

Mapping Female Folklore Collectors in the Norwegian Folklore Archives

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Abstract

This article adopts a map methodology to explore the forgotten female folklore collectors in the Norwegian Folklore Archives, examining their connections to the archive and what they collected. By focusing on historically invisible female collectors, the risk is that they are isolated as gender representatives and thus never become a part of the mainstream canon. Still, by literally putting these women on the map, it is our ambition that this will inspire a new take on the question of gender in the history of knowledge of folklore archives. The methodology employed combines remote reading and close reading, zooming in on a particular collector's life and actions. The article reveals the spatial dimensions of mobility with the aim of expanding our understanding of the female collectors who left their mark on the collection of folklore.

Keywords: map methodology, historical data, history of knowledge, folklore archives, female collectors.

“Why have there been no great women artists?” The art historian Linda Nochlin's rhetorical question still translates beyond her disciplinary field (Nochlin 1973). The Norwegian Folklore Archives (NFS) include a variety of collectors from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but posterity seems to have forgotten the women they encompass. A recent inventory demonstrates that the archive contains material by approximately 500 collectors of folklore. A fifth of these collectors turn out to be women. Who were these female collectors? What were their connections to the archive? Why, how, when and what did they collect?

Some answers might be found by way of mapping. By mapping, we refer to the process of discovering and identifying information about something, as well as the process of visualizing space by plotting geographical information on a map. With the inventory mentioned above as our starting point, we set out to complete the ongoing work of making a database of female folklore collectors in the Norwegian Folklore Archives. Once we knew the women's name, their birthplace, residence and where they collected

folklore, the places could be transferred and converted into dots on a digital map.

The method for this article can be compared to toggling, where we combine remote reading and close reading (Karlsen 2019:285). The remote reading is applied to database information and the digital map in our effort to make sense of patterns in heterogeneous historical data. Thereafter, we zoom in on the life and actions of one particular collector.

Archival material is not created out of nothing. It is somehow connected to place or places. It could be the place it was written down, the places it describes or the place where it is archived. The nature of the archival material may also be influenced by the place where the collector or archivist was born, lived, travelled to or worked. The relation is changeable as the material is moved or distributed through time and space. Albina Moscicka therefore refers to archival material as movable monuments, and its relation to geographic space as more complicated than immovable (2011:228).

By mapping female folklore collectors previously forgotten in the dark drawers of archival memory, our ambition is to contribute to the history of knowledge of the tradition archives.

Map Methodology

A map makes something visible. It provides the reader with a visualization of several kinds of information; in this case, about the places where the folklore collectors were born, lived and worked. More importantly, a map displays spatial dimensions of mobility, i.e. how someone or something moves over distance. The spaces the collectors moved and collected within are not empty. Space is connected to time and stories, and links geography with history, at the same time as it reflects the values and cultural codes within societies (Bodenhamer 2016:207). Persons and stories are inevitably, in one way or another, connected to space, and it is important to explore this dimension to get a fuller understanding of who the female collectors were, and how they made their mark on the collection of folklore. Visualization is an essential factor in the analysis of how phenomena and processes move in geographical space (Andrienko & Andrienko 2013:3).

As a part of the SAMLA project¹ we have begun to explore visualization tools and methods such as the use of maps. The aim of the examination was to see what information a map could provide and what functions a more developed map in forthcoming phases of SAMLA should contain. This effort can be seen in the context of an ethnological and folkloristic research tradition historically dominated by a keen interest in origin and distribution. However, maps have also been used to compare movements, to mark borders and regions, and to discover uncovered areas (Skåden 2018:79). Inspiration can also be drawn from other research fields, such as literary studies. In

the article *Hamsuns litterære geografi*, Frode Lerum Boasson and Lars G. Johnsen sought to investigate the spatial relationship between the places in the Norwegian author Knut Hamsun's corpus (2020:140). They extracted all the place names from the corpus – fiction, non-fiction and letters – before creating a map based on these three categories. The map visualized a difference between the types of writing. The letters mirror the places where Hamsun himself and the people he knew lived (Lerum Boasson & Johnsen 2020:145). The fiction was more national than the non-fiction, and more fictional places appear in the fiction (Lerum Boasson & Johnsen 2020:152–153). Lerum Boasson and Johnsen's main point is that the use of maps gives an overview which is difficult to obtain by traditional close reading of archival sources (2020:139).

