, please refer to the bibliographies. References using these abbreviations include the appropriate volume number in roman numerals immediately after the abbreviation (if not already included and if necessary), an alphabetical section reference (if present), and the story or record number of the item. For example, a story numbered 217 in the second section of the second volume of *Danske sagn*, is referred to as DS II B 217.

ATU. Hans-Jörg Uther. 2004. *The Types of International Folktales*.

Dfs. Dansk folkemindesamling (Danish Folklore Archive)

- 1906/23. Special collection, *Sagn og tro*.
1906/60. Special collection.
1906/135. Special collection, *Biographical sketches of folklorists and collectors*.
1929/1. Original copies of materials sent to Kristensen.
1929/94. Copies of proverbs from L. N. Bertelsen's collection.
1929/102. Unpublished third series of *Jyske almueliv* I–VI.
1929/129. Alphabetical index to all of Kristensen's informants.
1929/137. Newspaper articles and unpublished notes about Tang Kristensen.
DgF. Svend Grundtvig et al. 1966–1976 [1853–1976]. *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*.
DS. ETK. 1980 [1892–1901]. *Danske sagn*. 8 volumes.
DSk I. ETK. 1900. *Danske Skjæmtesagn. 1. samling*.
DSkv. ETK. 1901. *Et hundrede gamle danske Skjæmteviser efter Nutidssang*.
DSnr. ETK. 1928–1939. *Danske sagn. Ny Række*. 7 volumes.
Fab. ETK. 1896. *Danske Dyrefabler og Kjæderemser*.
FBK I. ETK. 1896. *Fra Bindestue og Kølle*, volume 1.
FBK II. ETK. 1897. *Fra Bindestue og Kølle*, volume 2.
GKV. ETK. 1927. *Gamle Kildevæld*.
GKV2. ETK, Peter Olsen, and Johannes E. Tang Kristensen. 1981. *Gamle kildevæld*.
JAH. ETK. 1891–1894. *Gamle folks fortællinger om det jyske almueliv*. 6 volumes.
JAT. ETK. 1900–1902. *Gamle folks fortællinger om det jyske almueliv*. Supplement. 6 volumes.
JFm. ETK. 1871–1897. *Jydske Folkeminder*. 13 volumes.
JFm I. ETK. 1871. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 1, *Jydske Folkeviser og Toner*.
JFm II. ETK. 1876. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 2, *Gamle jydske Folkeviser*.

- JFm III.** ETK. 1876. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 3, *Jydske Folkesagn*.
- JFm IV.** ETK. 1880. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 4, *Sagn fra Jylland*.
- JFm V.** ETK. 1881. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 5, *Æventyr fra Jylland*.
- JFm VI.** ETK. 1883. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 6, *Sagn og Overtro fra Jylland*.
- JFm VII.** ETK. 1884. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 7, *Æventyr fra Jylland*.
- JFm VIII.** ETK. 1886. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 8, *Sagn og overtro fra Jylland*.
- JFm IX.** ETK. 1888. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 9, *Sagn og overtro fra Jylland*.
- JFm X.** ETK. 1889. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 10, *100 gamle jyske folkeviser*.
- JFm XI.** ETK. 1891. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 11, *Gamle Viser i Folkemunde*.
- JFm XII.** ETK. 1895. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 12, *Æventyr fra Jylland*.
- JFm XIII.** ETK. 1897. *Jydske Folkeminder*, volume 13, *Æventyr fra Jylland*.
- KØ I.** ETK. 1892. *Kuriøse Overhøringer i Skole og Kirke*. Volume 1.
- KØ II.** ETK. 1899. *Kuriøse Overhøringer i Skole og Kirke*. Volume 2.
- Lege.** ETK. 1896. *Danske Børnerim, Remser og Lege udelukkende efter Folkemunde*.
- MA I.** ETK. 1892. *Molbo- og Aggerbob historier samt andre dermed beslægtede fortællinger*. Volume 1.
- MA II.** ETK. 1903. *Molbo- og Aggerbob historier samt andre dermed beslægtede fortællinger*. Volume 2.
- ML.** Reidar Thoralf Christiansen. 1992 [1958]. *The Migratory Legends*.

MO. ETK. 1923–1928. *Minder og Oplevelser*. 4 volumes.

Ord. ETK. 1890. *Danske ordsprog og mundheld*.

Sk. ETK. 1884–1889. *Skattegraveren*. 12 volumes.

