



SCANDINAVIAN BALLADS

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY SVEN H. ROSSEL

WITS II
NUMBER 2

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To Erik Dal
—in gratitude

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PREFACE

The Nordic countries have made a unique contribution to world literature with their balladry—epic dance songs of medieval origin which for centuries have been transmitted in oral tradition—both as regards to artistic quality and to the sheer number of texts that have been preserved from the 16th to the 20th century. These texts have survived in the manuscripts of the Renaissance aristocracy as well as in oral peasant tradition. This anthology attempts both to reflect the wide chronological span and the variation of sources. Over 500 different ballad types with more than 3,000 variants have been preserved in Denmark. Of the appr. 250 Swedish types 200 can be found in this Danish material and of the 200 Norwegian types 150 can be found in Danish and 100 in Swedish tradition. Actually Scandinavian balladry—including Faroese, Fenno-Swedish and Icelandic material—must be viewed as an entity since the common Scandinavian language during the Middle Ages offered no linguistic barriers to prevent the free flow of ballad texts from one country to the other.

Because of this Pan-Nordic perspective and the number of ballads in Danish an emphasis on material from Denmark is justified. In addition, Denmark is so far the only Scandinavian country which owns a complete scholarly edition as well as an impressive number of ballad anthologies available in English translation (see bibliography). These have to a great extent been utilized in this volume. I am very much indebted to the ballad scholarship of Karl-Ivar Hildeman and Bengt R. Jonsson (Stockholm) and Iørn Piø and Erik Dal (Copenhagen). Erik Dal's ballad edition from 1962 has served as an important source of inspiration. Discussions with David W. Colbert (Seattle) have proven very inspiring and fruitful and David has likewise taken upon himself the difficult task of translating a number of texts which were not available in English. I would like to express my gratitude to him and to the aforementioned colleagues as well as to Mrs. Janet Kuhn (Scandinavian Dept., University of Washington) who with utmost patience has typed and retyped my manuscript. I am also grateful for a grant from the Svend Grundtvig-Axel Olrik Foundation which made it possible for me to do research at the Royal Library of Copenhagen.

Sven H. Rossel

INTRODUCTION

During the 17th and 18th century—the periods of Baroque and Classicism—the majority of authors and scholars in Scandinavia rejected medieval balladry as barbaric and aesthetically worthless folk literature. A reversal of this standpoint took place during the pre-romantic period when a vivid interest in this anonymous poetry began to surface around 1770. This trend had its international parallels, as evidenced by the efforts of Thomas Percy in England and J. G. Herder in Germany. In a critical essay¹ the Schleswig writer H. W. von Gerstenberg thus mentions Percy's collection *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) claiming that Denmark in its balladry owned an even richer treasure than the English and the Scots.

The Nordic ballad genre seems to have developed first in Denmark and then spread via Sweden to the other West Nordic countries, Norway, Iceland and the Faroes, during the late Middle Ages. Whereas the East Nordic—Danish and Swedish—tradition is rooted in aristocratic circles the West Nordic is most likely a result of an active middle class, freeholders, craftsmen and merchants, who not only took up the genre but even developed it further by including new topics—Old Norse and Germanic legends.

Social differences, that is to say the lack of an actual landed aristocracy in the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway, in addition to thematic and stylistic differences makes it possible to distinguish between this West Nordic tradition, characterized by the heroic ballad, and an East Nordic tradition, characterized by the knightly ballad tradition (see below p. 7). The uniting element was the common medieval Scandinavian language which made it possible for a ballad text to move from one country to another and often makes it rather difficult to determine the country of origin.

Originally a main function of the medieval ballad was to accompany the chain dances. When the Middle Ages drew to a close this type of dance went out of fashion—except in the Faroes—and, particularly in Denmark and Sweden, the ballad survived only as a means of vocal entertainment. During the 16th century interest in balladry experienced a revival among the Danish and Swedish nobility, and the old texts were now recorded in song books or autograph albums together with later lyrics and poems from other countries. In the West Nordic areas, on the

other hand, the ballads remained only in oral tradition for another 200 years due to the lack of an upper class with antiquarian interests.

Because of the prolonged period the ballad texts have been part of peasant tradition, they frequently appear fragmentary and incoherent—aesthetically less satisfactory but certainly closer to the actual oral performance. Nor did the early collectors of folklore, the men and women of the Renaissance aristocracy, simply reproduce their sources, but selected and altered their material according to their taste (see nos. 23–26). This was also the case with the first published ballad edition of Northern Europe, the Dane Anders Sørensen Vedel's *Et Hundrede udvalgte Danske Viser* (One Hundred Selected Danish Ballads) from 1591, which is partly based on the manuscripts of the aristocracy, partly on direct collection—actually the first folkloristic project in Scandinavia—and with later ballad recordings from popular tradition by the enlightened bourgeoisie, which is a specific Swedish phenomenon. Likewise, the so-called peasant song books contain edited material. The oldest of these were written about 1700 but the greatest number stem from the later 18th and the 19th century. They contain art poetry, religious songs—and perhaps a few ballads—recorded when they were heard performed or copied from broadsides; occasionally these simple popular prints, sold at fairs or in the streets, were even sewn together and included in the volume. These later ballad recordings and song books are—in spite of the strong antiquarian interest which inspired in particular some of the Swedish collections—logical continuations of the Renaissance repertoires of the nobility. The owner of the manuscript in question should be regarded not only as a collector but also as a creative person, and his or her repertoire should be analyzed as the result of an interaction between transmission, individuality and social milieu.²

In Denmark Vedel's collection was re-issued several times. In 1695 it was enlarged with 100 additional texts by Peder Syv, and this immensely popular edition appeared in its last reprint in 1787. To some extent Syv took his material from the broadside prints of medieval ballads which had become popular in lower social circles during the 17th century. The oldest known broadside containing an actual medieval ballad was published in Copenhagen in 1572,³ but also new songs were written during the 16th and 17th century which appeared as stylistic echoes of the ballad (*efterklangviser*), a genre yet to be more closely defined and investigated.⁴

About 1650 the aristocratic tradition dried up and was succeeded by a burgeoning peasant tradition in Denmark and Sweden, a shift of emphasis to a lower social class, which to some extent had already been anticipated in the previous century as perhaps reflected in ballad

no. 30. Collecting in those circles, however, did not become common until after 1800 when the rediscovery of folk traditions and literature became a valuable and frequent source of inspiration to the romantic poets. The texts for the Danish ballad edition of this period by W. H. F. Abrahamson, R. Nyerup and K. L. Rahbek, *Udvalgte Danske Viser fra Middelalderen* (Selected Danish Ballads from the Middle Ages), 1812–14, were still drawn from early manuscripts and printed sources. Its valuable collection of ballad music, however, was based on oral tradition. Only with Svend Grundtvig did a systematical collection of texts from peasant tradition really begin in Denmark. In 1853 he began publishing *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* (Denmark's Old Folk Ballads). The Jutland school teacher, Evald Tang Kristensen, who collected more than 3,000 ballads from oral sources in the countryside became its most significant contributor. This edition was finally concluded in 1976 with two volumes of tunes and indices. It contains 539 various ballad types with several thousand variants, providing Danish ballad research with a unique, reliable edition which has served as a scholarly model for all following ballad editions, as e.g. F. J. Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 1882–98; similar monumental editions of Norwegian and Swedish ballads still need to be published.

While Fenno-Swedish ballads and other folkloristic material were not recorded to any large extent until the 1860's, in Sweden itself such recordings had continued from the Renaissance throughout the 17th and 18th century. The first of the romanticists to act upon this period's folkloristic interest was L. F. Rääf who, from 1808 on, collected a great number of ballads. Some of them were included in the first Swedish ballad edition, published by the clergyman A. A. Afzelius and the renowned poet E. G. Geijer, *Svenska folkvisor* (Swedish Folk Ballads), 1814–16. Geijer's contribution was mainly a long theoretical introduction about Scandinavian balladry typical of the romantic view of ballad origin (see below p. 6, 10). A larger part of Rääf's collection was later published in A. I. Arwidsson's *Svenska fornsånger* (Old Swedish Songs), 1834–42, which was a much more reliable edition from the point of view of scholarship and which served as a model for Svend Grundtvig.

In the Faroe Islands ballad recordings were made already in the 1780's from an oral repertory which consisted partly of lengthy narrative ballads in Faroese, belonging to the West Nordic groups of ballads (see below p. 9), and partly of ballads in Danish, especially introduced by Vedel's and Syv's collections. In Iceland a few manuscripts have been preserved from the late 17th century. During the 19th century additional material was collected. The ballad, however, never became as pre-

dominant in Iceland as in the other Scandinavian countries due to the development of another narrative genre, the *rímur*.⁵

In Norway the systematic recording of ballads first began with the breakthrough of Romanticism in the 1830's which followed in the wake of her independence from Denmark in 1814. Abrahamson's edition from 1812–14 (see above p. 5) had included some Norwegian tunes but the collecting gained momentum in particular after 1840. That year Jørgen Moe published a small volume of folk poetry, *Samling af Sange* (Collection of Songs) with a musical supplement. At the same time Olea Crøger took up collecting ballads in the region of Telemark. Her material later passed to M. B. Landstad and was included in his great collection of *Norske Folkeviser* (Norwegian Folk Ballads) of 1853, a landmark in the history of Norwegian ballad research.

In Scandinavia the international term "ballad" (from Latin "ballare": to dance) has become synonymous with *medieval* ballad in recent years. Previously the terms "heroic song" (*kæmpeviser*, *kämpavisa*) or "folk song" (*folkeviser*, *folkvisa*) were used, the latter expressing the romanticists' view that the ballads were created by common people. Most literary historians still use the term "folk song"; modern folklorists, on the other hand, consider *any* song which has been transmitted in popular tradition a folk song—the ballad just being one of several of its genres.

This ballad can be defined as a strophic, narrative text, based on an episodic structure, frequently primarily made up of dialogues, with one or two refrains of a more lyrical character—either alluding to the plot of the ballad, rendering a brief nature description or setting the mood. The introductory stanzas (see nos. 4, 6) from which the refrain has sometimes developed are likewise lyrical. The origin of this so-called burden stem (*stevstamme*) has been strongly debated. Is it a remnant of ancient, local folk poetry which merged with the more epic ballad imported from abroad,⁶ is it a late addition to the ballad developed from the refrain and part of the increasing "lyrization" of the entire genre⁷ or is it an off-shoot of similar literary preludes to be found in German and German-inspired Danish lyric poetry of the 16th century?⁸

The ballad was not the creation of ambitious troubadours following strict aesthetic rules but above all an art form with a *functional* purpose. To this unsophisticated attitude corresponds the simplicity and flexibility of ballad forms and meters: couplets and quatrains—as in the English ballad—with usually four (occasionally three) stresses in each line whereas the treatment of the weak syllables is completely free. The stanzas are end-rhymed but assonance is fully acceptable. As is still the case in the Faroe Islands where the Scandinavian ballad up to this day

has maintained its function as a *dance* ballad, the stanzas (and the possible burden stem) were sung by the leader and the other dancers joined in with the refrain with great enthusiasm expressed through changing tempi as is also evidenced in contemporary Faroese tradition.

The milieu of the ballad is that of the country gentry, the ideals those of a feudal, medieval society. The character delineation is stereotypical, e.g. "so fair a maid" and "my handsome lad." Their psychology is not individualized or analyzed but projected through the spoken dialogue or the action itself. Their feelings are described in set phrases, e.g. "proud Adeluds" and "with truth and modesty," and just as certain nouns are always accompanied by certain adjectives, the characters are presented in a limited number of situations, which each time are described identically:

There was brave Sir Nilus
from home he rode away;
he betrothed proud Hillelil,
she was so fair a maid.

This stanza is entirely put together with stock formulas, a technique that is employed in almost every ballad. It made it possible to move without difficulty single lines and whole stanzas from one ballad to the other, thus supporting the singer's occasionally failing memory. The implementation of this formulaic—and repetitious—language nevertheless follows certain rules. The formulas therefore also contribute indirectly to broadening and interpreting characters and plot through their place in the structure of the entire ballad text.⁹

Scandinavian ballads are traditionally classified according to their content. The term *knightly ballads* (*riddervise*)—by far the largest group—thus indicates the milieu and characters they depict: the medieval aristocracy and usually focus on erotic conflicts. They are primarily found in Denmark, and Danish knightly ballads have to a large extent been transposed to the other Scandinavian countries and influenced their ballad traditions.

The *magic ballads* (*trylleviser*, *naturmytisk viser*) deal with supernatural beings and events: revenants, transformations and runic spells, and are partly based on folk belief, partly on internationally known motifs. Characteristic of Norwegian tradition are a number of later *troll ballads* (*trollviser*) from the 14th and 15th century based on Old Norse folklore but often rendered with elements of burlesque irony. Axel Olrik and Ernst Frandsen have postulated¹⁰ that the attitude toward nature changed during the Middle Ages from fear and resignation when confronted with the unknown to greater self-assurance and even sympathy with bewitched or transformed beings.

Whereas the rare traces of Christianity seem only secondary to these ballads, the *religious ballads* (*legendeviser*) are clearly of Catholic origin. Very few of these exist in Scandinavia, in Sweden centered around Saint Stephen, in Norway around Saint Olav. Unique is the Norwegian *Dream Ballad* (*Draumkvede*), an off-shoot of European medieval visionary literature.

Characteristic of Danish balladry are the numerous *historical ballads* (*historiske viser*), frequently centered around characters known from the national history, e.g. the Valdemar dynasty or Marsk Stig. Norway, however, has hardly any historical ballads, whereas Sweden has a large number that are closely connected with the Danish tradition. A special group is constituted by the Swedish *ballads of bridestealing* (*brudrovsvisa*) connected with the Sverker dynasty. While some historical ballads do have an atmosphere of contemporaneity about them, accuracy in describing a historical event is not necessarily evidence of a simultaneous date of composition as suggested by Svend Grundtvig. The historian Johannes Steenstrup has cautioned against this romantic view "insisting on the rules observed of all other historical sources; namely that the age of a document is first and foremost determined according to the date when it first appeared";¹¹ and a number of ballads are indeed based on later written sources. A new view of the historical ballads has been presented by the Norwegian folklorist Svale Solheim, who rejects the search for concrete, historically verifiable details in favor of a study of the values and attitudes inherent in the text and the character's reaction to the historical events and conditions. "Then the result of such analyses must be compared with—and checked against—historical facts. The task must be to reach, in this way, a deeper insight in the interrelationship between the ballad and the historical background."¹² However, as Karl-Ivar Hildeman has pointed out,¹³ the utmost caution is required when accepting this "independent popular opinion" as historically valid since a number of historical ballads were actually composed precisely in order to create this opinion and therefore rather deserve the term political or propagandistic song (see no. 13, note).

Svend Grundtvig dated some of the historical ballads to the 12th century and suggested that the *heroic ballads* (*mytiskheroisk vise*, *kämpavisa*) were even older since they had subjects in common with Old Norse and Germanic legends, e.g. the Eddas and the *Nibelungenlied*, and that these epics were recast into ballads all over Scandinavia shortly after the year 1000. Knut Liestøl has, however, demonstrated that their origin is West Nordic, that they are relatively late, from the 14th century, and to a large extent based on the so-called Fornaldar sagas.¹⁴

The heroic ballads are less formulaic and tightly structured than the knightly ballads for instance, characteristics which also apply to another late ballad type, the *novelistic ballad* (*romanvise*), a Scandinavian off-shoot of the courtly continental poetry such as that about Charlemagne, Tristan and Isolde, Paris and Helen. The novelistic ballads were especially popular in the Faroe Islands where some of the versions reach the length of more than 200 stanzas, embroidering the original plot and breaking it up into separate episodes.

A final group of ballads, the *jocular ballads* (*skæmteviser*)—frequently with a racy erotic point—does not share the formal or metrical uniformity of the other ballad categories. Their age is difficult to determine and, with a few exceptions, they seem to have their origin in lower social strata from the close of the Middle Ages.

A grouping of ballads in the following order: heroic ballads, magic ballads, historical ballads, knightly ballads, novelistic ballads, jocular ballads and finally ballad echoes (see p. 4), indicates the traditional view of their age, based on the supposition that the ballads were written soon after the event they deal with. This view, which was prevalent during the period of Romanticism, has been rejected or modified. Other criteria for dividing up the material are possible: chronologically according to the date the ballad texts were recorded, according to sociological¹⁵ or aesthetic principles¹⁶ disregarding the actual age of the ballads.