However, as Kristina Skåden suggests, digital tools are closely connected to the analogue (2018:77), which is also the case in our examination. The archive sources of NFS form the foundation of the database, and the map is again made from the database as an extension. In the process we have completed the database of female folklore collectors in NFS with information from the archive collections and additional sources. The limited number of women made it possible to manually work on a detailed level. Data regarding the women and their activity was collected from NFS's digital catalogue, which contains information about the archive collections. We also looked at documentation from earlier research on the female collectors done by previous employees in the archive.

A total of 59 female collectors were registered. Three of the women lacked information regarding the place of activity but were still plotted on the map with the place of birth and residence. Further, all the information gathered was transferred to KulturNav. KulturNav is an open cloud-based service provided by KulturIT, an a technology company which serves the sector, supported by the Arts Council Norway (KulturNav, n.d.). In KulturNav, institutions can create open name authorities and vocabularies, which can be used by other institutions. In SAMLA KulturNav is used to generate authority data utilized in the annotation of digitized archive sources. As a part of this ongoing process, each female collector was created as a name authority, with information about date of birth, death, place of birth, residence, activity and so on. A spreadsheet with all the data was then extracted from KulturNav and used as a basis for the investigation for this article. This complete list of female collectors contained a few names that were not plotted on the map. These were left out because their status as collectors was uncertain, or because the archive did not contain any material attached to their name. A couple of collectors were also left out for reasons of privacy.

Further, the application Google My Maps was used to create the map of female collectors, as it is free of charge and had the basic functions which were needed. Each pin on the map was given the name of a collector. The

application enabled layers for each place category, and the possibility to colour-code them. Place of birth is marked with a green infant icon, and residence, where the collector lived, with a blue house icon. Place of activity, marked with a red check icon, represents the place the material is from. This place might differ from the place of both birth and residence. Google My Maps also allows lines to be drawn in colour codes between the pins to connect the places for each collector. Colour codes and different icons were used to distinguish the pins and lines from one another. There are green lines drawn between place of birth and place of activity, and blue lines between residence and place of activity. To highlight the patterns for this article, the icons and lines were converted to black/white. The lines visualize how the places are connected, over short or longer distances. Each layer can be hidden or made visible, depending on what kind of information or pattern the viewer wants to see. For larger areas, where the pin could not be put in a specific spot, for instance regions like Østlandet (Eastern Norway), the marker was placed where the application suggested. Some of the collectors were active within a small geographical area, and in those cases the pins were merged together (see also “Limitations”).

Limitations

The Norwegian Folklore Archives’ database of female collectors is, as already pointed out, a result of the research and registrations of various employees over the years. The level of details registered for place names varies. This is a common challenge with movable monuments (Moscicka 2011:228). The initial plotting of the map might be inaccurate or have a varying level of detail for the different collectors. For some collectors, we had information about each village (*bygd*) they had collected from. For others, the list only provided names of larger areas. The different levels of detail might entail a skewed image of the plotted place names. Place names may also have changed over time. However, the aim was not to go into every single collector’s material to complete or adjust the place names.

The pins that represent place of activity can also be misleading. Some material is registered in the database with specific place of origin, and therefore pinned on the map as a place of activity. But the collector might never have been there herself. Regardless, the pin will represent a place of interest for the collector.

Some pins are missing on the map. As noted above, the level of detail varies, and some places are registered as “nationwide collection”. As this information is impossible to pin down, it has been left out. Also, the USA is missing from the map because of lack of information. Tora Østbye (1876–1967) emigrated to the USA in 1916. We currently do not know where she lived in the USA, why she emigrated or whether she wrote or collected

something that could be connected to Norwegian folklore while she was there.

Mobility Patterns

The map clearly shows that the female collectors were mobile during the whole period (Figure 1). Given the national romantic idea of stable isolated farming communities, this may come as a surprise. The archive in itself gathers “the contemporary”, which in time may become the starting point for constructions about the future. However, in the nineteenth century population growth was more rapid than in any other country (Myhre 2006:249–253). The reasons were development in industry, the improvement of agriculture, transport and communication, and urbanization. In the wake of modernity, the geographical and social mobility of the population increased.

