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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 eight 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 vogsens, 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 skjønnede, 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).