Scandinavian ballads are usually regarded as a medieval genre even if a number of individual ballad types were composed probably at a younger date. Some scholars date the genre back to the early 13th century—with the period 1200–1350 as the golden age—although the oldest fragments are from the 15th century and complete recordings only from the 16th century. There are, nevertheless, several reasons for an earlier dating: the formulaic language, the orality of the Renaissance recordings and the vastly deviating versions of one and the same ballad indicating a previously existing oral tradition, as well as testimony from the 13th and 14th century about dance, which—as we know from several sources, among others from the ballads themselves—was linked to the performing of the ballad. Finally, Ernst Frandsen and David Colbert have pointed to a number of characteristic ballad formulas found in Swedish chivalric epics, the so-called Eufemia Romances from 1303–12.¹⁷ However, the question of age has—and still is—fiercely debated. In 1971 the literary historian Knud Tøgeby suggested¹⁸ that Scandinavian ballad tradition was a result of the import of the British ballad during the early 15th century, and Erik Sønnerholm has suggested the Renaissance as the period during which the ballads were actually composed.¹⁹

In 1935 the question of age was dealt with by Ernst Frandsen from a purely stylistic point of view.²⁰ He claimed the couplet to be the oldest form of the ballad from appr. 1200. Due to an influx of later German-inspired lyricisms its tight structure expanded into the younger quatrain during the following century. The weakness of Frandsen's theory is his supposition that these lyrical elements stem from a Danish counterpart to the German *Minnesang* which is, however, completely lost. The obvious possibility that the two ballad forms, the epic and the lyrical, were simply introduced simultaneously from the most likely country of origin of the Scandinavian ballad, France, nevertheless still remains.

The Scandinavian ballad shares its epic substance and its formal structure with two 13th-century French refrain songs, the *rondeau* and the *chanson de toile*. Ernst Frandsen has argued in favor of Germany as the connecting link between France and Scandinavia²¹ but the most striking parallels are to be found in Great Britain. It has generally been assumed that the borrowing from France occurred shortly after 1200 through the British Isles via the North Sea whereafter a mutual influence took place.²² David Colbert has argued in favor of a merger of the *rondeau* and the *chanson de toile* at the Danish court of the High Middle Ages in such manner as to exploit their narrative possibilities.²³ Having once enlarged upon this basic stock of true love ballads, further connections with international balladry—borrowing from Germany (see no. 33) and France, and mutual interchange with England and especially Scotland (see nos. 6, 21)—would appear to be post-medieval.

The lack of sources from the Middle Ages has led to various theories regarding the creation of the ballad. The term used by the Romantics, "folk song," indicates their belief that it was created collectively. This so-called *theory of production* was countered later during the 19th century by the *theory of reception* which claimed that the ballad which has survived is only a distortion of what was originally created by an individual poet belonging to the aristocracy. This latter theory has led to numerous attempts to reconstruct a—now lost—first and optimum form of the text. One procedure was to include all diverging stanzas from the various versions of a given ballad, another to exclude these stanzas in order to reach the epic common core of the ballad. All such philological and aesthetic attempts to recreate the *urform* are, however, based on methods which from a scholarly point of view must be regarded as problematic or even unsuccessful. The frequently totally different results of such reconstructions of one and the same ballad demonstrate precisely the inapplicability of this approach. Therefore more recent ballad anthologies render the chosen versions precisely as they have been

recorded with a minimum of editing, rejecting altogether the possibility of tracing the original form.

This modern, folkloristic view of balladry is based on the realization that every text is, in principle, equally significant. The oldest text was recorded in the Renaissance manuscripts, the younger in peasant tradition around 1900 and the newest will perhaps be sung on tape tomorrow. The texts were created by individuals but have been passed on from one generation to another as part of a living tradition—a perception which in a way merges the production and reception theories—and should not merely be viewed as exceptional because of a possible early date of recording. The oldest text is not necessarily the most valuable, for—as stated by K. L. Kittredge: "There are *texts*, but there is no *text*."²⁴

Here focus has turned from the origin of the ballads to folk tradition and the formation of the numerous variants, and in later years more emphasis has been put on the research into the performance and function of the ballads in their historical as well as in their current milieu. Each text in a given singer's repertoire has been selected from the enormous production of texts in his time, because it has been of a specific importance in the everyday life of that singer. This active role has been described by Thorkild Knudsen thus: ". . . only the ballads that are true are remembered and sung—the stanza and melody in which the singer no longer believes is neglected or changed. A ballad, performed today, can be five hundred years old, from the Middle Ages. But it is at the same time much younger, from yesterday or from today. Because the personality of the singer colors the content and form of the ballad and it is *his* or *her* presentation we are confronted with."²⁵ A study of such changes in the ballad text—the transmission process itself—which creates the variants is extremely valuable in order to map out and analyze the tradition of a certain text and it is possible to establish elementary rules for the principles by which the singers change their texts.²⁶

The transmitted ballad texts should therefore not be regarded as historical relics or fixed literary texts. But to view them as purely sociological or even ideological statements by one single person or an entire social group should also be avoided. Ballads should not be read uncritically as valid mirrors of the period in which they were recorded or sung. They are not merely statements but also interpretations of human conditions.²⁷ It is this existential perspective which in the last resort gives the ballads their timeless validity and quality.

I

1. GERMAN GLADENSWAIN

A. S. Vedel: Et Hundrede udvalgte Danske
Viser, II, no. 2, 1591

The Danish king and his youthful queen,
they sat at their festive board,
and many a tale they told by turns
anent the salty fiord.

—*So he flew over the sea.*

The Danish king and his youthful queen
were sailing through the foam;
and better that day for both their sakes
the queen had stay'd at home.

The ship roll'd on the heaving deep,
the wind no longer blew,
and over them, greedy to sink them all,
the fierce wild raven flew.

"If any there are beneath the waves,
that hinder the ship to sail,
I'll give you silver and ruddy gold,
to send us a favouring gale."

5. "And thou, wild carnage raven, hark!
Forbear our vessel to drown,
and pounds by weight of silver and gold
fifteen I'll pay thee down."

"Of gold or silver no need have I,
a different gift I claim;
whatever thou bearest beneath thy belt,
to me thou givest the same."

"Naught else beneath my belt do I bear
than this my bundle of keys,
if God shall bring me alive to land,
I'll others have made for these."

She took the bundle of keys so small,
those over the board she threw;
the fierce wild raven her words had heard,
and joyous away he flew.

The queen stepp'd out on the glittering sand,
and bitter the grief she felt;
she noted that German Gladenswain
had quickened beneath her belt.

10. And when in the onward flight of time
five months were past and gone,
she went aloft to her bower, the queen,
and bare a lovely son.

'Twas eventide, as the babe was born,
they took him to church by night,
they christen'd him German Gladenswain,
and hid him the best they might.

They nurs'd that infant the winter through,
they nurs'd him for winters nine,
till he the gallantest youth was grown,
that ever met mortal eyne.

So well he throve, and so well he grew,
so well too his horse could ride;
yet oft as his mother beheld the boy,
from bitterest grief she cried.

"O tell me then, dearest mother mine,
nor answer to me deny,
why weep you, and why so dolefully moan,
so often as I go by?"

15. "O listen then, German Gladenswain,
I've reason enough to grieve,
for thee as a babe to the Troid I gave,
and he will his gift receive."

"Nay, listen to me, my mother dear,
and lay your sorrow aside;
whatever the fate that God decrees,
the same I must e'en abide."

One Thursday it was, an autumn day,
at th' early morning hour,
a loud shrill voice the ladies heard,
as open stood their bower.

And in that loathesomest raven came,
and sat by the queen, did he;
"Now call to your mind, my gracious Queen,
the gift that you made to me."

She swore by God, and she swore by men,
by heaven and earth and all,
that she nor daughter nor son had borne,
nor any her own could call.
—*So he flew over the sea.*

20. Away that loathsome raven flew,
and yell'd a scream of joy;
"Wherever I find young Gladenswain,
I claim for my own the boy."
—*So he flew over the sea.*

When German was fifteen winters old,
he fain his betroth'd would see;
a daughter she was of England's king,
and none was so fair as she.

And more and more he daily long'd
to go to his lovely bride;
"But how shall I come to the seagirt isle
across the salty tide?"

So rose young German Gladenswain,
and round him his mantle threw,
and up to the ladies' lofty bower,
to speak to his mother flew.

In came young German Gladenswain,
in scarlet array'd was he;
"O lend me, mother, your feather-dress
to cross the salty sea."

25. "My feather-dress on a hook is hung,
its plumes drop on the floor;
if thou to a foreign land dost go,
I see thee again no more."

"The wings for thee are much too long,
they spread so wide in the air;
If I till midsummer live, my son,
I'll make me another pair."

He d'on'd the dress, and across the sea
he flew for many a mile,
and met the raven so wild and fierce,
that dwelt on a lonely isle.

So boldly he flew, and skimm'd the wave,
or rose to the clouds on high,
till, distant afar from either shore,
he heard a frightful cry.

"Well met, young German Gladenswain,
so long where hast thou been?
A little and tender babe thou wast,
as gave thee to me the Queen."

30. "O leave me, raven, and let me fly
my lovely young bride to see,
and soon as I hither return again,
I'll render myself to thee."

"I'll set on thy body a special mark
to bear with thee hence ashore;
where'er thou sittest with knights and squires,
forgettest thou me no more."

His right eye out of his head he peck'd,
drank half of his heart's best blood;
yet flew the youth to his trulove's bower
across the briny flood.

And there so blood-besprent and pale
he stay'd his airy flight;
the maidens, who sat within the bower,
shrank trembling aback with fright.

Their laugh and frolic the maidens ceas'd,
their games no longer play'd;
but rose and clasp'd her fair white hands,
his ladylove Adelaide.

35. "Right welcome, dear German Gladenswain,
but where have you been in fight?
And why are your clothes so stain'd with blood?
And why is your cheek so white?"

"Farewell, for ever, dear Adelaide,
away from you I must fly;
my life the ravenous monster claims,
who tore from my head an eye."

She took in her hand a silver comb,
herself she dressed his hair,
and dropp'd on every lock she comb'd,
a bitter and scalding tear.

On every tangled lock she dress'd
the bitterest tear would flow,
and much his mother she cursed the while,
the cause of all his woe.

She clasp'd him fondly within her arms
in loving and long caress;
"Oh! cursed be she, the wicked queen,
who brought on us such distress."

40. "Nay cease, I prithee, dear Adelaide,
my mother so to ban,
she could not avert, what fate decreed;
avert it what mortal can?"

He drew on his limbs a feather dress,
and rose to the sky so blue;
his bride drew on her another dress,
and, whirling, behind him flew.

"O turn to your home, dear Adelaide,
turn back from your flight so high,
for open is standing your chamber door,
your keys on the pavement lie."
—*So he flew over the sea.*

"Though open be standing my chamber door,
and keys on the pavement lie,
I'll follow you, wheresoever you go,
be near to you, when you die."
—*So he flew over the sea.*

Whatever the birds, in the air she met,
she clipp'd them at once in twain;
the raven alone she could not reach,
to leave him among the slain.

45. Then turn'd her, the lady Adelaide,
and lighted upon the strand;
but left there of German Gladenswain
was nothing beside his hand.

2. THE POWER OF MUSIC

Recording from West Jutland by P. K. Toksvig, 1872

Sir Peter rides into the quad,
fair maiden meets him there so sad.
—*My dearest sweetheart,*
why grievest thou so deeply?

"Grievest thou for either saddle or steed,
or grievest thou that thou art betrothed to me?"

"No, I don't grieve for saddle or steed
and neither that I am betrothed to thee.

But I grieve for the stream so wide,
for in it lie my sisters five,

5. In it lie my sisters five,
it is foretold I shall lie at their side."

"Harken, fair maiden, neither sorrow nor pine,
with you shall ride twelve squires of mine.

Four in front and four at the rear
and two men on each side."

They came to the river bridge at the sluice,
there reared the steed on four golden shoes.

And thirty nails with gold a-gleam;
fair maiden fell into the raging stream.

In wrath she flew to the clouds so high
that ravenous bird to seek;
and eastward she flew, and to west she flew,
her vengeance sworn to wreak.

Whatever the birds, in the air she met,
she clipp'd them in pieces three,
she met the raven, and into ten
she clipp'd him with dismal glee.

48. She hover'd about that dreary heath,
till, wasted with grief, she died;
for love of her German Gladenswain
so mournfully sank his bride.
—*So he flew over the sea.*

10. Sir Peter he speaks to his page so small:
"Go fetch me my golden horn from my hall."

He raised the horn and artfully blew,
no bird did move in birch or yew.

He blew the bark off linden and fir,
the horns off cows, the antlers off deer.

The merman came up on strand,
the maiden he held in his hand.

"Here is your bride so fair of form,
pray, rest thou now thy golden horn."

15. "No, I shan't rest my golden horn,
before thou fetchest her sisters five."

The merman came up on strand,
five maidens he held in his hand.

"Any here thou hast her sisters five,
pray, rest thou now thy golden horn."
—*My dearest sweetheart,*
why grievest thou so deeply?

"No, I shan't rest my golden horn,
before thou fetchest thy finest gold."
—*My dearest sweetheart,*
why grieveest thou so deeply?

The merman came up from the waters beneath,
the finest gold he held in his teeth.

3. SIR OLAF AND THE FAIRIES

Stockholm Royal Library Songbook in Quarto, no. 1; recorded after Ingierd Gunnarsdotter, Höglunda, Västergötland, about 1670

Sir Olaf rides before the dawn
—*comes the dew, comes the frost—*
he thinks he rides in glittering sun.
—*When in leaf the greenwood, Sir Olaf comes home.*

Sir Olaf comes to the mountain's foot
where the fairies are dancing in the wood.

Fairies and fairies' kin are there,
elf-king's daughter with flying hair.

Elf-king's daughter holds out her hands:
"Come, Sir Olaf, and join the dance."

5. "To dance with you, to dance at your side,
has forbidden me my promised bride.

I will not dance and I cannot stay
and to-morrow is my wedding-day."

"Will you not dance and will you not stay,
I shall a curse upon you lay."

Sir Olaf turns his horse to leave
and home with him ride sickness and grief.

20. "And there thou hast thy finest gold,
pray rest thou now thy accursed horn."

21. His valiant sword Sir Peter drew,
he fell on the merman whom he slew.
—*My dearest sweetheart,*
why grieveest thou so deeply?

His mother's courtyard he reaches late,
his mother is waiting afore the gate.

10. "Welcome, welcome, my dearest son,
Why, from your cheek has gone the bloom?"

"My thought was slow and fast my steed
and so an oak branch I did meet.

Oh sister, go, and make my bed,
oh brother, let my horse be fed.

Oh mother, come and brush my hair,
oh father, go and make my bier."

"Oh speak not thus, my dearest son,
to-morrow is your wedding morn."

15. "Oh this may be as it may be,
—*comes the dew, comes the frost—*
but never my promised bride I'll see."
—*When in leaf the greenwood, Sir Olaf comes home.*

4. THE FEATHERED MAIDEN

Svaning's Manuscript I, about 1580

*I've often been in a forest
so far away at the fiord,
in it grow the fairest trees
of which you ever heard.
—So wins a youth his maiden.*

*In it are the fairest trees,
both linden and willow grow;
in it gambol the beautiful deer
that you call stag and doe.*

*In it gambol both stag and doe,
and other fair beasts there be;
in it sings a small nightingale
in a green linden tree.*

That he heard, Nilaus Erlandsen,
[who always went hunting about.]
He saddled his steed with the golden-red shoes,
rode yonder to seek it out.

5. Yonder rode Nilaus Erlandsen,
so bootlessly did he fare:
there he stayed for three whole days,
the bird he couldn't snare.

Then he put snares on all the trees
where the bird was used to sit;
the small bird used her eyes so well,
he couldn't garner it.

He put the snares on every path
where the bird was used to dwell;
he couldn't catch the little bird,
she used her eyes so well.

And he took his axe in hand,
he wanted to fell the tree;
entered the man who owned the wood
with a spear so threateningly.

"If you cut my ancestral wood,
if you do me this tort,
I promise you, Nilaus Erlandsen,
that you shall suffer for 't."

10. Quoth the beautiful maiden then
from high above the tors:
"Lad, if you listen to my advice,
then shall the bird be yours.

Harken to me, my handsome lad,
and listen to my advice:
if you haven't some uncooked meat,
away the wild bird flies."

He cut the flesh out of his chest,
hung it on the linden tree;
she seemed to like it and fluttered her wings,
the flesh she wanted to keep.

And when the little nightingale
took hold of the bloody meat,
she changed into the fairest maid
who set on earth her feet.

In her silken sark she stood
under the linden tree;
and the knight took her in his arms,
they spoke of their agony.

15. The knight he took her in his arms
and patted her cheek so white:
"Tell me, dearest sweetheart of mine,
who caused you all your plight?"

"Playing with lilies and roses in bloom
I sat in my father's hall;
and my stepmother entered the room,
that didn't please her at all.

She changed me into a nightingale,
bid me to fly out here;
my seven maidens she changed into wolves
and bid them the bird to tear."

The maid stood under the linden tree,
loosened her beautiful hair;
her seven maids came running along,
and seven wolves they were.

19. And now has Nilaus Erlandsen
recovered from anguish and harm;
and now he sleeps so happily,
hugged by his maiden's arm.
—*So wins a youth his maiden.*

5. YOUNG SWENNENDAL

Recording from Lyngø near Sorø by J. F. Fenger in 1844

And it was he, young Swennendal,
would play with golden ball,
and drove it into the maiden's bower,
and paled her cheeks withal.