As a result of the mapping, patterns of mobility emerged. Some of the female collectors limited their collecting to their local community, but many also travelled beyond their place of residence. Most of the movement is between the east and west of Norway, and between areas where the population density is high, typically towns. We also see that a few collectors travelled great distances between the north and south of Norway. The reasons for the mobility might be found by taking a closer look at the individual collectors. Judith Olsen (1896–1989) was born and lived in the north of the county of Nordland. Later she moved to Bærum (south-east). Her material is an account of her childhood (1896–1917) in the trading town of Risøyhamn in Nordland. From her own writings we know that she moved south with her husband as a newlywed sometime after 1917, where he worked as a lead engineer. And it was here she would write down her recollections of her childhood in the north. Hallfrid Christiansen (1886–1964) was born at Gimsøy in the Lofoten area, also in Nordland. She went to school and worked at several places in northern Norway before moving to Oslo to study philology, Norwegian and German at the University. After finishing her PhD in 1935, she worked in Oslo and Bergen. Christiansen collected folklore both in Nordland where she grew up, and in Buskerud and Oppland (inland counties in southern Norway). Olsen and Christiansen both represent mobile women, illustrated with long lines on the map. Other women’s pins are placed closer together, demonstrating that they collected in their home area. Johanne Ferkingstad (1884–1966) from Karmøy (south-west), Olga Knutsen (1887–1973) from Kragerø (south) and Thora Skolmen (1868–1933) from Nordre Land (inland) all collected in or around their place of residence.

The map and database alone provide no answers to why some collectors moved. But we do know that many of the female collectors had a profession or education that might relate to an interest in collecting. The activity could be related to their own occupation, or reflect how they travelled with

their husband in his profession. Many were teachers, or married to teachers, which often led to moving to whatever place they could find employment. Some fieldwork is therefore work-related.

A few collectors did fieldwork with scholarships from the Norwegian Folklore Archives. Giving out grants for collecting folklore, as initiated by Knut Liestøl, was a “means to carry out the systematic and nationally-coordinated project of collecting” (Kverndokk 2018: 96). One of the recipients of a grant was Gunvor Ingstad Trætteberg (1897–1975). Trætteberg was born in Tromsø (north), studied at the National College of Art and Design in Bergen (west) and the Norwegian National Academy of Craft and Art Industry in Oslo. She lived and worked in Bærum and Oslo (south-east). She was a collector, ethnologist and did research on Norwegian folk-costumes. In 1948 she travelled on an NFS scholarship to multiple places in Sunnhordland (a western county of Norway), collecting folklore, customs, and traditions.

Out of NFS’s total 91 scholarships, nine were granted to women. Most of them were educated working women, like the folklorist Elin Frøyset (1921–2004) from Østfold, and the teacher Ruth Hult (1910–1996) from Halden. Among the scholarship recipients, however, there are also the housewife Martina Søylen (1884–1983) from Voss, known for her voluntary work, the self-educated painter and writer Tone Gudve Gjelstad (1908–1978) from Hof in Vestfold, and the housewife Ingerid Johanna Lavik (1913–2001) from Austevoll.

Density – Areas in Norway

The collectors covered large sections of Norway. We see that the place of birth, where they lived and where they collected are concentrated in the same

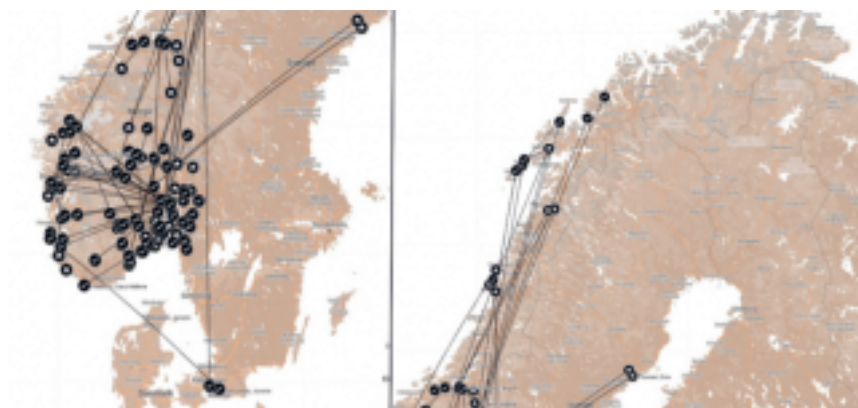


Figure 1. Mobility.

areas. The eastern part of Norway, the west coast south of Nordfjord, and Lofoten has a higher density of icons from all three categories. The highest density is found in Eastern Norway (Østlandet). The activity and place of residence corresponds to the highest density of the population according to maps from 1875 (Figure 2) and 1950 (Kartverket, n.d., b) which are approximately the start- and endpoint of the active collection period of the female collectors. The earliest recorded material stems from 1830–1850, by the collector Olea Crøger (1801–1855), recognized by posterity as a significant Norwegian collector of ballads. However, the bulk of the activity took place between 1920 and 1957. The timeframe corresponds to the formative years of the new institution the Norwegian Folklore Archives – from the appointment of Knut Liestøl as a professor of the new institution in 1917 and a few years later the internationally recognized scholar Reidar Th. Christiansen as its first archivist. The “reign” of Liestøl and Christiansen lasted until the 1950s, with the death of Liestøl in 1952 and Christiansen’s retirement in 1956. As Kyrre Kverndokk has pointed out, “The institutionalization of folklore in the early 20th century implied a scientification of not only folklore as a cultural category, but also of the practice of collecting folklore and the shaping of the folklore records” (Kverndokk 2018:107).