Sk efter. ETK. 1890. *Efterslæt til "Skattegraveren."*

VFK. ETK. 1899. *Vore Fædres Kirketjeneste belyst ved Exempler*.

Æv. Margit Brandt, ed. 1974. *Registrant over Evald Tang Kristensens Samling af Eventyr*.

Measurements

Agricultural Units

In 1907, Denmark switched entirely to the metric system. Before then, the following units applied to agricultural measurements:

Hartkorn: From the term “hard grain” (rye or barley). A unit of measure used to determine the value of a piece of land, based on its expected productivity. The use of the *hartkorn* as a measure of productivity for taxation purposes was abandoned in 1903.

Tønde: A unit of measure that can refer either to (a) land, and usually translated as “acre” despite it being somewhat larger than an acre (see below) or (b) a measure of volume, and usually translated as “barrel”.

1 tønne (tdr) of land = 14,000 kvadrat alen = 5,516 square meters (approx. 1.36 acres)

1 tønne hartkorn = 139.2 liters or 100 kilograms of “hard grain”.

One *tønne hartkorn* was the normative amount of taxation that 5 1/7 *tønne* of land would create. This level of taxation could

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rise or fall based on the valuation of the productivity of the land on a 24-step scale.

1 tønne (barrel) = 8 skjæpper (measure) = 139.12 liters

1 skjæppe (sk) = 4 fjerdingkar = 17.39 liters

1 fjerdingkar (fj) = 8 album = 4.3475 liters

1 album (alb) = 0.5438 liter

Distance, Weights, and Measures

1 mil = 4 fjerdingvej = 7.53 km = 4.68 miles

1 fjerdingvej = 3,000 alen

1 alen = 2 fod = 4 kvarter = 24 tommer = 63 centimeters

1 kande = 2 potter = 8 pægle = 1.9 liters

1 potte = 4 pægle = 0.96 liter

1 pægl = 0.2 liter

1 kop = 0.25 liter

1 favn = 72 kubikfod = 2.2 cubic meters

1 fad = 4 oksehoveder = 927.5 liters

1 oksehoved = 6 ankre = 226 liters

1 tønne korn (grain) = 144 potter = 8 skjæpper = 139.2 liters

1 tønne sild (herring) = 112 potter = 108.2 liters

1 tønne flydende vare (liquid) = 136 potter = 131.4 liters

1 pund = 0.5 kilogram (established by law in 1839)

1 dusin = 12 pieces (a dozen)

1 snes = 20 pieces

1 halvsnes = 10 pieces

Currency

Until the currency reform of 1873, several different currencies were used in Denmark. From 1713 until 1813, Danish money was based on the *rigsdaler* (rixdollar), which

was backed by silver. The word *daler* is a shortened form of the name of a Czech silver coin, the Joachimstaler, from 1518. One type of *rigsdaler*, which was used largely for daily commerce, was known as the *kurant*. Another *rigsdaler*, the *specie*, was used for more formal transactions and contained more silver. Consequently, these two types of *rigsdaler* were not equivalent in value, with 1 *rigsdaler kurant* containing 20.63 grams of silver as opposed to 25.28 grams in the *specie*.

In 1813, with the Danish state bankruptcy, the complicated *rigsdaler* was replaced by the *rigsbankdaler*, the value of which was set at $\frac{1}{2}$ of the previous *specie rigsdaler*. Despite the new official name, the *rigsbankdaler* was generally referred to as a *rigsdaler*. These currency systems were based on divisions of twelve:

12 penning = 1 skilling

16 skilling = 1 mark

6 mark = 1 *rigsdaler* or *daler* (sometimes referred to in English as the *rixdollar*)

The most common coins were the 4, 8 and 24 skilling (shilling) coins. The *krone* (crown), worth 8 marks, although part of the monetary system promulgated in 1625, was used largely only to keep track of debt, and there were few *krone* coins in circulation.

After 1873, the Danish monetary system was aligned with that of Norway and Sweden, with the *krone*, or crown, based on the gold standard, as the main currency. The crown was set as equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$ of a *rigsbankdaler*. This new system, implemented in 1875 and still current in Denmark, was a decimal system (as opposed to the earlier systems that were based on divisions of twelve) and consisted of *kroner* (crowns) and *øre*, with one *krone* equivalent to one hundred *øre*.

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Tangherlini, Timothy R. 2013. "[Fieldtrip date] Fieldtrip." In, *Danish Folktales, Legends, and Other Stories: The Danish Folklore Nexus*. Digital Materials. Seattle: University of Washington Press.