—Choose thy words well!

"Hark thee! throw not, young Swennendal,
thy golden ball at me;
there dwells a maid in Hovensland,
is longing after thee."

"No rest shall ease thy weary limbs,
no slumber close thine eyes,
till thou hast freed that lovely maid
from trance, wherein she lies."

Young Swennendal could rest no more,
but round him wrapp'd his cloak,
and mounting up to the upper room,
his troopers thus bespoke.

5. "Sit here, my men, and quaff at board
the wine and luscious mead;
but I to Goliath cave must go,
to ask my mother rede."

Alone he went, young Swennendal,
and wrapp'd him in his gear,
and took his way to Goliath cave
his mother's rede to hear.

And there did he, young Swennendal,
beat on his mother's mound,
till wails and stones and teams and grave
were crumbling all around.

"Who is it here disturbs my sleep?
Who deals these heavy blows?
And may I not in peaceful sleep
e'en in my grave repose?"

"Who is it here who beats so hard
and seeks to give me pain?
What not beneath the marble tomb
in peace may I remain?"

10. "Young Swennendal, thy youngest son,
'tis I, my mother dear;
and I have come to Goliath cave
counsel of thee to hear."

"The maid in a spell has bound me fast,
and this her cruel vow;
that rest no more shall ease my limbs,
nor slumber cool my brow."

"And spell-bound has the maiden thee?
Made she this vow indeed?
Three gifts then I'll on thee bestow,
shall serve thee in thy need."

"I'll give thee first a stout grey horse,
and faithful he'll be found;
he tramps as well on ocean wave
as on the solid ground."

"I'll give thee too a sword of gold,
gird it upon thy side,
and, where thou journeyest in the world,
in safety thou shalt ride."

15. "I'll give thee too a golden key,
its name is Adelring,
use but that key, and every lock
shall open to thee spring."

"I'll give thee too a table-cloth
spun of the moorgrass wool;
desire whatever meat thou wilt,
with that it shall be full."

Young Swennendal he journey'd forth,
and found a little lane;
a herdsman there his cattle drove
to pasture on the plain.

"O tell me, Herdsman, honest man,
what now I ask of thee;
to whom belongs the mighty herd,
thou drivest o'er the lea?"

"These cattle," said that aged man,
"that on the pasture run,
are all the maid's at Hovensland,
whom knight has never won."

20. "And tell me, Herdsman, honest man,
what now I ask of thee;
if thou dost know that lady's fetch,
conceal it not from me."

"The lady's fetch right well I know,
but never will reveal,
for if her secret I betray,
her anger I shall feel."
—Choose thy words well!

"If thou the lady's fetch dost know,
conceal it not from me;
if I become this country's king,
I'll make a count of thee."
—Choose thy words well!

"Eight lions watch her night and day,
nine grisly bears beside;
and only on an Elfin horse
may any near them ride."

"If Elfin horse can help me here,
for that I do not lack;
I've brought with me an Elfin horse,
I'm sitting on his back."

25. "The portals are of marble stone,
the locks of steely plate,
and only with an Elfin key
can any through the gate."

"If Elfin key is all I want,
then through the gate can I,
for this is e'en an Elfin key,
is hanging on my thigh."

As through the gate young Swennendal
and up the courtyard went,
lowly the bears and lions crouch'd,
and linden humbly bent.

From window loop the lady peer'd
to see the novel sight;
"But whence then is he hither come?
And who, this handsome knight?"

Her little page the lady call'd,
the truth she long'd to know;
"Ask, whence is come the handsome knight,
and why he halts below."

30. But answer'd thus young Swennendal;
"The Lady of Hovensland
must hither come to hear the truth,
herself before me stand."

So came the Lady of Hovensland,
herself before him stood;
"And whence has come this handsome knight?
Why cross'd the briny flood?"

"It is from Denmark's isle I'm come
to this your foreign clime,
to see the Lady of Hovensland,
and how she spends her time."

"And art thou come from Denmark's isle
Then prithee let me hear,
how fares the brave young Swennendal,
the youth to me so dear?"

"And is it then young Swennendal,
who is to you so dear?
None else than he, young Swennendal,
is with you halting here."

35. And there was costly velvet cloth
and silk and sindal spread,
when Swennendal the gentle maid
to bridal banquet led.

36. Five days they held the marriage feast,
and wine they gladly pour'd,
and there was he the aged man
the uppermost at board.
—Choose thy words well!

6. SIR OGEY AND LADY ELSEY

Magdalene Barnewitz's Manuscript, about 1670 and Countess Christiane's Manuscript, 1660

*Three maidens in their chamber,
the two were weaving gold,
and wept the third her bridegroom,
lay buried in the mould.
—For her troth to him was plighted.*

It was the rich Sir Ogey,
he rode to an isle away,
he wooed the Lady Elsey,
and won that lovely may.

He won the Lady Elsey,
betroth'd his gentle bride,
and on his very wedding night
before her eyes he died.

So sorely wept the lady
and wrung her hands for woe,
the knight Sir Ogey heard it
down in his grave below.

5. So sorely wept the lady,
so sorely beat her breast,
the knight Sir Ogey heard it,
no longer could he rest.

He rose, the knight Sir Ogey,
with coffin on his back,
and stagger'd towards her chamber
a dismal weary track.

He tapped her door with coffin,
he wore no robe of skin;
"Wake up, my gentle Elsey,
and let thy bridegroom in."

Some while lay Lady Elsey,
and much in doubt was she;
"But can it be Sir Ogey
is hither come to me?"

Up spake the Lady Elsey,
and tears were on her cheek;
"Come, if the name of Jesus
thou still dost dare to speak."

10. "Rise then, dear Lady Elsey,
and open me the door,
for name I can Lord Jesus,
as I could do before."

Uprose the Lady Elsey
and bitter tears she shed,
and let him in to her chamber,
the cold buried dead:

She took her comb, fair Elsey,
she comb'd his tangled hair,
and every lock she straighten'd,
she dropp'd on it a tear.

"Now hear me, dear Sir Ogey,
the truth I pray thee tell,
how under ground thou farest
down in thy cell."

"'Tis so down in that earth-house,
where I must tarry now,
'tis as the joys of heaven,
if happy thou."

15. "Then hear me, knight Sir Ogey,
and grant the boon I crave,
to go with thee, my dearest,
and share thy grave."

"'Tis so down in that earth-house
my narrow lonely cell,
'tis like to hellish torture,
o cross thyself well!"

"So oft as thou art weeping,
and grieveest thee so sore,
is brimming full my coffin
with blood and gore."

"Above my head is growing
the grass so sweet,
but lothely snakes are twining
about my feet."

"Yet when I hear thee singing,
and thou art glad,
then is my grave's small chamber
with roses clad."

20. "The white cock now is crowing,
and down must I below;
to earth wend all my fellows,
and with them I must go."

"The red cock now is crowing,
and down must I below;
to earth must wend all dead men,
and I too must go."

—For her troth to him was plighted.

"And now the black cock's crowing
home I must go below;
unlock'd are all the portals,
and I too must go."
—For her troth to him was plighted.

Up rose the knight Sir Ogey,
took coffin on his back,
and stagger'd towards the churchyard
a dismal weary track.

And what did Lady Elsey
so sorrowful of mood?
She walk'd beside her bridegroom
across the murky wood.

25. But when she reach'd the churchyard,
she saw his golden hair,
how pale it grew and paler,
that once had been so fair.

And when she had cross'd the churchyard
up to the church's door,
grew pale Sir Ogey's cheek too,
as roses red before.

At hand and foot Sir Ogey
was fading away,
fading his cheerful rosy cheeks
to clods of clay.

"Now hear me, Lady Elsey,
hear me, my bride so dear,
no longer mourn thy husband,
nor drop for him a tear."

"But wend thee home, dear Elsey,
in peace to sleep;
no longer mourn thy bridegroom,
no longer weep."

30. "See yon small stars above thee,
how wanes their light;
and see how fast is fleeting
the hour of night."

She turn'd her towards the heavens,
the stars, she saw them wane,
but slipp'd to his grave the deadman,
she saw him not again.

He slipp'd away, the deadman,
and down he went below,
and full of grief his lady
must homeward go.

Sorely she wept, fair Elsey,
and daily did she pray,
that live she might no longer
than year and day.

34. So sick she grew for sorrow,
she laid her on her bed,
and, ere that month was ended,
was on her bier, and dead.
—For her troth to him was plighted.

7. SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST

Allan Ramsay: The Tea-Table Miscellany, or a Collection of Choice Songs, Scots, and English,
4, London 1737

There came a ghost to Margret's door,
With many grievous groan,
And ay he tir'd at the pin,
But answer made she none.

"Is that my father Philip,
Or is't my brother John?
Or is't my true-love, Willy,
From Scotland new come home?"

"'Tis not thy father Philip,
Nor yet thy brother John;
But 't is thy true-love, Willy,
From Scotland new come home."

"O sweet Margret, O dear Margret,
I pray thee speak to me;
Give me my faith and troth, Margret,
As I gave it to thee."

5. "Thy faith and troth thou's never get,
Nor yet will I thee lend,
Till that thou come within my bower,
And kiss my cheek and chin."

"If I should come within thy bower,
I am no earthly man;
And should I kiss thy rosy lips,
Thy days will not be lang.

"O sweet Margret, O dear Margret,
I pray thee speak to me;
Give me my faith and troth, Margret,
As I gave it to thee."

"Thy faith and troth thou's never get,
Nor yet will I thee lend,
Till you take me to yon kirk,
And wed me with a ring."

"My bones are buried in yon kirkyard,
Afar beyond the sea,
And it is but my spirit, Margret,
That's now speaking to thee."

10. She stretch'd out her lily-white hand,
And, for to do her best,
"Hae, there's your faith and troth, Willy,
God send your soul good rest."

Now she has kilted her robes of green
A piece below her knee,
And a' the live-lang winter night
The dead corp followed she.

"Is there any room at your head, Willy?
Or any room at your feet?
Or any room at your side, Willy,
Wherin that I may creep?"

"There's no room at my head, Margret,
There's no room at my feet;
There's no room at my side, Margret,
My coffin's made so meet."

Then up and crew the red, red cock,
And up then crew the gray;
"'Tis time, 'tis time, my dear Margret,
That you were going away."

15. No more the ghost to Margret said,
But, with a grievous groan,
He vanish'd in a cloud of mist,
And left her all alone.

16. "O stay, my only true-love, stay,"
The constant Margret cry'd;
Wan grew her cheeks, she clos'd her een,
Stretch'd her soft limbs, and dy'd.

II

8. STEPHEN AND HEROD

Recorded 1923 by Greta Dahlström after Karl Lundsström (b. 1851), Nagu, Nötö

Saint Stephen a man steadfast of mould
—fast then to him should we hold—
the Jews tormented him for holding to our Lord,
yea, Jews tormented him, yet with stones him did but crown.
In Rome none livelier was in town,
nor warier of other men,
that too was our Saint Stephen.

To water went Stephen with five foals in hand
—fast then to him should we hold—
and Herod the King, he ruled in all the land.
—Let Stephen be our trusted guide and our helmsman bold.

And Stephen bent down to look into the well
and saw the stars shining that down there did dwell.

And Stephen went home for all people to tell
how that three stars were to be seen in the well.

5. A cock was first roast and then boiled, a fine beast
to set before Herod, to serve for a feast.

"And if it be true, as now Stephen doth say,
then fly, cock, away with your feathers in place."

The cock gathered up all his fine feathers blue,
and, healthy and well again, off he then flew.

Cock took to the air and with fate had a fling.
On his throne full of cares sat Herod the king.

"A babe was born yesterday, greater than all,
a king of kings before whom Herod must fall."

10. "A babe without peer has been born to be king,
before whom Herod's kingship is nothing."

"When Herod from Stephen hand and foot did strike,
this blessed child gave succour, none e'er saw the like."

"With Stephen struck down hard by his very door,
this blessed child made him as whole as before."

On strode now this Herod, and haughty was he,
—fast then to him should we hold—
looked down on Stephen small as any man could see.
—Let Stephen be our trusted guide and our helmsman bold.

And there on a stone Stephen sat for to rest.
—fast then to him should we hold—
 By sun and by moon was he bathed and refreshed.
—Let Stephen be our trusted guide and our helmsman bold.

15. Then Herod on tree-trunk did sit for a time,
 while serpents and dragons upon him did climb.

If now in this house Stephen's buns are too few,
 knock down your chimney-stack, that is what we'll do.

And if there's no trick that we better can play,
 why then we will carry each stone clean away.

But if of the soup there's enough us to fill,
—fast then to him should we hold—
 then praised be our host, and praised his good will.
—Let Stephen be our trusted guide and our helmsman bold.

19. Thanks be to you in this your house,
 here we have had a fine carouse.
 Join with us, brothers, to make merry here,
 Christmas comes but once in a year.
 Fal-la-la-ral-la-la-ral-lal-lay.

9. STEPHEN STABLEBOY

Recorded in Småland or Västergötland in the 1810's

Stephen stableboy did think
—we offer thanks this night—
 to lead his horses five to drink.
—all for the star so bright.
Dawn is not yet to be seen,
all the stars of heaven gleam
and glitter.

Two of them were sorrel steeds,
 these knew how to earn their keep.

Two of them were dapple gray,
 these knew how to pull a dray.

The fifth of them as milk was white,
 and on this one did Stephen ride.

5. E'en before the cock did crow
 did Stephen to the stable go.

Before the rising of the dawn,
 bridle and gold saddle on.

7. Stephen rides them down to drink,
—we offer thanks this night—
 drawing water from the spring.
—all for the star so bright.
Dawn is not yet to be seen,
all the stars of heaven gleam
and glitter.

10. MARY MAGDALEN

Recorded by P. A. Säv after Anna Maria Holstein, Visby, and C. N. Carlsson,
 Lärbro, Gotland, 1845

Magdalen went to the salt sea strand,
—red sun is shining—
 there to wash her snow-white hands.
—All as the linden is greening.

Magdalen crossed the bridge so broad,
 she saw where God the Father stood.

"Hear me, Magdalen, maiden fair,
 give me some of the water so clear."

"Oh, had I only my silver ewers,
 I would give ye the clearest water."

5. "If only ye had never known man
 I would drink from thy very hands."

Then came to her the Holy Ghost:
 "Three are the lovers ye have known."

But the maiden swore to the Holy Ghost
 that she knew nothing of secret love.

Magdalen swore to the king so great
 that never had she been violated.

"And hear me, Magdalen, be not forsworn;
 three are the children ye have borne."

10. "The first ye had by thy father,
 ye cast it into the river."

"The second ye had by thy brother,
 ye cast it into the salt sea flood."

"The third ye had by thy parish priest,
 that was not of thy sins the least."

She fell to God the Father's feet:
 "What judgment will God give to me?"

"Thy penance shall be as it should:
 seven years in the wild wood."

15. "Seven years that ye must stray
 the wild moor with the wolves so gray."

"Thy food shall be the buds so small
 that grow upon the lindens tall."

"Thy drink shall be the drops so small
 which to earth as dew must fall."

"Thy bed shall be the leaves so small
 that grow upon the lindens tall."

"Thy sport, it shall be none at all
 but to go among the beasts that crawl."

20. When seven years had run their course,
 Christ himself she stood before.

"And how do ye like this food of thine?"
 "As if I were eating cake so fine."

"And how do ye like this drink of thine?"
 "As if I were drinking mead and wine."

"And how do ye like this bed of thine?"
 "As if I were sleeping on silk so fine."

"And how do ye like this sport of thine?"
 "As if I were in the dance and game."

25. "And hear me, Magdalen, fairest maid,
 we shall be in Paradise today."

26. "In heaven I have prepared thy throne
—red sun is shining—
 because of the God ye believed upon."
—All as the linden is greening.

11. THE DREAM BALLAD

Recorded by M. B. Landstad after Maren Ramskeid, Kviteseid, Telemark, about 1840

Olaf grew to manhood
lithe as a willow wand,
father and mother loved him
since his first words he found.

Olaf grew to manhood,
lithe as a willow grew,
father and mother loved him
since his first breath he drew.

On Christmas Eve he rested,
into a dream he fell
woke up at the Epiphany,
at church time broke the spell.
—*And that was Olaf Oknison,
who slept so long, so long.*

Woke up at the Epiphany,
just when the sun would set:
“Now to the church I’ll go then
and will my dream relate.”

5. Woke up at the Epiphany
just when the sun went down,
saddled his fastest horse then
and chose a gold bridoon.

“You there, up by the altar
may Holy Writ relate,
and I stand by the church door
and will my dreams narrate.

“When I away was taken
I crossed a hedge of thorn,
rent was my scarlet mantle,
my fingernails were torn.
—*And the moon is shining,
and the way is long.*

“When I away was taken
I took a path of thorns,
rent was my scarlet mantle,
my toenails all were torn.