The map also visualizes some large voids where there are no records of activity whatsoever, whether place of birth, residence or place of collecting: the northern part of Norway (Finnmark), large areas between Trondheim and northwards to Lofoten, the coast and inland in the north-western part of Norway, and mountain regions between the east and west of Norway. One



Figure 2. Correspondence between the map of population distribution from 1875 where dark areas indicate high density (Kartverket, n.d., a), and the map of Norwegian folklore collectors.

explanation can be found in the topography of Norway, where many areas are difficult to inhabit. Another explanation can be the proximity to more developed means of communication, for instance in larger towns, which made it easier both to collect and to hand in collected material.

Identifying Dina

Both the availability of sources and the kind of sources we use for research are defining for the stories that can be told (Götlind & Kåks 2014). A map can only begin to tell the story. As seen above, it provides initial information about mobility, where the collector was born, lived, worked or collected. Still, some categories of information are not easily drawn from a map. This was the case with information related to time and temporality, such as questions about when the fieldwork took place or the duration of it. Our work with the spreadsheet, however, shows some general tendencies. Around 37 of the women were born in the 1800s. Most of them collected as young adults. Magny Waadeland (1892–1993), collected legends in the 1920s, but contacted the archive years later when she herself was in her fifties about a legend from the 1850s. Waadeland had some education, but is listed as a housewife after marriage. The occupational affiliation in our selection of folklore collectors is diverse. There are farmers and schoolteachers, tenants and even a few (4) who are given titles by virtue of being the wife or daughter of someone, like a “a pastor’s daughter” like Kristiane Lommerud (1848–1941), “the wife of a clergyman” (Dina Bugge 1841–1921), or simply “housewife” like Waadeland. The majority however, are in fact scholars or educated women of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, who served as folklore collectors in their spare time. The map has limitations regarding *what* the women collected. What we can extract from the database presents no certain patterns in the women’s collections. In general, the material shows a wide span in both content and range. Most records are about folk tales, legends and ballads; folk beliefs; or rituals and traditions. There are some exceptions, for instance quite a substantial record about work and working life, or supernatural manuscripts like the two carefully archived black books owned respectively by Barbro Pedersdotter (1837–1891) and the unidentified Kjersti Bakken. This brings us back to Götlind and Kåks’ statement, which also underlines the necessity of studying different types of sources, depending on the purpose of the research.

In the following we will discuss how a selection of additional sources and close reading can be used to contextualize and expand the information shown on the map. One of the pins on the map refers to the collector listed in the archive as Dina Thorsen (1834–1886). She was born in Tyristrand on 8 November 1834, and baptized as Mariane Randine Thorsdatter Kolbjørnrud in the local parish church in June the following year. She would remain

unmarried, move to different towns working as a housekeeper and eventually end her life at the age of 71, as a financially independent woman in Sweden. In making a complete register of all the folklore collectors represented in the archive, we met many challenges when trying to identify each person. Dina Thorsen was no exception. As an individual and as a collector she is intriguingly visible and invisible in posterity.

Initially, we knew that Thorsen had collected in Ringerike and that at some point she possibly had moved to Sweden. But we did not know where she was born or if she had lived in other places. However, considering that the map already had shown that most of the women had collected in their home place, it was plausible that this was also the case with Thorsen. A closer look at a letter from Thorsen to Moltke Moe, where she mentions her “childhood memories” at Tyrstrand in Ringerike, confirmed our assumption. Digitalarkivet (the Norwegian Digital Archives) and Nasjonalbiblioteket (the National Library of Norway) provided us with relevant sources that might tell us more. Still, name searches in digitized censuses, books, and newspapers gave few results and no good matches.

The dates of the two letters in the archive, 1884 and 1888, made it possible that Thorsen was born sometime between 1810 and 1860. When her place of origin was confirmed, it helped us identify her father, the farmer Thor Olsen Kolbjørnrud. In his obituary, printed in *Christiania Intelligentssedler* on 9 May 1860, his children were listed, and among them was Mariane Randine Thorsdatter Kolbjørnrud. The farm of Kolbjørnrud is located at Tyrstrand on the western side of Tyrifjorden, the same place that Thorsen mentions in one of her letters. At the time, it was not uncommon to use shortened forms of names. Taking all the new information into consideration, it was very likely that Mariane Randine Thorsdatter Kolbjørnrud was the birth name of our Dina Thorsen.

A possible full name gave better search opportunities and more results. One person with the name Mariane Randine Thorsdatter Kolbjørnrud was found, born in 1834. As a young adult she had worked as a housekeeper in Sandefjord and Trondheim. But there was no other information about her in any Norwegian public sources. Luckily, there were still clues left in her two letters, addressed to Moltke Moe and Peter Christen Asbjørnsen. Both were signed in Sweden, at the ironworks of Holmfors, belonging to the Olofsfors ironworks in Levar, in Nordmaling municipality in the north-eastern part of the province of Västerbotten. The possibility that Thorsen had moved to Sweden as an adult clarified the lack of information about her in Norwegian sources. In censuses of Nordmaling from 1880, 1890 and 1900, we found Dina Thorsen, listed as Marianne Thorsen, now living with her younger sister and the sister’s husband. Thorsen’s older sister and brother, both unmarried, had also moved to the same area. Her brother and sister’s husband both had significant positions at Olofsfors.

The sources show that Thorsen remained unmarried until her death in 1906. After working as a housekeeper in several Norwegian towns, following the household of the District Magistrate Peter Vogt Ottesen from Sandefjord via Trondheim to Kristiania. She is not registered with any occupation after moving to Sweden. With her brother-in-law's position in the local industry, it is possible that their income would enable him to provide for more family members. However, there is an interesting detail in the Swedish census of 1900. Here, listed as Mariana Randi Thorsen and now living in Levar, her occupation is *kapitalist* (capitalist). This title signifies someone who lives off inherited funds or wealth. The title has the same meaning in both Norwegian and Swedish. In the censuses there are often connections between widowhood and the occupation as *kapitalist*. In Thorsen's case the plausible explanation is that she inherited the property of her father in 1860, who owned half of the farm Kolbjørnrud (Høyendahl 2022:60) or that she even was the heir of her childless sister and brother-in-law after 1898. With this new information we could put two more places on the map, Holmfors ironworks and Levar, both in Nordmaling, Sweden (Figure 3). This shows the relationship between her movements over a great distance. First, employment explains some of these relationships on the map. Second, there are family ties that lead her out of the country. Last but not least, we now understand that despite the mobility illustrated by the pins on the map, referring to the different places she lived and worked, Thorsen chose to collect (or recollect) and share folk tales restricted to the area of Ringerike where she had spent her childhood.

“Meddelt af Frøken Dina Thorsen”

A close reading of her collection in the Norwegian Folklore Archives reveals more about Thorsen, both as a folklore collector and as nineteenth-century female. Like all the other named folklore collectors represented in the archive, her records are filed and organized alphabetically by the collector's family name and stored in filing cabinets. In one of the drawers, there are two archive folders marked “NFS Thorsen” – a signature which refers to the archive and the collector. Compared to other collections in the archive, Thorsen's is rather small, consisting of approximately 130 handwritten pages. The main part consists of Thorsen's folklore records: 19 folktales and a few legends, in addition to the two cover letters mentioned above. The time of recording is not certain but is estimated to have been sometime in the 1870s or 1880s. Some records are written on loose pages sent to Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Moltke Moe with the additional cover letters, dated respectively 12 January 1884 and 25 April 1888. Most of the records, however, are bound as a manuscript, beautifully decorated with a marble pattern. Moltke Moe's handwritten index on the first page and a note on the



Figure 3. Movements of Dina Thorsen.

cover indicates that Thorsen's records were bound on his initiative. His note on the cover says "Frøken Dina Thorsen's optegnelser fra Ringerike (især efter hendes gamle afdøde mor)", which translates to "Miss Dina Thorsen's records from Ringerike (mostly from her old deceased mother)".