“Gjallar Bridge is gruesome,
hard it is to cross,
bitches bite, and serpents,
bulls there stand and toss.

10. “Saw two serpents fighting,
on each other fed,
brother saw and sister
in a bridal bed.

“Waving bogs I wandered
that no footing gave,
in my mouth, on Gjallar Bridge,
dark earth of the grave.

“Happy he who on this earth
gives the poor man shoes,
he need never barefoot go
on rough Hechel Moors.

“Blessed he who on this earth
to the poor gives rye,
he need not grow giddy
on Gjallar Bridge so high.

“Happy he who on this earth
to the poor gives corn,
he need not on Gjallar Bridge
fear the bulls’ sharp horn.

15. “Happy he who on this earth
to the poor gives bread,
never in the Other Life
need he be afraid.

“Happy he who on this earth
clothes gives to the poor,
never in the Other Life
mockery need fear.

“To the Milky Way came,
blue the ice there lay,
God himself did guide me
and I turned away.

“To the Milky Way came,
and to my right hand
Paradise was shining
o’er the wide, wide land.

“Out I looked on Eden,
better is no land,
my god-mother saw I,
red gold on her hand.
—*And the moon is shining,
and the way is long.*

20. “My god-mother saw I,
what could better be:
“Go now to Broksvalin
to the judgment seat!”

“Saw a man then walking
knee-deep in the earth,
with a blood-red mantle
and a babe in arms.
—*In the clouds, in Broksvalin,
judgment will be given.*

“Saw a man then walking
in a cloak of lead,
his poor soul was weary,
downcast in this world.

“From the north a troop came,
and they seemed the worst,
Grutte Graybeard led them
on a coal-black horse.

“From the south a troop came,
nothing seemed more blessed,
led by Holy Michael
next to Jesus Christ.

25. “From the south a troop came,
leisurely they went,
led by Holy Michael
with his trump in hand.

“Lord of souls, Saint Michael
then his trumpet blew,
calling all poor sinners
to the judgment seat.

“All poor souls were trembling
leaf-like in the wind,
all the poor souls present
crying for their sins.

“Lord of souls, Saint Michael,
put them in his scales,
weighed before Lord Jesus
all the sinners’ souls.

“Woke at the Epiphany
at the midnight call.
From such times and journeys
God preserve us all!
—*And that was Olaf Oknison,
who slept so long, so long.*

30. “Woke at the Epiphany
from my long, long sleep.
How the soul is tempted
in a dream so deep!”
—*And that was Olaf Oknison,
who slept so long, so long.*



12. VALDEMAR AND TOVELIL

Ide Gjøe's Manuscript, about 1630

Tovelil lives at her father's place,
two maidens they brush her hair with grace.
—*Sincerely. King Valdemar loves them both dearly.*

Two maidens they brush her hair with grace,
two others her locks with gold embrace.

Two others her locks with gold embrace,
two hold a mirror before her face.

Two clad her in scarlet robes with care,
two others they follow her everywhere.

5. The king looked on and he didn't stir,
and soon he started to yearn for her.

He sent five squires to fetch her to him,
Tovelil would not follow them.

He sent nine squires as guard on her way,
Tovelil would not follow they.

The Danish king wouldn't take her No,
he let his charger for Tovelil go.

The dance was trod in the yard of the queen,
many fair maidens could there be seen.

10. The dance was trod by two or three,
proud Tovelil was it who sang for they.

Eight trod the dance or nine, maybe,
proud Tovelil was it who sang for they.

The queen who at the window stood
saw Tovelil tread the silk under foot.

"Listen now, Tovelil, my dear,
lift up your train of silk so sheer."

"If I shall be queen of Denmark, I feel
I must have silk under sole and heel."

15. "Listen now, Tovelil, my dear,
what was your morning gift, let me hear."

"He gave me the finest band of gold,
and fine as the queen did ever behold.

He gave me a chest of gold agleam,
as fine as ever in Denmark was seen.

He gave me two silver-buckled shoes,
he vowed to me to be ever true."

"Listen now, Tovelil, my friend,
how did the king get your consent?"

20. "The king won the consent of mine,
because his power was greater than mine."

The queen she swathes her head in skin,
and then to Denmark's king she walks in.

"Listen now, Sire, lend me your ear,
why do you hold yon Tovelil so dear?"

"Why do I hold yon Tovelil so dear:
she's borne me two sons who are always near.

One is named Christof, the other Canute,
wherever I go, they follow me for good.

25. Never do I go into a fight,
Canute and Christof are at my side."

"Be that as it may, be that as it may,
but I will have Tovelil driven away."

The queen she orders a couple of squires:
"You make the bath house as hot as a pyre.

Make the bath house as hot as a pyre,
I want yon Tovelil there to die."

The queen orders her squires three:
"You fetch yon Tovelil here to me."

30. Tovelil came into the hall:
"What do you want, queen, you had me called?"

"Listen now, Tovelil, my dear,
the bath house you shall for the king prepare."

In through the bath house door Tovelil trod,
the door was by the queen slammed shut.
—*Sincerely. King Valdemar loves them both dearly.*

"There's neither water nor lye about,
for Heaven's sake you let me out."
—*Sincerely, King Valdemar loves them both dearly.*

The queen she walks along Riber Street
and meets Canute and Christof, so ill at ease.

35. "So here you are, young Christof and Canute,
go fetch your mother of the bath house out."

Christof he gave his horse the spur
and drove the steed right over her.

13. QUEEN DAGMAR'S DEATH

Svaning's Manuscript II, about 1580

Queen Dagmar lies ill in Ribe town,
in Ringsted she should have been;
all the ladies in Denmark's land
she speedily called in.
—*In Ringsted there rests Queen Dagmar.*

"Now fetch me one, now fetch me two,
now fetch me all the wise;
go and fetch me young Kirsten,
Sir Carol's sister of Ribe."

Young Kirsten entered through the door
with honor and innocent air;
Queen Dagmar she arose once more,
so did she welcome her there.

"If you can read, if you can write
and ease my misery,
then you shall wear red velvet robes,
and you shall have my steed."

5. "If I could read, and if I could write,
I'd do it with all my heart;
verily, in all truth I say,
your pain is very hard."

She opened the Holy Virgin's book
and read her all she could see;
verily, in all truth I say,
the tears ran down her cheeks.

They followed her out, they followed her in,
the queen sank faster and faster:
"Seeing that I won't better be,
I pray you send for my master.

And when Canute this deed had seen,
he rode his steed across the queen.

Canute and Christof they said to the king:
"Now go and fetch the queen in the street."

"It doesn't matter the queen is dead,
would God let Tovelil live instead."

40. They got Tovelil from the bath house loose,
she looked like a roasted Yuletide goose.
—*Sincerely, King Valdemar loves them both dearly.*

Seeing that I won't better be,
I pray you send for my lord;
pray, send word to Gullandsborg,
you won't find him before."

Then her little page arose
and acted without respite;
the saddle he took off the filly grey
and saddled the steed so white.

10. The king he stands in the castle hall
and looks so far abroad.
"Yonder I see a little page
so sad and sorely distraught.

Yonder I see a little page,
so sadly he presses on.
God our Father in Heaven knows
how it with Dagmar has gone."

Entered then the little page,
to the king he himself bestirred:
"Queen Dagmar has sent me here to you,
with you she wants a word."

The king clapped the dice board together
so that the dice they sang:
"The Lord our father in Heaven forbid
that Dagmar should die so young."

The king set out from Gullandsborg
with one hundred men, on his way;
and he rode into Ribe town
just followed by Dagmar's page.
—*In Ringsted there rests Queen Dagmar.*

15. There was grief in the women's chambers,
where all the ladies cried;
Queen Dagmar she died in young Kirsten's arms
when the king into town did ride.
—*In Ringsted there rests Queen Dagmar.*

There was the king of Denmark,
in the doorway he did stand;
and there was young Kirsten,
she took him by the hand.

"Oh, hear ye, king of Denmark,
no more shall you grieve or mourn;
we have brought forth a son today,
from Dagmar's side he was shorn."

"I beg you, all you virgins and maids,
for God's sake hear my plea:
I beg you pray for Dagmar's soul
that she may speak to me."

With eyes as red as streaming blood
Queen Dagmar sat up in her bier:
"Alas, alas, my noble sire,
why brought you this pain to me?"

20. The first request that I beg of you,
I know you'll do it fain:
to every outlaw give him peace,
free the prisoner of his chain.

14. MARSTI AND HIS WIFE

Rentzel's Manuscript, 1580–90, No. 27

Noble Marsti he went abroad,
great honor he won on his way;
Erik the king he stayed at home,
he led the wife astray.
—*The lady lingers on Zealand,
so many are her sorrows.*

There was noble Marsti,
came home from feuding and war;
but his goodwife wouldn't come
to meet him as before.

Noble Marsti pondered
long with darkened face:
"Oh, why won't my beloved wife
meet me with an embrace?"

"When you left for foreign lands,
I was the spouse of a knight;
now I am queen of Denmark,
that is my shameful plight."

The second request that I beg of you,
it is to your boon:
do not betroth you to Bengerd,
she is a poisonous bloom.

The third request that I beg of you,
you'll grant me willingly:
pray, let Canute, my youngest son,
the king of Denmark be.

And should you not let my youngest son
Canute be Denmark's king,
Bengerd will bear another,
my son to ruin and bother.

And hadn't I last Sunday laced my sleeves
and donned my fair headdress,
then purgatory wouldn't have given me
one moment of distress.

25. And hear you this, my noble sire,
if more you want me to say:
in Heaven dwell all God's angels,
they want me with them to stay."
—*In Ringsted there rests Queen Dagmar.*

5. There was the noble Marsti
reaching for his knife:
"Had I been told by somebody else,
it would have cost you your life."

"Never more shall I go to sleep
at your side again,
ere King Erik who did me this harm
is caught by you and slain."

There was the noble Marsti
answered her not a thing;
to court he rode his charger
to stand before the king.

There was the noble Marsti,
at court he took his stand;
and he was greeted by knights and squires
and many an honest man.
—*The lady lingers on Zealand,
so many are her sorrows.*

Then arose King Erik
and offered him his hand:
"Welcome back, Sir Marsti,
home to country and land."
—*The lady lingers on Zealand,*
so many are her sorrows.

10. Answered him Sir Marsti,
an angry man and wroth:
"I did myself the greatest harm
when I did go abroad.

I rode out of this country,
put Reval and Ri at bay,
while you have, King Erik,
led my dear wife astray."

"Harken to me, Sir Marsti,
and be not angry with me;
eight great castles on Zealand
I grant they yours shall be."

15. THE KING'S MURDER

Rentzel's Manuscript, 1580-90, No. 26

Many a man in Denmark
for royal power hopes;
and so they rode to Ribe town
and bought themselves new robes.
—*The country is in distress.*

They bought themselves new robes,
each was a cowl thing;
and then they rode into the night
to betray their rightful king.

They rode into the peasant yard,
each ready with his spear;
all of them wore ashen hoods,
that none should know them there.

4. And then they went into the barn
and gathered in their disguise.
The noble master lay awake,
he couldn't believe his eyes.

4A. [They rode their horses into the barn,
with candles did it abound;
they looked about them for the king,
whom they unhappily found.]

"Harken to me, King Erik,
never in all my life
will castles eight on Zealand
be equal to my wife."

Paused Sir Marsti a long, long time,
pondering on his lot:
"I shall build a castle on Hielm,
if it cost me all I've got."

15. Marsti rode home to his wife so fair,
a fortress on Hielm he built;
he heeded neither arrow nor gun,
nor stones from the catapult.

16. Marsti and his wife so fair
with them did their sorrow go.
I tell you verily in truth,
it brought King Erik great woe.
—*The lady lingers on Zealand,*
so many are her sorrows.

5. Their spears went into his body
and through his side did they leave.
"And now we have committed the deed
o'er which all Denmark shall grieve."

5A. [It was then that Ranild
pierced the beam with his blade;
but the noble master was dead,
to him it was little aid.]

6. When the little page-boy saw
his master suffer this fate,
be put the saddle on his steed,
no longer did he wait.

The queen she sits in the castle hall,
she looks so far and wide:
"Yonder I see the little page,
so swiftly does he ride.

He's riding on my master's steed,
I fear for great disaster.
Pray our Father in Paradise,
what has become of my master?"
—*The country is in distress.*

Entered then the little page,
and thus he did her address:
"My master is slain in a peasant's barn,
the country is in distress.
—*The country is in distress.*

10. My master is done to death,
may he God's mercy obtain.
Guard now the young Duke Erik
who over Denmark shall reign."

16. THE BANISHMENT

Svaning's Manuscript II, about 1580

Marsti awakened at midnight:
"So strangely I have dreamt,"
spoke he to his dearest good wife,
"may Christ know what it meant."
—*The noble master, the young Marsti.*

"I dreamt that I and my squires
across a bridge rode back;
my steed he reared and threw me off
and ran to the unbroken pack."

"Lie down, my noble master,
forget it and relax;
it means your peasants and tenants
will soon bring in the tax."

"Tomorrow the court is sitting
for the South, near the river's spring;
may God in Heaven know whom they
will blame for the death of the king."

5. Marsti and his valiant squires
they rode to Ranisburgh,
clad in their armor, chain and swords,
they were in so great a hurry.

The queen she stands in the castle hall
and sees the advent of his band:
"Yonder comes riding Sir Marsti,
the king of the Southern land."

"Speak not, my gracious lady,
and mock me not with that name;
he is called bailiff Sir Ove
who can that title claim.

11. "For the tidings that you have brought,
although they aren't good,
while we are alive, at the court of the king
you shall have clothing and food."
—*The country is in distress.*

Harken, my gracious lady,
you mock me not in your hate;
he is called bailiff Sir Ove
who slept with you of late."

Answered him young King Christof,
swathed in velvet red:
"We have enough bad tidings,
now my father is dead."

10. Answered him young King Christof
with honor and renown:
"Marsti, you shall flee from Denmark,
if I shall wear the crown."

"If I must flee from Denmark,
I shall neither shrink nor stall:
I shall fetch my food in Denmark
in summer, winter and fall."

And so he does, Sir Marsti,
when the king of exile speaks:
the isle of Hielm he fortifies
in the following two weeks.

13. The peasant makes his way to his field,
preparing to sow his corn:
"O Lord, O Lord, pray, help us now
when the isle of Hielm has grown horn."
—*The noble master, the young Marsti.*

17. THE OUTLAWS

Svaning's Manuscript II, about 1580

There were one hundred and forty seven,
they gathered on a down:
"Where shall we go from here on,
wrathfully the king on us frown."
—*And we are driven out of Denmark.*

"We must all agree
and take what it may be."

Answered the youthful Sir Marsti:
"Sooner than that I shall fight and die.

We'll build ourselves a castle on Hielm,
we fear not the king of Denmark himself.

5. We'll build it higher than any tower,
impregnable to all Denmark's power.

6. So strong a castle shall here we build
to stand against guns and catapult."
—*But we are driven out of Denmark.*

18. THE ABDUCTION FROM VRETA ABBEY

Stockholm Royal Library Songbook in Quarto, no. 57;
copy by Johannes Thiomæ Bureus, about 1630

Slain lie so many heroes
across the Swedish land,
ever since Sune Folkesson
abducted that lily wand.
—*Slain lie so many heroes.*

Great sorrow there was in Sweden,
and the heroes grew irate,
ever since the Folkung noblemen
broke into the abbey at Vreta.

King Magnus dwelt in Sweden,
mighty he was and bold,
so comely had he daughters two,
the fairest that eyes might behold.

King Magnus summons a council
and all agreed to this plan:
proud Elin should enter Vreta Abbey
and proud Karin rule the land.

5. Proud Elin should enter Vreta Abbey
and there she would remain
until she was given the Spanish king
with all the gold of Spain.

It was Sir Sune Folkesson,
spoke to his brother Sir Knut:
"We shall ride to Vreta Abbey
and take proud Elin out.

"If we set out for Vreta Abbey
and if we get that maid,
her father King Magnus will hear of this,
we shall lose our lives for her sake."

And it was both these noble lords,
they bad them saddle their steeds:
"We wish to ride to Uppsala,
King Magnus there to see."

The noblemen rode to Uppsala
and within the castle stood,
inquiring about King Magnus,
it wasn't for his good.

10. In came the little pageboy,
was clothed in kirtle gray:
"King Magnus lies in his bedchamber
longing so far away."

It was Magnus, king of Sweden,
that very night he died.
So quickly to those noble lords
were brought the same tidings.

It was Sir Sune Folkesson,
he bad them saddle his steed:
"Now we will ride to Vreta Abbey,
the maiden there to see."
—*Slain lie so many heroes.*

"If we set out for Vreta Abbey
and if we get that lady,
then thou shalt know, my brother Sir Knut,
that maiden belongs to me."
—*Slain lie so many heroes.*

Proud Elin dreamt a dream at night
where she lay on her couch.
She woke in the morning early
and told her mother about it.

15. "I dreamt that my father's falcons,
they were no more than three,
they sat up on our convent roof,
so woefully did they screech.

"I dreamt that my father's falcons,
they flew off toward the west,
I fear that I long will suffer
a sorrow within my breast.

"I dreamt about the wild eagle
and the wild griffin too,
they began to pick a quarrel
and into my arms they flew."

It was then the abbess,
she would interpret the dream:
"It is the Folkung noblemen
that are yearning after thee.

"Thou dreamt that thy father's falcons,
they were no more than three,
because of Sir Sune Folkesson
sorrow and woe thou shalt dree.

20. "Thou dreamt that thy father's falcons,
they flew off toward the west,
that is Sir Sune Folkesson
that keeps thee within his breast.

"Thou dreamt about the wild eagle
and the wild griffin too,
because of Sir Sune Folkesson
sorrow and woe thou shalt endure."

Seven times about the abbey
the noblemen rode in a ring,
in the middle of the cloister wall
is where those lords broke in.

Down there came the cloistered nun,
was clothed in kirtle blue:
"Who's breaking down our cloister wall
and is making such a hue?"

"Hear thou, little cloister nun,
all that I say to thee:
where sleeps the proud maid Elin?
Thou hide it not from me!"

25. "The house it is of marble stone,
the roof it is of lead,
the sheets they are of silken cloth
where the maiden sleeps abed."

And up and woke the abbess,
to her servant thus she spoke:
"Who so wishes to enter the abbey
that cloister walls are broken?"

"Sir Knut breaks down our cloister wall,
Sir Sune has entered in.
Sir Sune has put out the candles
burning over proud Elin."

The lady's foremost knight awoke,
to his brother thus did say:
"And we must risk our tender lives
all for our dearest lady."

Those noble lords with the proud Elin,
they could not make their escape
before all twelve of her knights in arms
dead by the door there lay.

30. Both her head and feet were bare
as they led her out the door,
so grievously was never a royal princess
led away before.

They took a cape, it was of blue,
to cover her golden hair,
they lifted her onto a pacer gray
and led her off from there.

They rode along the highway
and Vreta Bridge they crossed:
"Hear me now, proud Elin,
you'll plight my brother your troth."

"Hold your tongue, Knut Folkesson,
and dare you say not so!
I have oftentimes sworn ere this
Sir Sune shall have my no."

It was proud lady Elin,
a word she had to say:
"If my father, King Magnus, hears of this,
I'll be avenged straightway."

35. It was Sir Sune Folkesson,
he added to her dismay:
"King Magnus is laid out in his bedchamber,
has longed so far away."
—*Slain lie so many heroes.*

"If it is true as you say to me
King Magnus my father is dead,
then there is no one in all the world
who can help me in my need."
—*Slain lie so many heroes.*

Quickly they took that noble lady,
to Ymseborg they did go.
This will I say to you in sooth:
she lived with daily woe.

They lived together for fifteen years,
they lived together so,
that neither had a pleasant word to say,
neither yes nor no.

It was on a Wednesday evening,
proud Elin had a pain in her side,
she prayed to God so fervently
that she'd not have long to bide.

40. It was the lady Elin,
she spoke to handmaids two:
"You ask Sir Sune Folkesson
come to me here in my room."

In then came the handmaids two,
were clothed in kirtles of red:
"Sir Sune, would you to proud Elin go,
we fear she will soon be dead."

In came Sir Sune Folkesson,
was wrapped in a scarlet skin:
"Why do you send for me so soon
to leave my guests within?"

"I have got a pain in my side,
I hope I soon shall be dead.
I thank the Lord God in heaven
that He saves me from my need."

It was Sir Sune Folkesson,
he patted her cheek so white:
"Forgive me, oh my dearest,
all my sins and slights."

45. "Never can it be forgiven
that you have done me the harm
to take from me my chambermaid
and lay her in your arms.

"You laid my maid on bolsters of blue
and took her into your care,
but me you have cursed and beaten
and dragged me by my hair."

It was Sir Sune Folkesson,
he patted her cheek so white:
"I beg of you, my dearest,
forgive my sins and slights."

"Never can it be forgiven
that you have done me this grief:
seven daughters have I had by you
that I never got to see!"

"Seven daughters have I had by you
with the pains of childbed,
three of the maidens are still alive,
the other four are dead."

50. So quickly then the way for them
with finest silk was spread,
so soon were the noble maidens
before their mother led.

"Welcome to thee, proud Karin,
eldest of all my maids,
and welcome to thee, proud Kerstin,
betrothed to the king of Spain."

"Welcome to thee, proud Adelin,
youngest of all the three,
thou shalt enter a convent
and pray so well for me."

"Hear me now, proud Karin,
to thy mother's words give heed:
never love Magnus Benediktsson,
he'll never be good to thee."

It was the proud lady Karin,
to her mother answered she:
"God grant that you may live so long
you will see how it fares with me."

55. It was the proud lady Elin,
so swiftly she replied:
"This will I say to thee in sooth,
thou takest after thy father's side."

It was also the maiden Adelin,
her cheeks with tears ran:
"I will not enter a convent,
I'd rather take a man."

It was the proud lady Elin,
she wrung her hands in grief:
"Will not even my own children
obey a word from me!"

It was the maiden Adelin,
this vow she would fulfill:
"I shall enter a convent, dear mother,
since this is your will."
—*Slain lie so many heroes.*

"I was given into the convent
all with a silken sark,
and I was taken out again
all with an aching heart."
—*Slain lie so many heroes.*

60. It was Sir Sune Folkesson,
his tears fell to his chin:
"Forgive me, my dearest sweetheart,
all my slights and sins.

"Forgive me all the slights and sins
against you I have done,
and I will go barefooted
all the way to Rome."

"Should you go barefoot to Rome
or to Jerusalem,
all for my twelve bold knights in arms,
I never can forget them."

Forth then stepped the maidens three,
their cheeks were wet with tears,
then they gained for their father
the friendship of their mother dear.

64. "Now lay aside your scarlet skin
and wear the cape of blue.
You now shall take a knight's daughter,
a princess you'll no more woo!"
—*Slain lie so many heroes.*

IV

19. THE MAIDEN'S MORNING DREAM

Recorded near Lemvig, Jutland, by P. Kr. Madsen, 1870

Fair Vesterland was born at evening time
—who tears the leaves off the lily—
 her mother was dead before early mass time.
—She dances the dew off the meadow.

Her father he rode so many a path,
 he married Greyveggen, a stepmother bad.

She bestowed on her daughters honor so rich,
 but bestowed on fair Vesterland strokes by a switch.

She bestowed on her daughters golden boons,
 but bestowed on fair Vesterland swabs and brooms.

5. Greyveggen entered through the door:
 "Tell me the dream that you had this morn."

"I dreamt a little duck was I
 that to the Wenders' land did fly.

I dreamt that strong and wide was my wing,
 I'd rule the land for the Wenders' king."

"I curse you, fair maid, for the luck you've found."
 And then she struck Vesterland dead to the ground.

"I curse you, fair maid, for the luck you've found;
 in the yard the king and his Wenders dismount.

10. You'll stand in the sight of the Wenders' king,
 but not in your gold robe and golden ring."

"Why do you forbid me my gold to wear,
 the gift from my mother, before you came here?

Why do you forbid me the gold so red,
 I came into it when my mother was dead?"

She went to the chest where her gold she hid,
 she used all her strength and opened the lid.

Then she put gold on top of gold,
 all that her fingers and arms could hold.

15. Her golden scissors she took in her hand,
 in sight of the Wenders' king she did stand.

"Oh tell me, fair Vesterland, without fail,
—who tears the leaves off the lily—
 why are your cheeks so wan and pale?"
—She dances the dew off the meadow.

"Last night I fell from the balustrade
—*who tears the leaves off the lily—*
from up above, and hurt my head."
—*She dances the dew off the meadow.*

"No, your hard-hearted stepmother wouldn't unbend,
she struck you dead before my advent.

What must be cut or sewn or bound?
It ill befits you to go to town."

20. He wrapped her into a beautiful cloak,
the road to the Wenders' land they took.

21. He crowned her and put her on the throne,
—*who tears the leaves off the lily—*
for she was to rule as his very own.
—*She dances the dew off the meadow.*

20. NILUS AND HILLELIL

Svaning's Manuscript I, about 1580

There was brave Sir Nilus
from home he rode away;
he betrothed proud Hillelil,
she was so fair a maid.
—*They act out a play,*
and the play was nothing but anger.

They drank at the wedding
every day through five;
on the sixth at evening
they followed home the bride.

They had horses saddled,
away her wain they haled;
when they come to the moorland
there blows so strong a gale.

"It rains and it is windy
and cold and won't relent;
tell me, my proud Hillelil,
where to unfold our tent.

5. If we ride to Hørringsholm,
it is so long a path;
if we ride to Fredelund,
your uncle harbors me wrath."

"Let us ride to Fredelund
and rest ourselves tonight,
and be my mother's brother there,
your peace I shall make right."

There was brave Sir Nilus
into the yard rode in;
and there stood Sir Peter,
swathed in fur and skin.

"Here you are, Sir Peter,
you are my uncle dear;
give Sir Nilus roof tonight
for him and all his men."

"God be with you, proud Hillelil,
you did no fortune find;
a man that was far richer
for you I had in mind."

10. "A man that was far richer
for me you had in mind;
but none I could love better
you any place would find."

"I will give him roof tonight
for him and those he binds;
but well he knows, Sir Nilus,
he slew a brother of mine."

They followed then proud Hillelil
to her chamber for to sleep;
they followed then brave Sir Nilus
into the banquet hall.

—*They act out a play,*
and the play was nothing but anger.

Poured they for brave Sir Nilus
both mead and wine again;
out he goes, Sir Peter,
arms himself and his men.
—*They act out a play,*
and the play was nothing but anger.

Entered then Sir Peter,
his sword on the table he threw:
"Did you forget, Sir Nilus,
my brother was slain by you?"

15. "No, full well I know it,
as if it were yesterday;
I'll be a brother to you,
as long as live I may."

"You and all your squires,
my peace you need not fear;
but your sister's two sons they shall
stay and serve me here."

Up then rose the warriors two
with swords girt at their waist:
"My master, give us now your leave,
and we will solve our fate."

There stood brave Sir Nilus
looking at the affray,
until both his sister's sons
dead on the flooring lay.

"I promised once by the holy grave
the Lord did suffer in death,
I never would draw my sword on a Sunday
except in sore distress."

20. Up stood brave Sir Nilus
and drew his sword from his sash;
verily, I tell you,
valiantly did he slash.

There was brave Sir Nilus
he slashed with might and main
so long, until his valiant sword
wore out and broke in twain.

He shielded himself with cushions
and bolsters high and low;
outside the door of the banquet hall
he got the fatal blow,

Then said brave Sir Nilus
with sorrow and with woe:
"Be ready now, proud Hillelil,
for it is time to go."

There was brave Sir Nilus
mounted his horse so white,
and then he rode to Hermindsholm,
he rode the best he might.

25. There was brave Sir Nilus
into the yard rode in;
there stood his dear sister,
swathed in fur and skin.

"Welcome to you, dear brother,
why do alone you ride?
Where may my two sons be
who should be at your side?"

"I rode on to Fredelund,
Hillelil counseled so;
and there your two sons now remain,
I got the fatal blow.

Listen, my dear sister,
now make a bed for me
and be to proud Hillelil a mother,
the fairest woman is she."

"How can I to Hillelil
be a mother good?
By her I lost two sons of mine
and my brother in his own blood."

30. There was woe in the chambers
and there was still more harm;
there was brave Sir Nilus
died in his sister's arm.

31. There died brave Sir Nilus,
there was great sorrow and fear;
proud Hillelil laid her in his arms
and died with him she held dear.
—*They act out a play,*
and the play was nothing but anger.

21. SVEND IN THE ROSE GARDEN

Recording from South Sealand by Franziska Carlsen, 1846

"Where were you at this late hour
—*Svend in the rose garden near?*"
"I have been in the bower
—*O my mother dear.*
—*I shall be late or never.*"

"Why is your sword so bloody?"
"Because I have killed my brother."

"Where will you turn your course?"
"I'll flee this country of ours."

"What will you do with your good wife?"
"She'll spin for her food and keep alive."

5. "What will you do with the children of yours?"
"I shall place them with friends of ours."

"When shall we see your homecoming?"
"When women are all widow-women."

"When are they all widow-women?"
"When all the men are dead."

"When are all men dead?"
"When all farms are desolate."

"When are they desolate?"
"When ravens they grow white."

10. "When do ravens grow white?"
"When the swans grow black."

"When do swans grow black?"
"When we see feathers sink."

"When will we see feathers sink?"
"When we see stones afloat."

"When will we see stones afloat?"
"When we see the ocean bloom."

14. "When will the ocean bloom
—*Svend in the rose garden near?*"
"When we hear the crack of doom
—*O my mother dear.*
—*I shall be late or never.*"

22. EDWARD

Motherwell's Manuscript, 1825 and after. Recorded from Mrs. King, Kilbarchan, Scotland

'What bluid's that on thy coat lap,
Son Davie, son Davie?
What bluid's that on thy coat lap?
And the truth come tell to me.'

'It is the bluid of my great hawk,
Mother lady, mother lady:
It is the bluid of my great hawk,
And the truth I have told to thee.'

'Hawk's bluid was never sae red,
Son Davie, son Davie:
Hawk's bluid was never sae red,
And the truth come tell to me.'

'It is the bluid of my greyhound,
Mother lady, mother lady:
It is the bluid of my greyhound,
And it wadna rin for me.'

5. 'Hound's bluid was never sae red,
Son Davie, son Davie:
Hound's bluid was never sae red,
And the truth come tell to me.'

'It is the bluid o my brither John,
Mother lady, mother lady:
It is the bluid o my brither John,
And the truth I have told to thee.'

'What about did the plea begin,
Son Davie, son Davie?
'It began about the cutting of a willow wand
That would never been a tree.'

'What death dost thou desire to die,
Son Davie, son Davie?
What death dost thou desire to die?
And the truth come tell to me.'

'I'll set my foot in a bottomless ship,
Mother lady, mother lady:
I'll set my foot in a bottomless ship,
And ye'll never see mair o me.'

10. 'What wilt thou leave to thy poor wife,
Son Davie, son Davie?'
'Grief and sorrow all her life,
And she'll never see mair o me.'

'What wilt thou leave to thy old son,
Son Davie, son Davie?'
'I'll leave him the weary world to wander
up and down,
And he'll never get mair o me.'

12. 'What wilt thou leave to thy mother dear,
Son Davie, son Davie?'
'A fire o coals to burn her, wi hearty cheer,
And she'll never get mair o me.'

23. EBBE SKAMMELSEN

Sofia Sandberg's Manuscript, before 1622

Skammel he lives up here in Thy,
merry and well to do;
he has five sons so proud and strong,
two of them came to woe.
—*And thus roams Ebbe Skammelsen
on many stormy trails.*

Three of them died long ago,
the other two were left;
verily, I tell you,
they were brave and deft.

Ebbe was the younger,
he rode far and wide;
proud Adeluds, the lovely maid,
he asked to be his bride.

Proud Adeluds, the lovely maid,
he asked her for her troth;
then he took her home to his mother,
and then he rode abroad.

5. Ebbe serves in the house of the king
and acts with honor there;
Peter, his brother, stays at home
and courts the maid he has dear.

There was Peter Skammelsen
he dressed in velvet all,
looking for proud Adeluds
he went into the hall.

"Here I find you, proud Adeluds,
give me your troth and grace;
I shall honor and love you
all my living days."

"Be silent, Peter Skammelsen,
don't talk this way to me;
I'm betrothed to your brother,
this shall never be."

Answered Peter Skammelsen,
richly in velvet dressed:
"Ebbe serves in the house of the king,
to him you are just a jest."

10. Then said Ebbe's mother,
for him she didn't care:
"You take Peter Skammelsen,
Ebbe is false, I swear.

Ebbe serves in the house of the king
and acts with honor there;
a maiden in the house of the queen
he yearns for and holds dear.

Better you take my older son,
with castles golden-red,
than wait for Ebbe Skammelsen,
he loves another maid."

"Harken, Peter Skammelsen,
you take another wife;
no other man shall bind me
while Ebbe is still alive."

Answered her Ebbe's mother,
her voice had an honest ring:
"I'll tell you the truth, proud Adeluds,
Ebbe he died last spring."

15. Then proud Adeluds stood up,
the delightful rose,
and she gave Peter Skammelsen
her silken hand in troth.
—*And thus roams Ebbe Skammelsen
on many stormy trails.*

They prepared for the wedding
and bought both wine and brew;
Ebbe served in the house of the king,
so little about it he knew.

—*And thus roams Ebbe Skammelsen
on many stormy trails.*

Ebbe awoke at midnight
and told what he had dreamt;
his companion lay awake
thinking of what it meant.

"I thought I saw my stone house
in flames and all alight;
there burned my brother Peter
together with my bride."