Thorsen is one of the few known female nineteenth-century collectors. This also makes her interesting in representing a part of the history of collecting and collections, prior to the establishment of the new national institution the Norwegian Folklore Archives in 1914. By the time she addressed Asbjørnsen he was a well-established authority on folktales. Since the 1840s he had published numerous collections (the first ones together with Jørgen Moe) of folktales and legends.² After his death, she contacted his heir, the young Moltke Moe. As the first professor of folklore from 1886, and the owner of a considerable private collection, Moe held a unique position in both the academic and the public sphere (Kverndokk 2018:194). In 1907 he donated his collections to the Norwegian State, on the condition that the Norwegian Folklore Archives would be established.

To get a better understanding of Thorsen's folklore records, the folktale catalogues are useful. These were made with the aim of categorizing and classifying folktales. A classification of the Norwegian folktales can be found in *The Types of the Norwegian Folktale* (1984) by Ørnulf Hodne. Hodne's catalogue is based on the Aarne-Thompson classification system (Aarne & Thompson 1961). In the classification system the same folktale types are grouped based on shared topics, and then given an AT number based on the sequences of action and motifs. Thorsen's records are mostly

classified as the type “tales of magic”, but there are also “animal tales”, “religious tales”, “tales of the stupid ogre”, “stories about a woman (girl)” and “jokes about parsons and religious orders”. In the Aarne-Thompson classification, tales of magic are listed as part of the category “Ordinary folktales”, which interestingly shows that these tales were considered as the true folktales within the genre. The tales of magic are long epic tales that take place in a magic universe where the hero most often faces great challenges that are solved with support from good helpers and supernatural powers. The majority of the tales of magic in Thorsen’s collection indicate that there were many tales of magic in circulation in Ringerike at the time. However, it might also reflect what Thorsen considered worth collecting.

“De 3 Ryttere som skulde til Paris”

Some of Thorsen’s folktale records are particularly noticeable. “De 3 Ryttere som skulde til Paris” (The three riders who wanted to go to Paris) is described in *The Types of the Norwegian Folktale* as follows:

Three friends who are seeking their fortune eat a magical bird, and they all get something that brings them luck. One of them gets a purse that will never be empty, the second one a bag that mobilizes 15 soldiers for every blow he gives it, while the youngest one sees his future bride. This is the same princess as a king has promised to the person who can free his kingdom of a dragon. The youngest succeeds and marries her. The other two give false evidence against them and persuade the king to put them in prison and sentence their children, a boy and a girl, to death. They are rescued by the maid and grow up with the king’s miller. After a time they are recognized because of their golden hair and have to flee. At last they return to the king’s palace, persuade the king to set free their parents and expose the delinquents. (Hodne 1984:160–161)

In Hodne’s additional comments the location is set to Ringerike, Buskerud. The time of recording is estimated to be around 1875 and the collector is D. Thorsen. No other versions of this folktale are listed in Hodne’s catalogue. Reidar Christiansen’s *Norske eventyr. En systematisk fortegnelse efter trykte og utrykte kilder* from 1921 provides another classification of the story. Christiansen classified “De 3 Ryttere som skulde til Paris” as the eighth out of 50 variants of AT 400: De tre prinsesser i Hvidtenland (The man on a quest for his lost wife). Christiansen describes it as “sterkt opblandet, muligens reminisc av nr. 400”, (a mixture, possibly reminiscent of AT 400) which states that he has uncovered some known elements from no. 400 in Thorsen’s record (Christiansen 1921). Although referring to Christiansen’s classification, Brynjulf Alver would later on make an interesting additional comment. Alver describes “De 3 Ryttere som skulde til Paris” as a folktale with well-known events and motifs, and with a logical course of action in terms of the genre. Further, he assumes that the folktale is written by

someone who thoroughly knows the genre, most likely Thorsen herself (Alver 1969:223). This indicates that Thorsen had knowledge about and is herself a part of the folklore tradition in Ringerike. Moltke Moe's note, "mostly from her old deceased mother", on the manuscript cover indicates the presence of an oral tradition in Thorsen's childhood home. In other words, Thorsen knew of a lot of folktales in addition to being able to retell them.

Herremannsbruden

Another of Thorsen's folktales that stands out is "Herremandens Brud", assumed to have been collected sometime before 1876. "Herremandens Brud" is the first record in the bound manuscript, which expresses the special significance of the folktales. In Hodne's catalogue, the folktale is identified as AT 1440 Herremannsbruden (The tenant promises his daughter to his master against her will) and categorized within "Stories about a Woman (Girl)". Hodne's summary of the folk tale: "A rich master wants to marry the handsome, but unwilling, daughter of his tenant. On the wedding day the master sends for 'that which was promised him'. The daughter sends the horse, and it is taken into the master's chamber and dressed as a bride" (Hodne 1984:255).

Dina Thorsen's "Herremandens Brud" was published in 1876 in P. Chr. Asbjørnsen's *Norske Folkeeventyr; Ny samling. Anden udgave* as "Herremandsbruden". This book was the second extended edition of *Norske Folkeeventyr. Ny samling* published in 1871. There are many interesting aspects to this folktale. First, Thorsen's version from Ringerike seems to be the only one known. Two variants are listed both in Hodne's catalogue and in Reimund Kvideland's *Norske eventyr* (1972). Still, Kvideland refers to these two as Asbjørnsen's own rewritten versions; "Utforma for utgiving ["Formulated for publication"] (NFS Var C 108.2 og 12.)". A closer look at these two variants confirms that they are Asbjørnsen's edited versions of Thorsen's original record, used in the published text in 1876. Asbjørnsen himself has marked them with "Herremandsbruden, kasseret omskrevet. Meddelt af Frk. Dina Thorsen. 1876" ["Herremandsbruden discarded rewritten. Communicated by Miss Dina Thorsen"]. In other words, "Herremandens Brud" seems to be quite unique, which might explain why Asbjørnsen chose to publish it.

"Herremannsbruden" has been described by the art historian Leif Østby as "a little gem of narrative art" ("liten perle av fortellekunst", Østby 1969:53), a characterization that shows the significance of this folktale. Østby refers to the folklorist Olav Bø, who believes that Asbjørnsen did not make any major changes when publishing "Herremandsbruden", except a possible stylistic editing. Still, Bø also states that Dina Thorsen was known

for her narrative skills. If Dina Thorsen was known in her time as a narrator, her invisibility in the archival context is at best ironic. However, the source of Bø's statement is unknown. What we do know is Ringerike's significant position in nineteenth-century folklore collecting. The farm of Moe, which had fostered two generations folklore collectors; Jørgen Moe and Moltke Moe, was also located in Ringerike. Peter Christen Asbjørnsen, Jørgen Moe's close friend and partner, had studied, travelled, and collected a great deal in this area. In many ways, Ringerike is considered as the centre of the Norwegian folktales collected and published by these two leading Norwegian folklore collectors (Alver 1969:5). It is not unlikely that Thorsen was affected by this activity and the living oral tradition of Ringerike.

There is no preface to the second edition of *Norske Folke-Eventyr; Ny samling*. The book therefore gives no information about the choice of adding five new folktales to this edition, published by the Danish publishing house Gyldendal. However, an appendix with both a glossary and information about the informants and the 49 published folktales was added, mostly because Frederik Hegel, the publisher, found it necessary for Danish readers (NFS Asbjørnsen Brev, fra Frederik Hegel 10 November 1876). In addition, the appendix reflects Asbjørnsen's acknowledgement towards his informants. "Herremandsbruden" is the last of the 49 and comes with a rather short note: "Fra Ringerige. Meddelt af Frøken Dina Thorsen" ["From Ringerike. Communicated by Miss Dina Thorsen"]. On Thorsen's original record, Asbjørnsen has made a note that says "benyttet omfortalt" ["utilized retold"], which refers to the published variant and states that the folktale is recited there (NFS Thorsen 2, p. 1). However true to the Grimmian ideal, Asbjørnsen evidently retold the stories he encountered for several reasons (Esborg 2022).

Asbjørnsen acknowledges Thorsen when he sends her the book where "Herremannsbruden" is published. As mentioned above, Thorsen sent a letter to Asbjørnsen on 12 January 1884. Here, she thanks him for sending her the book:

Saa venligt af dem at komme mig ihu! Jeg ble saa glad da bogen kom. Min Svoger siger at det første Eventyr, (*Væderen og Grisen*) er det bedste i bogen, men min søster og jeg synes best om *Herremandsbruden* og det kommer vel deraf at vi kjænde hende fra vi vare smaae. Jeg har i den senere tid veret i huset hos min gifte søster som er bosat her i Nordmalingssocken, Vesterbotten, Sverige, og de kan troe at det var eget at komme herop fra Christiania, det var som om jeg minst skulde vere kommen 30 aar tilbage i tiden, folk her oppe ere saa fulde af overtroe, det myldrer af Nisser og Smaatrolde i hver krog og hver stor sten og hvert træ har sit "Rå" som kan gjøre folk ondt om de komme stenen eller træet for nær. Nede ved Olofsforsbrug 2 Mile herfra boer en gammel mand, Boman hedder han, som i sin ungdom var forlovet med Huldren [...].