"You thought you saw your stone house
in flames and all alight:
that is because your brother
betrothed your lovely bride."

20. Then arose young Ebbe
and tied the sword at his side,
then he asked for furlough,
as homeward he would ride.

There was Ebbe Skammelsen
he rode a furious race,
three days he used to ride the road
that erst took thirty days.

There was Ebbe Skammelsen
he rode so fast away,
he came to his father's house
on the first wedding day.

There was Ebbe Skammelsen
rode into his father's yard;
there he saw a little page,
dressed in a mantle smart,

"Harken to me, my little page,
and answer me my query:
who are all these people here
who're gathered and make merry?"

25. "All these people that you see
who are gathered here,
came as Peter, your brother,
weds the maid you have dear."

Entered then his sisters two
and welcomed with joy their brother;
they were gladder to see him again
than both his father and mother.

To one he gave a diadem,
the other a golden band,
both he had bought for his lovely bride,
brought from a foreign land.

[To one he gave a golden band,
the other a gold ring so wide:
both he had brought from a foreign land,
brought for his lovely bride.]

Ebbe he turned his steed around,
he wanted to ride away;
but his mother took hold of the reins,
demanding that he should stay.

30. Doggedly she held on to the reins,
demanding that he should stay;
now she rues so deeply
she stopped him from riding away.

His mother offered him cushion and chair
and place at the table to dine;
his father asked him to go around
and pour the golden wine.

Ebbe poured wine for Adeluds,
she shone like a golden sprite;
and he became so sorrowful
whenever he looked at the bride.

There was Ebbe Skammelsen
he poured as time went on;
then he asked his father for leave
to rest himself and sit down,

There he sat for a little while,
until his mother said
that it might be the best for him,
if he would go to bed.

35. Ebbe Skammelsen arose
with Adeluds on his arm;
verily, I tell you,
his heart felt hurt and harm.

Ebbe Skammelsen he asked,
out on the balcony:
"Do you remember, Adeluds,
you pledged me loyalty?"

"All the troth I got from God,
I gave to Peter, your brother;
I promise, all my living days
to care for you as a mother."

"I wooed you not for my mother,
I asked you to be my wife;
now shall Peter Skammelsen
pay for it with his life.
—*And thus roams Ebbe Skammelsen
on many stormy trails.*

Harken to me, proud Adeluds,
together let's go away;
then I will kill my brother
and suffer for you this dismay."
—*And thus roams Ebbe Skammelsen
on many stormy trails.*

40. "If you take your brother's life,
you'll lose me, too, for sure;
and you shall grieve yourself to death
like a wild bird on the moor."

There was Ebbe Skammelsen
he drew his sword from his side,
turned to lady Adeluds
and killed his brother's bride.

Under his scarlet mantle
he hid the bloody sword;
then he went and stood before
his brother in the hall.

24. EBBE SKAMMELSØN

Jens Bille's Manuscript, 1555–59

Skammel bor i Thy,
både rig og øvert kåd,
så høviske haver han sønner fem,
de to fors ilde ad.
—*Fordi træder Ebbe Skammelsøn
så mangen sti vild.*

Ebbe han tjener i konningens gård
både for guld og fæ;
Peder hans broder lader bygge et skib,
han rejser op sejletræ.

Midt udi den gården
der aksler han sit skind;
og så går han i højeloft
for jomfru Lucelille ind.

"Hil sidder I, jomfru Lucelille,
I syr hr. Ebbe klær;
hr. Ebbe tjener i konningens gård,
han spotter eder og hæder."

5. Det svared jomfru Lucelille,
og svared hun for sig:
"Han spotter ingen stolt jomfru,
end halve sider mig."

"Peter, my brother, get to your feet
and hie yourself to the bride;
too long she's sitting in her bed
longing for you at her side."

"Harken, Ebbe Skammelsen,
do not spoil for a fight;
I promise, brother dear, that you
may sleep with my bride tonight."

45. There was Ebbe Skammelsen
the sword from his side he drew;
there was his brother Peter's head
he severed with a blow.

46. He wounded his father grievously,
his mother lost a hand;
and thus roams Ebbe Skammelsen
on many wild trails in the land.
—*And thus roams Ebbe Skammelsen
on many stormy trails.*

"Står op, jomfru Lucelille,
I giver mig eders tro!
Det vil jeg for sandingen sige,
det Ebbe døde i fjor."

Svared det jomfru Lucelille,
og svared hun for sig:
"Halve mere skade får I deraf,
end jeg venter mig."

"Hør I det, jomfru Lucelille,
Giver Peder eders tro!
Det vil jeg for sandingen sige,
det Ebbe døde i fjor."

9. Drukke de det fæsten[s]øl
og end den samme nat,
brylluppet end før månedsdag,
de rådde det iså brat.
—*Fordi træder Ebbe Skammelsøn
så mangen sti vild.*
(...)

25. EBBE SKAMMELSØN

Karen Brahe's Folio Manuscript, about 1583

Skammel han bor sig nør i Thy,
han haver de sønner unge;
det vil jeg for sandingen sige:
den ene fik skæbnen så tunge.
—*Fordi træder Ebbe Skammelsøn*
så mange sti vild.

Skammel bor sig nør i Thy,
han er både rig og kåd;
så raske da haver han sønner fem,
de to gås verden imod.

Den ene hedder Ebbe Skammelsøn,
den anden hedder Peder hin ung;
det vil jeg for sandingen sige:
deres skæbne blev dennem så tunge.

Det var Ebbe Skammelsøn,
han red sig under ø;
fæsted han sig stolt Adelus,
hun var så væn en mø.

5. "I bider mig, stalten Adelus,
og gemmer I vel eders ære;
men jeg rider i kongens gård
for guld og penning og ære."

Ebbe han tjener i kongens gård
både for guld og ære;
hjem sidder Peder hans broder,
han lokker hans hjertenskære.

Ebbe han tjener i kongens gård
både for guld og fæ;
Peder hans broder lader bygge et skib
og rejser op sejletræ.

Det var Peder Skammelsøn,
han svøber sig hoved i skind;
så går han i højeloft
for stalten Adelus ind.

"Hør I det, stalten Adelus,
I giver mig eders tro!
Jeg vil eder elske og ære,
den stund jeg leve må."

10. "Hvorlunde skulle jeg eder love
med eder at bygge og bo!
Spør det Ebbe, eders broder,
jeg haver hannem givet min tro!"

"Hør I det, stalten Adelus,
I giver mig eders tro!
Det vil jeg for sandingen sige:
[Ebbe] døde i fjor."

12. Op stod stalten Adelus,
så smal som en liljevånd;
så gav hun Peder Skammelsøn
sin tro med hviden hånd.
—*Fordi træder Ebbe Skammelsøn*
så mange sti vild.
(...)

26. EBBE SKAMMELSSON

Stockholm Royal Library Songbook in Octavo, no. 17; 1600–1700

Skammel han bodde på Tidön,
han var både rik och kåt,
så karske åtte han söner fem,
de två gick världen emot.
—*Förty träder Ebbe Skammelsson*
så mången vill stig.

Tre de äro döde
och två de leva än,
det vill jag för sanning säga:
de äro två raske hovmän.

Det var Ebbe Skammelsson,
han låter sadla sine hästar:
"Jag vill rida in under ö,
jungfru Lucie vill jag gästa."

Det var Ebbe Skammelsson,
han rider i jungfruns gård.
Ute står jungfru Lucie lilla,
var svept i sobel og mård.

5. "I stånden här, jungfru Lucie,
ären svept i sobelskinn,
viljen I låna mig hus i natt
och blive allerkäraste min?"

"Väl skolen I få hus i natt
och foder vill edra hästar,
men det står min moder till
att svara sådane gäster.

I gån eder i stugan in
och dricker mjöd och vin,
så länge jag går i stenstugan
och rådes med moder min."

"I sitten här jungfruns moder,
ären svept i sobelskinn:
viljen I mig jungfru Lucie giva
till allerkäraste min?"

"Det var jungfruns moder,
månde såled's därtill svara:
"Eder giver jag min kära dotter,
om hon eljest eder behagar."

10. "Hören I, liten Lucie,
huru lång' viljen I efter mig bida,
så länge som jag tjänar i konungens gård
och lärar mig dusten rida?"

"Eder bidar jag i vintrar
och så i vintrar två
och eder bidar jag så lång en tid
som I mig läggen oppå."

Ebbe han tjänar i kungens gård
både för guld och ~~fru~~,
hemma går Peder, hans broder,
bortlockar hans hjärtans kära.

Det var Peder Skammelsson,
han axlar skarlakanskinn,
så går han i frustuvan
för liten Lucie in.

"Hören I, jungfru Lucie lilla,
viljen I vara min kära,
min broder han tjänar i kungens gård,
han eder båd' spottar och hädar."

15. "Så grant då känner jag Ebbe
och Ebbe känner grant mig:
aldrig spottar han någon stolta jungfru,
fast mindre gör han det mig."

"Så hören nu, jungfru Lucie lilla,
om I viljen bliva min fästemo:
så visst hjälpe mig den allsmäktige Gud
att Ebbe min broder är död."

17. "Är det sant I säjen för mig
att Ebbe eder broder är död,
så hjälpe mig den evige Gud
jag bliver eder fästemo."
—*Förty träder Ebbe Skammelsson*
så mången vill stig.
(...)

V

27. THOREKARL OF ASGARTH

Sung by Ole Grønset, Gol in Hallingdal, after 1750

Sad and weary was Thorekarl
when home he came from the woods;
a thief had stolen his hammer away,
he did not know who could.
—*Thorekarl is reining and taming his foal.*

Loken donned his wings and flew
till he was like to burst,
and comes into Grimmel's garth
as his fire was alight.

"What's afoot in Asgarth
since trolls are out at night?
You came running at such a clip
as if you had been chased."

"This is afoot in Asgarth,
it's ill and none too good:
Thorekarl has lost his hammer,
he doesn't know how he could."

5. To this replied the giant Grimmel
at home in all his might:
"I'm the one who has taken his hammer,
not a word from him I'd hide."

"He'll never get his hammer back
until he agrees to this:
to bring me as bride into my house
the youngest of his sisters."

Loken he donned his wings and flew
till he was well nigh dead;
he got him back to Asgarth
before Thorekarl went to bed.

And Grimmel has taken his hammer
and hides from him not a word:
fifteen feet and fathoms nine
he's buried it in the earth.

It was the Lady Valborg,
so ill were all her words;
all the blood drove from her veins,
she blackened as the earth.

10. So then they took their dainty bride
and brushed and braided her hair;
so quick were then the bridesmaids
to arrange the bridal gear.

And in comes the giant Grimmel
and Valborg's train he sees:
"Bring me in my finest clothes
and I'll be as fair as she."

The bride she had a roasted ox
with a kettle of broth to eat,
and all the bread that they had baked
from fifteen bushels of seed.

Fifteen salmon she gobbled up
along with some other small fishes
before she began to gasp for drink
to wash down her favorite dishes.

"I'm going to need more than a horn to drink,
I'm shivering with the cold;
bring it to me in a basin
and carry it in on poles."

15. To this replied the giant Grimmel
at home in all his might:
"I never saw a daintier bride
eating so much of a night!"
—*Thorekarl is reining and taming his foal.*

28. THE AVENGING SWORD

Karen Brahe's Folio Manuscript, about 1583

Sir Peter rode to the castle door,
the King of Danes he stood before.
—*Forward, hurrah, ride forward!*

"Welcome, Sir Peter, comrade mine!
Hast thou avenged him, father thine?"

"Oh, I have been so southerly
until the sun bowed down to me."

"And I have been so westerly until
the sun sank near to me."

5. "And I have been so northerly
until the frost was froze to see."

"And I have been so easterly
until the day was fair to see."

"But never could I find the wight
to rede me my father's death aright."

"Now say what wilt thou give the wight
can rede thee thy father's death aright?"

"Of silver he shall have his fill,
and of golden coin what'er he will."

10. "Yea, more I'll give to him,
a ship in sailing-trim."

He smiled, the King, his words to heed:
"Here stand I that did the deed!"

"By God in heaven, I tell thee true,
none but I thy father slew!"

Sir Peter smote himself on the breast:
"Heart, bide still, nor break thy rest!"

"Heart, lie still, bide patiently,
sure and swift shall my vengeance be."

15. Sir Peter walked abroad
to speak with his good sword.

"Harken, sword so good!
Wilt drink thy fill of blood?"

"Good brown brand, wilt fight for me?
No brother have I on earth but thee."

"Oh, say, how can I fight for thee?
My hilt is broken in pieces three."

To the Smith his way he wended
that the hurt might be amended.

20. He gave him iron, he gave him steel
of proof and price, the hurt to heal.

"Good brown brand, wilt fight for me?
No brother have I on earth but thee."

"Be only in thy blows so stern
as I'll be swift in point to turn!"

"Be only in thy blows so stout
as I in hilt will bear thee out!"

Sir Peter sought the hall
where the knights were drinking all.

25. To prove his brand he was full fain,
seven champions there lay slain.

Up and down he swung his blade,
neither matron he spared nor maid.

Up through the rafters did he thrust,
the King and his sons they bit the dust.

Up spake the babe in cradle lay:
"A red revenge dost thou wreak today."

"A red revenge for father thine,
God give me a day for avenging mine!"

30. "And have I avenged him, father mine,
shalt see no day for avenging thine!"

He seized the babe amain
and smote it straight in twain.

"Cease, brown brand, thy thirst to slake,
bide thou still for Our Savior's sake!"

Wearily whispered the sword and still:
"Pain of thy blood I'd have my fill!"

"Hadst thou not earned my name, I vow
I would have slain thee, here and now!"

35. He sought the Smith again,
bade forge an iron chain.

In chains he bound him, foot and hand,
for now he fain would leave the land.

37. When o'er the grave of the King he passed
the chains of iron were riven and brast.
—*Forward, hurrah, ride forward!*

VI

29. THE BALLAD OF TRISTRAM

Various manuscripts from the 17th century

Tristram against the heathen hound
the battle set;
many a man got bloody wounds
when there they met.

—*To the lovers it was shapen but to sunder.*

Back was he borne upon a shield,
that brave young knight;
many a leech sought leave to heal
his body's blight.

But all their leechcraft he refused
and swore a vow:
"Only Iseult, that lady fair,
may heal me now!"

Tristram sends his messengers
and three men leap:
"O go and tell Iseult the Fair
my wounds are deep."

5. Tristram sends his messengers;
five take his plea:
"O go and tell Iseult the Fair
to come to me."

"And bid her as I shall command
prepare her trip:
Let all the sails be dyed with blue
upon her ship."

His messengers to Cornwall came
o'er waters dim:
"Young Tristram, lady, bids you come
to visit him."

Then went Iseult into the hall
and sought the king;
"O may I not to this knight, thy friend,
some healing bring?"

The king made answer in angry wise
and stern did say:
"He spurns the healing of all the rest;
he must be fey."

10. Iseult the Fair with softest speech
pled piteously;
her arms about the monarch's neck
made earnest plea.

"I'd gladly let thee heal this knight
of his sore wound,
could I but know thou wouldst return
both safe and sound."

"With God must rest my safe return,"
the lady quoth.
"I may not in this journey now
forget my troth."

She cast on her a sable fur
with sigh and tear;
then went the jewelled lady out
upon the pier.

"I must as Tristram did command
prepare my trip,
and let the sails be all of blue
upon my ship."

15. They wound the sails as the lady bade
to the masthead high;
to Tristram she will not fail to come,
so like to die.

Iseult the Dark went from the hall,
and said not true:
"Black are the sails upon the ship
instead of blue."

Into the hall Iseult the Dark
returned once more:
"Black are the sails upon the ship
that nears the shore."

Tristram turned his face to the wall,
and naught he spake.
Three miles away a man might hear
that great heart break.

They brought the blue-sailed ship to shore
on the cold black sand;
retainers bore Iseult the Fair
the first to land.

20. Long was the way they had to walk;
the road was wide;
but ever she heard the sound of bells
that clanged and cried.
—*To the lovers it was shapen but to sunder.*

Long was the way they had to walk;
 it marred the feet;
 and ever she heard the sound of bells
 and chanting sweet.
—To the lovers it was shapen but to sunder.

Then said Iseult, the lady fair
 from o'er the foam:
 "Tristram, alas, should not be dead
 when I come home."

Iseult came into the solemn church
 with a hundred men;
 the priests were chanting their last farewell
 o'er his body then.

Iseult o'er his coffined body bent,
 like a rose-bud bright;
 the silent priests in the chancel stood
 by candlelight.

25. Iseult o'er his coffined body bent;
 scarce seemed alive;
 the silent priests in the chancel stood
 with candles five.

Many a heart in this weary world
 with woe is fed.
 Iseult o'er his coffined body bent,
 and lay there dead.

The bitter soul of Iseult the Dark
 with grief was torn.
 Two bodies then from the ivied church
 were straightway borne.

Iseult the Dark in anger spoke,
 and took her troth:
 "If I can help it, death shall fail
 to join them both!"

Hastily, quickly they were laid
 beneath the mould;
 to north and south of the church they lie
 alone and cold.

30. And from their graves two birches grow
 that mutely strain
 across the roof of that dark church
 to meet, in vain.
—To them it was not shapen but to sunder.

VII

30. THE SONG CARRIER

Svaning's Manuscript II, about 1580

Once I served a gentleman
 for a summer and a fall;
 he gave me ale and mead and meat
 and full reward withall:
—He taught me so many ballads.

I put my ballads into a cart,
 I put a hay-pole on top;
 I hitched four oxen up to the cart
 but they couldn't budge from the spot;
—I was overloaded with ballads.

And when I came up to the farmer's yard
 and through the deepest ditch,
 my fourth wheel it broke apart
 and my load began to pitch;
—I was overloaded with ballads.

When I came into the farmer's yard
 they had so big a scoop:
 and some they measured and some just took,
 they thought they would use them up
—And still I had plenty of ballads.

5. And then I took me a hat-full,
 to the housewife bore them in;
 four songs I had in each of my hands,
 I passed them out to the women.
—And still I had plenty of ballads.

6. The housewife went to the pantry
 as they were preparing to eat;
 she fetched me fifteen well-aged cheeses
 and sides of salted meat;
—You shall have these for your ballads.

31. THE LAD WHO WAS FOOLED

Recorded by Evald Tang Kristensen after Jens Mikkelsen, Kølvrå by Ringkøbing

A knight so bold and a maid so gay
were going out to harvest hay.
—*And how she did laugh!*

After a joust with the hay that they ted
he hoed together a wedding bed.

"Now may I do what I want to do,
for I have made a bed for you?"

"Yes, you may do what you want to do,
but only if to my room we go."

5. The knight he started to fuss and fume
and helped her getting back to her room.

"Now may I do what I want to do,
for back to your room I have taken you?"

"Yes, you may do what you want to do,
when out of my frock you have helped me, too."

The knight he started to fuss and fume
and helped her with her frock in her room.

"Now may I do what I want to do,
for with your frock I assisted you?"

10. "Yes, you may do what you want to do,
when out of my shift you have helped me, too."

The knight he started to fuss and fume
and helped her with her shift in her room.

"Now may I do what I want to do,
for with your shift I assisted you?"

"Yes, you may do what you want to do,
when up in my bed you have helped me, too."

The knight he started to fuss and fume
and helped her getting to bed in her room.

15. "Now may I do what I want to do,
for into your bed I assisted you?"

"Yes, you may do what you want to do
when out of my sark you have helped me, too."

The knight he started to fuss and fume
and helped her out of her sark in her room.

"Now may I do what I want to do,
for with your sark I assisted you?"

"Yes, you may do what you want to do,
but first go out, I must ask of you."

20. The knight went out as he was told,
she shut the door with lock and bolt.

21. With lock and bolt she shut the door:
"The devil should let you in any more."
—*And how she did laugh!*

VIII

32. I KNOW WHERE SO LOVELY A GARDEN GROWS

Sung by a peasant girl, Lundum near
Horsens, before 1837

I know where so lovely a garden grows,
—*a garden grows*—
on every side she is covered with roses.
—*In summertime, in summertime.*

She is like the very proudest cloister,
within so many small flowers are fostered.

Within so fair a linden-tree grows,
within there sport both the hart and the doe.

Within her the red, red roses spring
within her the sweetest nightingale sings.

5. There flows no water, but wine so clear,
this evening I'm going to see my dearest.

6. The song that I here before you recite,
—*you recite*—
'tis of the maid who my heart delights.
—*In summertime, in summertime.*

Bröms Gyllenmär's Manuscript, Borrarp
near Gällstad, Älvsborg län, 1630–45

I know where so lovely an orchard grows,
—*an orchard grows*—
abounding in so many roses.
—*In summertime.*

All about it is walled like a cloister,
within so many small flowers are fostered.

Within both the willow and linden grow,
within there sport both the hart and the doe.

There grows within the tenderest shoots,
there sings within none but the cuckoo.

5. It is not grass, but looks that spring,
within two nightingales sing.

There flows no water but only wine;
think of me, love, for thou art mine.

7. The little song that I here recite,
—*I here recite*—
'tis a proud maiden my heart delights.
—*In summertime.*

33. THE TWO ROYAL CHILDREN

Recording from Harbøre by Karen Thuborg

Two noble children of royal birth
they pledged each other their troth;
to live together they wanted,
one roof to shelter them both.

"But how shall I come over to thee,
across the white-topped wave?
There are so many billows blue
that can become my grave."

"Thou must dive in on your chest so white
and swim across to me;
and I shall light my lanterns nine,
and they shall shine for thee."

But outside stood a devilish maid
and heard the words they spoke;
she doused the light of the lanterns nine
that burned for the royal boy.

5. Inside sat all the convent maidens
and worked with golden thread;
one of them was his sweetheart dear,
tears on her cheek she shed.

In she went to her mother dear
—*-----*
and asked for leave that she might go
down to the roaring sea.

"All by thyself thou mustn't go
down to the roaring sea.
Awaken thou must thy younger brother
and he shall follow thee."

"If I awaken my younger brother,
ever thoughtless before,
he always shoots the little birds
that fly along the shore."

"All by thyself thou mustn't go
down to the roaring sea.
Awaken thou must thy younger sister,
and she shall follow thee."

10. "If I awaken my younger sister,
ever thoughtless before,
then she'll pick all the little flowers
that grow along the shore."

All by herself the maiden went
down to the roaring sea;
there she was met by a fisherman
who had just landed his skiff.

"Oh, listen, my good fisherman,
if thou dost fish for meed,
then fish me up the royal boy
who drowned in our sea."

"Yes, I have fished throughout the night,
caught nothing while afloat,
but for a little royal boy,
lies in the stern of my boat."

34. I WAITED UP ALL EVENING

Sung by a peasant girl, Adslev near
Skanderborg, before 1837

I waited up all evening
last Saturday for you;
you never came to see me
as you had promised to.

I lay upon my pillow
and wept so bitterly;
I thought each time I heard the door
that you had come to me.

I got up Sunday morning
and wept so bitterly;
to the church I thought to go
my true love for to see.

But never did I find you
when I arrived at church,
for you had gone another way
and left me in the lurch.

5. How can you gather roses
where roses are not grown?
How can you find a true love
where love was never known?

Then she drew from her finger a ring,
it was of the purest gold:
"This ring is for thyself as meed,
if you will trade with me."

15. She lifted up the royal boy
and sealed his mouth with a kiss.
Together they took the sorry road
down in the deep abyss.

Adapted by Svend Grundtvig:

I waited up all evening
last Saturday for you;
you never came to see me
as you had promised to.

I lay upon my pillow
and wept so bitterly;
I thought each time I heard the door
that you had come to me.

I got up Sunday morning
and braided up my hair;
I went down to the churchyard
to see if you were there.

You were not in the churchyard,
you never came to church;
for you have found another love
and left me in the lurch.

5. Back down the lane I wandered,
back down the lane alone;
a teardrop fell with every step
the long long way back home.

The red, the pretty ribbons,
the pledges that you gave,
I'll wear them now no longer,
I go unto my grave.

How can you gather roses
where roses never grew?
How can he be my true love
who true love never knew?

8. I went to gather roses,
I'll gather them no more;
I'll never love as tenderly
as I have loved before.

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS

Child: F. J. Child: *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 1–10, Boston and New York, 1882–98.

DgF: *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, 1–12, Copenhagen, 1853–1976.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. *Briefe über Merkwürdigkeiten der Literatur*, 8, 1766–70, in: *Deutsche Literaturdenkmale des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, 29–30, Stuttgart, 1890, p. 58.
2. Iørn Pii: "On Reading Orally-Performed Ballads: The Medieval Ballads of Denmark," in: Hans Bekker-Nielsen et al., ed.: *Oral Tradition—Literary Tradition: A Symposium*, Odense, 1977.
3. *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, 12, 1976, p. 213 (see bibl.).
4. A pioneer work is Nils Schjørring: *Det 16. og 17. århundredes verdslige danske visesang*, 1–2, Copenhagen, 1950.
5. Vésteinn Ólason: "Ballad and Romance in Medieval Iceland," in: *Ballads and Ballad Research* (see bibl. under Conroy, Patricia L.) and "The Icelandic Ballad as a Medieval Genre," in: *The European Medieval Ballad* (see bibl. under Holzapfel, Otto).
6. This theory was first proposed by Moltke Moe in a series of lectures in 1890 and were dealt with extensively in Richard Steffen: *Enstrofig nordisk folklyrik i jämförande framställning*, Stockholm, 1898.
7. Ernst Frandsen: *Folkevisen*, Copenhagen, 1935 and K.-I. Hildeman: "Balladstilens utveckling och upplösning," in: *Om visor och låtar: Studier tillägnade Sven Salén*, Stockholm, 1960.
8. Kaare Vinten: "Folkevisens lyriske indledninger," in: *Danske Studier*, 1973, p. 20–54.
9. Otto Holzapfel: *Studien zur Formelhaftigkeit der mittelalterlichen dänischen Volksballade*, Frankfurt, 1969 and "Scandinavian Folk Ballad Symbols, Epic Formulas and Verbal Traditions," in: *Ballads and Ballad Research* (see bibl. under Conroy, Patricia L.).
10. Axel Olrik: *Nordens Trylleviser*, Copenhagen, 1934 and Ernst Frandsen: *Folkevisen* (see note no. 7).
11. Johannes Steenstrup: *Vore Folkeviser fra Middelalderen* (see bibl.), p. 146 (Eng. ed.).
12. Svale Solheim: "Historie og munnleg historisk visetradisjon," in: *Nordisk seminar i folkedigtning*, 1, Copenhagen, 1962, p. 125.
13. K.-I. Hildeman: *Politiska visor från Sveriges senmedeltid*, Stockholm, 1950.
14. Knut Liestøl: *Norske trollvisor og norrøne sogor*, Kristiania, 1915; see also Sverker Ek: *Norsk kämpvisa i östnordisk tradition*, Gothenburg, 1921.
15. Sigurd Kværndrup, et al., ed.: *Antologi af nordisk litteratur*, 2, 1300–1525, Copenhagen, n.d.
16. F. J. Billeskov Jansen: *Danmarks digtekunst*, 1, Copenhagen, 2nd ed., 1969.
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18. Knud Togeby: "Den europæiske litteratur," in: F. J. Billeskov Jansen, et al., ed.: *Verdens Litteratur Historie*, 2, Copenhagen, 1971.
19. Erik Sponderholm: "The Importance of the Oldest Danish Ballad Manuscripts for the Dating of the Ballad Genre," in: *Ballads and Ballad Research* (see bibl. under Conroy, Patricia L.).
20. Ernst Frandsen: *Folkevisen* (see note no. 7); see also Sverker Ek: *Den svenska folkvisan*, Stockholm, 1924.

21. Ernst Frandsen: *Folkevisen* (see note no. 7) and David W. Colbert: *The Medieval Origins of the Scandinavian Knightly Ballads* (see bibl.).
22. Knut Liestøl: *Scottish and Norwegian Ballads*, Oslo, 1946 and Lise Præstgaard Andersen: "Danske og engelske folkeviser," in: *Danske Studier*, 1978, p. 24-41.
23. David W. Colbert: *The Medieval Origins of the Scandinavian Knightly Ballads* (see bibl.).
24. In: F. J. Child: *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Boston, 1904 ("Small Child"), p. xvii.
25. Thorkild Knudsen: "Ingeborg Munchs viser," in: *Folkeminder*, 7, 1961, p. 90.
26. Sven Hakon Rossel: *Den litterære vise i folketraditionen*, 1-2, Copenhagen, 1971.
27. See, in particular, Villy Sørensen: *Digtere og dæmoner*, Copenhagen, 1959 (the chapter: "Folkeviser og forlovelser").

NOTES TO THE BALLADS

1. GERMAN GLADENSWAIN, p. 13. *Germaud Gladensvend*. DgF 33F. Tr. by R. C. A. Prior. Stanzas 7 and 35 in Vedel's text have been omitted by the translator. St. 21: *England*: in the ballads simply an unspecified fairy tale country. The various versions of the ballad differ in their description of the supernatural being which kills German. DgF 33A describes it as a raven, 33B, D, E as an eagle and 33C as a "gam," a sort of griffin. Vedel's view of it as a "val-ravn," a man who—according to folk tradition—is transformed into a "carnage raven" and only can regain human shape by drinking the heartblood of a boy, is supported by *Lærn Piss* in *Danske Studier*, 1969, p. 48-71. Villy Sørensen has in *Digtere og dæmoner* (see bibl.) given a psychological interpretation of the ballad as well as of nos. 2-3. *Lit.*: Axel Olrik: *Nordens Trylleviser* (see bibl.). Hans Brix: *Analysen og Problemer*, 4, Copenhagen, 1938, p. 182-94. A. G. Drachmann, in *Danske Studier* 1962, p. 5-16.
2. THE POWER OF MUSIC, p. 15. *Harpens Kraft* DgF 40G. Tr. by Henry Meyer. In Slavic and German tradition this widespread ballad concludes tragically with the merman's bridestealing; in Iceland he only returns the bride's dead corpse. Like the related Scottish *King Orfeo* (Child 19) the Danish version, however, lets the music function as the rescuing power. *Lit.*: Sophus Bugge, in *Arkiv for nordisk filologi*, 7, 1891, p. 97-141. Axel Olrik and Villy Sørensen, see notes for no. 1.
3. SIR OLAF AND THE FAIRIES, p. 16. *Herr Olaf och älvorna*. Bengt R. Jonsson: *Svenska medeltidsballader 2* (see bibl.). Tr. by G. René Halkett. This ballad is known all over Scandinavia and has its counterparts in France, *Le roi Renaud*, and in Scotland, *Clerk Colvill*. Sv. Grundtvig has pointed to Brittany as its area of origin; his dating to c. 1100 has been moved 300 years ahead by Knud Tøgeby (see note no. 18). The late monologue ballad *The Elf Hill* (DgF 46) provides the plot with a happy ending. *Lit.*: Axel Olrik and Villy Sørensen, see notes for no. 1. A. Forslin, in: *Arv*, 1962-63, p. 1-92.
4. THE FEATHERED MAIDEN, p. 17. *Jomfruen i Fugleham*. DgF 56C. Tr. by Henry Meyer. St. 4:2 is from DgF 56D. The first three stanzas, the burden stem of the ballad (see introduction p. 6) constitutes the most elaborate nature description in Danish balladry.
5. YOUNG SWENNENDAL, p. 18. *Ungen Svendal*; also entitled *Ungen Svejdal*. DgF 70E. Tr. by R. C. A. Prior. The two fragmentary Edda poems, *Grógaldr* (*The Spell of Gróa*) and *Fjolsvimsnól* (*The Lay of Fjolsvith*), tell the same story of a young man who calls his dead mother back from the grave and from her receives tools and advice to free a maiden imprisoned in a castle—a fairy tale motif known from *The Sleeping Beauty*. Even though the chivalric milieu of the ballad is different from the Old Norse Edda poems the motif of love which surmounts all obstacles—symbolized in the linden tree, the image of love in Scandinavian balladry—is retained and is shared by another ballad *The Maiden's Morning Dream*, no. 19. Another love symbol, that of throwing a ball or runes into a woman's lap to catch her attention or rouse her erotic feelings, is likewise frequently used, as e.g. in DgF 73 and 76. The motif of a young man who through a spell becomes bound to a woman in a foreign country is known from one of the Arthurian legends.