[How kind of you to remember me! I was so pleased when the book arrived. My brother-in-law says that the first story (*Væderen og Grisen*) is the best in the book,

but my sister and I like *Herremandsbruden* best, which is probably because we have known her since we were young. Recently I have been in the home of my married sister who lives here in the parish of Nordmaling, Västerbotten, Sweden, and you can imagine how strange it was to come here from Christiania, it was like going back at least thirty years in time, people up here are so full of superstition, there are hordes of goblins and little trolls in every nook, and every big stone and every tree has its "Rå" who can harm people if they come too close to the stone or the tree where she lives. Down at the Olofsfors ironworks 20 kilometres from here lives an old man, Boman by name, who was betrothed in his youth to the Huldre [...].

The letter reveals several interesting aspects of Thorsen's relation with Asbjørnsen. The obvious reason for writing is to thank him for sending his new edition of folktales including some of her own stories. The letter reveals that she is clearly pleased with the fact that she is remembered. Her description of her life situation and family also discloses a form of familiarity, perhaps dating back to their common connection to Ringerike. Whether the letter was a part of an ongoing correspondence, we do not know. However, considering the years between the publication of "*Herremannsbruden*" in 1876 and Thorsen's letter from 1884, it is possible that they had been corresponding for years.

Another interesting aspect lies in Thorsen's reflection on the published folktales and her observations of the folk culture in her local area. Referring to her family's discussion of the published folktales reveals both a literary knowledge and a knowledge about folklore genres. She also describes her experience with vernacular folk beliefs in her current location in Nordmaling in Sweden, and how it makes her feel that she has been set decades back in time in this rural area.

The case examined above demonstrates how mapping of places connected to one single collector can initiate further research. It also shows how a limited amount of data can lead to new information and enable a close (re)reading of already known sources.

Conclusions – Recognition and Representation

As Daniel Chang et al. from Stanford University concluded after their digital work on *The Republic of Letters*: "the questions that this visualization has opened up for humanities scholars have already proved more important than the direct insights and answers that the visualization has provided. These new questions include direct questions about the data, such as missing data and missing attributes, but also questions that will lead historians back to the archives to discover other sources to explain patterns [...]" (Chang et al. 2009:2).

The map itself is most useful as a method to make sense of larger sets of historical data. It provides direct insight into general patterns of mobility;

many of the female folklore collectors moved over great distances. We also see that the density follows the same pattern as the general population of Norway at the same time. However, it is in itself not a sufficient tool to provide answers. We still need a close reading of the analogue archival material and other sources to go into depth with each female collector.

New questions arise when looking at the map: why did they collect and what kind of material did they collect? And how does the activity of the female collectors compare to that of male collectors? Further exploration of the use of digital tools will be interesting to use in order to see what kind of information will be uncovered. A map combined with a timeline with year and dates of birth, active years, residence and perhaps a detailed map of where and when the different material was collected, will yield a better overview of how long the collectors lived at different places, give an idea of what they collected in different areas, and maybe also show if two or more operated in the same area at the same time. With more complex maps and the possibility to generate statistics, we could find out whether the movement of certain collectors was due to their occupation, or if they moved with their family or husband. What could provide more answers in the future is to map all the male collectors in the same manner and then see if the movements and places of birth, residence and activity correspond to the female pattern. Another possibility to expand the map is to plot the individual stories collected, to ascertain which are connected to a place, and see where and when the stories were told. Further possible gender differences could be explored.

Women have historically been underrepresented in many fields. By highlighting female folklore collectors, we recognize their contributions and provide them with representation. At the same time, we must acknowledge, in line with Judith Butler (1990), that any attempt in the realm of identity politics runs the potential risk of alienating the subject we want to highlight. By focusing on historically invisible female collectors the risk is that they are isolated as gender representatives and thus never become a part of mainstream canon. Still, by literally putting these women on the map, it is our ambition that this will inspire a new take on the question of gender in the history of knowledge of folklore archives.

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¹ In the project SAMLA, the archival material and collections of three Norwegian tradition archives – the Norwegian Folklore Archives (NFS) at the University of Oslo, the Norwegian Ethnological Research (NEG) at the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History, and the Ethno-folkloristic Archives at the University of Bergen – will be digitized and made accessible. SAMLA is financed through the Norwegian Research Council’s INFRASTRUKTUR programme, and is included in the Norwegian roadmap for Research Infrastructure.

² See Østberg 2011 for a detailed bibliography on Asbjørnsen.