6. SIR OGEY AND LADY ELSEY, p. 20. *Frøstemanden i Graven*; also entitled *Aage og Else*. DgF 90A. Tr. by R. C. A. Prior. The old age of this ballad is suggested by its similarities to the Edda poem, *Helgakvíða Hundingsbana II* (*The Second Lay of Helgi the Hunting-Slayer*). Related is also the motif of G. A. Bürger's popular pre-romantic art ballad, *Lenore*, 1773. Much more popular in folk tradition is another revenant ballad, *The Buried Mother* (DgF 89), whereas *Sir Ogey and Lady Elsey* has served as a literary motif for a great number of Danish writers (see Aage Kabell, in *Scandinavica*, 6, 1967, p. 85-94 and Sven Hakon Rossel: *Den litterære vise i folketraditionen*, 1, Copenhagen, 1971, p. 33ff.).
7. SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST, p. 21. Child 77A. This ballad clearly constitutes a British counterpart to no. 6.
8. STEPHEN AND HEROD, p. 23. *Staffan och Herodes*. Otto Andersson: *Finlands svenska folkdikning 23A* (see bibl.). Tr. by J. A. Arengo Jones. Ballads dealing with the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen, are found in Great Britain in the 15th century. They are based on apocryphal medieval legends which describe St. Stephen either as a servant or a groom of King Herod. See no. 9.
9. STEPHEN STABLEBOY, p. 24. *Staffan stalletdräng*. Geijer and Afzelius: *Svenska folkvisor 91:1* (see bibl.). Tr. by David W. Colbert. In Swedish tradition there are two groups of Stephen ballads which probably were one single text originally. The first tells of St. Stephen and Herod (see no. 8), the second of St. Stephen tending his horses. This version has become extremely popular in Sweden as a processional or a beggar's song and is still performed during the annual Lucia-procession on December 13. *Lit.*: H. Celander, in: *Folkminnen och Folkankar*, 1927, p. 1-55. Dag Strömbäck, in *Om visor och låtar: Studier tillägnade Sven Salén*, Stockholm, 1960, p. 199-222.
10. MARY MAGDALEN, p. 25. *Maria Magdalena*. P. A. Sæve: *Götlandska visor 28* (see bibl.). Tr. by David W. Colbert. The title character of this ballad is actually Maria from Magdala who is mentioned in the gospels of Luke (8:2) and Matthew (27:56) and already in early Christian times was identified with the fallen woman Mary Magdalen in Simon's house (see Luke, 7:37). This tradition became the basis for various popular legends in Catalonia during the 11th century which again became the sources for a number of European Mary Magdalen ballads. Some of these, as for instance this Swedish version, incorporates yet another biblical motif, that of the woman of Samaria (see John, 4:7).
11. THE DREAM BALLAD, p. 26. *Draumkvæde*. M. B. Landstad: *Norske Folkeviser 7B* (see bibl.). Tr. by G. René Halkett. In spite of the fact that Norway since 1536 had been a Protestant country this Catholic ballad was retained in oral tradition until it was recorded for the first time in the 1840s. However, only the two texts published by Landstad form a coherent, although not complete whole, whereas the numerous remaining recordings are highly fragmentary. The ballad, whose author must have been familiar with medieval European, probably Irish or English, visionary poetry, forms a unique Nordic counterpart to Dante's *La Divina Commedia*. A connection between the ballad and the Old Norse *Sólarljóð*-poem has been suggested (Sv. Grundtvig, in DgF, 2, p. 540 and Moltke Moe, see below) and again rejected (Liestøl, see below) and various possible authors have been pointed at. The ballad's survival in popular tradition for four or five hundred years, its asserted lack of narrative thread and the separate group of "Beatitudes," based on the Sermon on the Mount (st. 12-16), have given rise to a heated debate based on various folkloristic and literary viewpoints. *Lit.*: Moltke Moe, in *Samlede Skrifter*, 3, Oslo, 1927, p. 197-400. Knut Liestøl: *Draumkvæde. A Norwegian Visionary Poem from the Middle Ages*, Oslo, 1946. K.-I. Hildeman, in *Medeltid på vers*, Stockholm, 1958, p. 216-58. Brynjulf Alver: *Draumkvædet*, Oslo, 1971. Michael Barnes: *Draumkvæde: An Edition and Study*, Oslo, 1972. Linae H. Isaacson, in: *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, 1980, p. 51-66.
12. VALDEMAR AND TOVELIL, p. 29. *Valdemar og Tove*. DgF 121A. Tr. by Henry Meyer. The Tove-ballad is widely spread throughout Scandinavia. Together with the related folk legends which became extremely popular in Danish literature as exemplified by J. P. Jacobsen's *Gurreange* (*Gurre Songs*, 1869), it was attached to King Valdemar Aterdag (1321-75). Sv. Grundtvig proved, however, in his introduction to the ballad that the legends tell about King Valdemar the Great (1131-82). Tove is not known from any Danish Middle Age sources but only from the Icelandic *Knytinga Saga* from the middle of the 13th century—perhaps an indication of the age of the ballad but without proving its historicity; thus Canute (Knud) the son of Valdemar and Queen Sophia. *Lit.*: W. Glyn Jones, in: *Mosaic*, 4:2, 1970, p. 29-45.

13. QUEEN DAGMAR'S DEATH, p. 30. *Dronning Dagmars Død*. DgF 135A. Tr. by Henry Meyer. St. 6: *The Holy Virgin's Book*: a collection of legends. St. 8: *Gullandsborg*: the Swedish island of Gotland belonged to Denmark 1361–1645. Elements of Catholic religious balladry are here combined with the ancient folk belief in the returning of the dead (see no. 6). The arrival of the Bohemian princess Dragomir (Danish: Dagmar), the bride of King Valdemar II (1170–1241), and her stay in Denmark are described in other ballads (DgF 132–34). After her death in childbirth in 1212 Valdemar married the Portuguese princess Berenguela (Danish: Bengerd), who herself was also portrayed in a ballad (DgF 136). Whereas Dagmar, without any support in the historical sources is described as mild and good, Bengerd is contrasted as an unpopular exploiter of the people, due perhaps to the unsuccessful reign of her three sons, Erik Plovpenning, Abel and Christoffer I who all ruled during the mid 13th century. The mention of Canute (Knud), the son of Valdemar and the widow of a Danish nobleman, is inexplicable unless Canute was a pretender to the crown. In this case the entire ballad, in particular its conclusion, contains contemporary political agitation and thus might indicate an approximate date of composition of this cycle of Dagmar-ballads.
14. MARSTI AND HIS WIFE, p. 31. *Marst Stig og hans Hustru*. DgF 145C. Tr. by Henry Meyer. St. 11: *Reval and Ri* (i.e. Riga): Estonia was Christianized by Denmark in 1219. Riga, in Latvia, never belonged to Denmark. St. 15: *gun*: not known in the 14th century. When King Erik Glipping was murdered in 1286 the "marsk" (Lord High Constable) Stig Andersen was accused of being the leader of the plot. He and the other eight conspirators took refuge in Norway from where they looted the Danish coasts. In 1290 Marsti (Marst Stig) built a castle on the island of Hielm (i.e. helmet); he died in 1293. The murder of the king was never cleared up but the event inspired an entire cycle of ballads (DgF 145 A–O), which, apart from *The King's Murder* (no. 15), replaced the political conflict with a private one: Marsti's revenge due to the king's rape of his wife, which is totally unhistorical. The smaller ballads form the basis for the so-called "Long Marst Stig Ballad" (DgF 145A) which according to Helge Toldberg's theory (see below) was compiled by Anders Sørensen Vedel *Lit.* (re. 145A–O): Hans Brix: *Analysér og Problemer*, 3, Copenhagen, 1936, p. 5–59. Sophus Larsen: *Visen om Hr. Marst Stig og hans Hustru*, Copenhagen, 1937. Helge Toldberg: *Marst Stig-viserne*, Copenhagen, 1963.
15. THE KING'S MURDER, p. 32. *Kongemordet*. DgF 145G. Tr. by Henry Meyer. St. 4A and 5A: added by Anders Sørensen Vedel. St. 5A: *Ranild*: the king's attendant, Rane Jonsen, was banished together with the other conspirators. St. 10: *Erik*: Vedel has inserted this correct name instead of the meaningless Canute, thus pointing to the prince, Erik Menved (1274–1319), who succeeded his father after the murder. Together with no. 16 this is the only ballad of the cycle that sides with the king; they are both regarded as written shortly after the murder.
16. THE BANISHMENT, p. 33. *Landsforvisningen*. DgF 145F. Tr. by Henry Meyer. St. 5: *Ranisburgh*: i.e. Rendsburg in Schleswig-Holstein. St. 9: *Christof*: Christoffer was born in 1276 but did not become king until 1320 after the death of his brother, Erik Menved (see notes to no. 15). The castle on Hielm (see notes to no. 14) was torn down in 1306, an indication of the contemporaneity of this ballad.
17. THE OUTLAWS, p. 34. *De Fredløse*. DgF 145K. Tr. by Henry Meyer. St. 1: this large number of conspirators stems from another ballad, DgF 7. This short text is possibly only a fragment.
18. THE ABDUCTION FROM VRETA ABBEY, p. 34. *Vreta klosterrov*. Bengt R. Jonsson: *Svenska medeltidsballader* 27 (see bibl.). Tr. by David W. Colbert. St. 2: *Vreta*: a Cistercian abbey founded by Elin's family, situated in the province of Östergötland. The major protagonists of this ballad, which is also known in Danish tradition (DgF 138), Sune Folkesson and Elin, are historical characters. The name of Elin's father, however, was not Magnus but King Sverker the Younger Karlsson (d. 1210). The historical sources do not tell of Sune Folkesson's bridestealing but that his and Elin's daughter, Benedikta, in 1244 was abducted by her husband to be, Lars Peterson, the topic for another ballad only preserved in Danish tradition (DgF 155). Sverker Ek (see below) relates *The Abduction from Vreta Abbey to Queen Dagmar's Death*, no. 13. *Lit.*: Sverker Ek: *Studier till den svenska folkvisans historia*, Gothenburg, 1931, p. 112–45. S. Axelsson, in: *Historisk Tidskrift*, 1957, p. 236–49. K.-I. Hildeman, in: *Ballads and Ballad Research*, p. 238–45 (see bibl. under Conroy, Patricia L.).
19. THE MAIDEN'S MORNING DREAM, p. 39. *Møens Morgendrømme*. DgF 239V. Tr. by Henry Meyer. The ballad is spread throughout Scandinavia, in particular 19th century peasant tradition. Sv. Grundtvig considered it to be Danish and of old origin but the references to the Wenders, a Slavic nation which raided southern Denmark during the early Middle Ages, gives no indication of the ballad's age. On the contrary, its romantic, fairy tale-like atmosphere indicates a rather late composition. Like no. 5 this ballad is connected with English or Celtic legendary tradition. Thus the dream episode has a parallel in William of Malmesbury's story of King Athelstan's birth in his *De Gestis Regum Anglorum* (12th century) (see Ida Falbe-Hansen, in: *Danske Studier*, 1922, p. 76f.). Aage Kabell even suggests (see below) that the ballad is based on a, now lost, English ballad. Moreover, the topic itself is common in folk tale tradition (*Cinderella*). *Lit.*: Aage Kabell, in *Festskrift til L.L. Hammerich*, Copenhagen, 1952, p. 166–71. Aage Jørgensen: *Folkevisesprøget*, Århus, 1969.
20. NILUS AND HILLELIL, p. 40. *Nilus og Hillelil*. DgF 325A (primarily Ab). Tr. by Henry Meyer. The highly varied forms of the place names in the different recordings of the ballad make a localization rather uncertain. Axel Olrik suggests (in DgF, vol. 6, p. 35) that the description of the harsh moorland in st. 3, which is found also in the recordings from Norway and Sweden, points to West Jutland with its similar nature as the region of origin.
21. SVEND IN THE ROSE GARDEN, p. 42. *Svend i Rosensgaard*. DgF 340A. Tr. by Henry Meyer. St. 1: *rose garden*: seems to mean cemetery. In Denmark the ballad has only been infrequently recorded in peasant tradition of the 19th century. It is also known in Sweden, Swedish-Finland and Iceland but has become particularly popular in its Anglo-American version, *Edward* (see below, no. 22).
22. EDWARD, p. 42. Child 13Aa. This Scottish version of no. 21 has become immensely popular in Anglo-American tradition in which a shift from the original chivalric milieu to a peasant setting becomes increasingly noticeable in the later recordings. *Lit.*: Archer Taylor: *'Edward' and 'Svend i Rosengård'*. *A study in the Dissemination of a Ballad*, Chicago, 1931. Wolfgang Schmidt, in: *Anglia*, 57, 1933, p. 277–312.
- 23–26. EBBE SKAMMELSEN, p. 43–47. *Ebbe Skammelsøn*. No. 23: DgF 354C. Tr. by Henry Meyer. St. 28 has been inserted from DgF 354Ca. This ballad is regarded as the principal Danish knightly ballad. It is also found in Norway and Sweden (see no. 26) but its origin is Danish and its localization to Denmark is generally accepted even though its historicity has never been established. In a few versions the ballad has received a legendary ending describing Ebbe roaming around in chains which fall off when he passes his brother's grave—a feature also found in no. 28. Nos. 24–26 (DgF 354A, 354B and Bengt R. Jonsson: *Svenska medeltidsballader* 22 (see bibl.)) have been included in the original language in order to demonstrate the various treatments of the opening episodes in the ballad's tradition. *Lit.*: Sophus Larsen: *Ebbe Skammelsøns Vise*, Copenhagen, 1923.
27. THOREKARL OF ASGARTH, p. 49. *Torekall*. Ådel Blom and Olav Bø: *Norske ballader* 42[a] (see bibl.). Tr. by David W. Colbert. Even though this incomplete ballad has its topic in common with the Edda poem *Þrymskviða* (*The Lay of Thrym*) it is, according to recent scholarship, hardly older than 1400. Sv. Grundtvig's view of its old age is evidenced by the position of its Danish version as the opening text in *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*. In the Danish version, which is found in numerous broadsides from the 18th century, as well as in the second Norwegian version (Blom and Bø, no. 42[b]) the ballad concludes in accordance with the Edda poem with Thor's regaining of his hammer. *Lit.*: Sophus Bugge and Moltke Moe: *Torsvisen*, Christiania, 1897. Magne Myhren, in: *Sumlen*, 1981, p. 9–24.
28. THE AVENGING SWORD, p. 50. *Hævnersværdet*. DgF 25. Tr. by E. M. Smith-Dampier. In Denmark the ballad is only known in this single Renaissance recording, whereas it exists in a number of partly fragmentary versions in 19th century Norwegian tradition—possibly the country of the ballad's origin. A speaking sword is known from some ancient Nordic legends. Thus Hans Brix (see below) points to the Starkad legend in Saxo's *Gesta Danorum*. *Lit.*: Hans Brix: *Analysér og Problemer*, 5, Copenhagen, 1940, p. 273–79. Paul G. Lange, in: *Meddelelser fra Dansk Litteratørforening*, 1966, p. 115–24.

29. THE BALLAD OF TRISTRAM, p. 51. *Tristrans kvæði*. Sv. Grundtvig and Jón Sigurðsson: *Íslensk fornkvæði* 23 (see bibl.). Tr. by Watson Kirkconnell, in: *The North American Book of Icelandic Verse*, New York and Montreal, 1930. The translator has constructed his text by using the various versions in *Íslensk fornkvæði*. *Tristan*, the Anglo-Norman romance by Thomas of Brittany, was translated into a Norwegian saga in 1226 by order of King Håkon Håkonsøn. The ballad follows closely the concluding part of this *Tristram's Saga*. It has also been recorded in Denmark (DgF470) and in the Faroe Islands.
30. THE SONG CARRIER, p. 53. *Visesangeren*. H. Grøner-Nielsen: *Danske Skæmteviser* 1, Copenhagen, 1927. Tr. by David W. Colbert. As pointed out in the introduction (see p. 4) this jocular ballad might actually be a description of how the ballad—already in the 16th century—moved from the aristocracy to a lower social stratum.
31. THE LAD WHO WAS FOOLED, p. 54. *Den narrede Ungersvend*. Evald Tang Kristensen: *Et hundrede gamle danske skæmteviser efter nutidssang* 52, Aarhus, 1901. Tr. by Henry Meyer.
32. I KNOW WHERE SO LOVELY A GARDEN GROWS, p. 55. *Jeg ved saa dejlig en Urtegaard*. DgF 516. Tr. by David W. Colbert. *Appelgården* ("Jag vet en så vacker apelagård"). A. I. Arwidsson: *Svenska fornsånger*, vol. 3, 5 (see bibl.). Tr. by David W. Colbert. This lyrical poem corresponds as a whole, both in its Danish and Swedish versions, to the burden stem introduction to no. 4.
33. THE TWO ROYAL CHILDREN, p. 55. *De to Kongebørn* ("Der var to ædelige Kongebørn"). Henrik Ussing: *Det gamle Harboøre*, p. 254–56, Copenhagen, 1928. Tr. by Henry Meyer. This ballad is based on the myth about Hero and Leander which was extremely popular in European folk tradition. The Danish version is derived from one of the many German songs dealing with the same subject, *Die Königskinder*. It was recorded in Denmark for the first time in Magdalene Barnewitz's Manuscript, around 1650, and in Sweden already in 1572–73 in Harald Olufsson's Songbook, and can be found in numerous broadside prints from the 17th to the 19th century.
34. I WAITED UP ALL EVENING, p. 56. *Det var en Lørdag Aften*. Fr. Sneedorff-Birch: *Danske Folkeviser og Melodier. Første Pentade* 2, Copenhagen, 1837. Tr. by David W. Colbert. Svend Grundtvig: "Sjællandsk Vise," in, P. O. Boisen: *Nye og Gamle Viser af og for Danske Folk*, Copenhagen, 1849. Tr. by David W. Colbert. This song—in Sv. Grundtvig's rewritten version—still is popular throughout Denmark and was even brought to the United States by Danish emigrants. Thus it is known to have been sung at Dania Hall in Minneapolis for six decades and it has been recorded with Anne-Charlotte Harvey: *Memories of Snooze Boulevard* (OLLE SP-223, Stereo Album).

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To supplement this selective bibliography see also introduction and notes.

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