

Strategies of Textual Modifications in the Theory and Practice of Hungarian Folktale Collecting and Publishing Activity in the 19th Century (1848–1872)

by Mariann Domokos

PhD Thesis

Objectives

The objective of my dissertation is to examine and introduce the history of Hungarian folktale collection activity from the beginning of the first institutional folklore collecting movements up until the publishing of the first Hungarian folklore anthology, a period that stretched roughly from the second half of the 1840s until the 1870s.

The dissertation presents and discusses not only the related historical initiatives and theoretical considerations as of folktale collection activity, but also introduces the practical achievements and collection result, all sources as possible subjects of further study.

The examined period, which represents the era before the institutionalized Hungarian folklore studies started, stretches from the date of the first historically recorded Hungarian folktale collection movement (that is the folklore collection movement of János Erdélyi and the Kisfaludy Society) until the date when the first volume of the so-called *Hungarian Folklore Collection* anthology (1872) was published.

This period was chosen for study on the well-grounded bases that during this quarter century period simply more volumes of books and more folktales were published than during the previous and following half century period all together (until the foundation of the personality research theory) being a valuable resource corpora for folklore text researches.

During the examined approximately quarter century (exactly until the foundation of the 'Budapest School of Tale Research' which has been known for drawing the personality of the tale-teller and the social context of tale telling into the focus of scholarly interest), this important condition played serious role in specifying the research period. The number of manuscripts outnumbered the folktales recorded in the middle of the 19th century which offers an excellent source for text researchers and folklorists.

Research concept

The structure of the dissertation takes a different path from the traditional canonical research methodology of which outlines the history of Hungarian folktale collection activity based on the folklore related oeuvre of only a handful of significant collectors and theorists, such as János Erdélyi, János Kriza and Arnold Ipolyi from the 19th century; however, the dissertation tries to complete, or, even make corrections to, their work on folktale-collecting practice; furthermore, the dissertation also takes an effort to point out new contexts does not examine separately the above-mentioned authors and their works, because their oeuvres have been well-researched with countless original sources published.

Unfortunately, the limited scale of the present dissertation does not allow for such a vast review presenting and discussing both canonical and non-canonical collectors and theorist in scientific depths as well.

In summary, the dissertation and its chapters are focused on the discussion and presentation of 19th century folktale collectors and volumes of collections, folklore subjects and aspects that are not subjects of the canonic folktale research of 19th century Hungary.

The fundamental concept of the dissertation was to introduce the historical data, tendencies and connections of Hungarian folktale collection activity as fragments, or micro-histories, chosen from the deep pool of rich Hungarian folklore.

Consequently, a range of case studies are explored so that the missing episodes of the history of Hungarian folktale research can be revealed, which maybe with time could contribute as source material for further studies.

Sources

One of the important consequences of the epistemologic problem, that is our knowledge of oral folktale can be acquired solely through *written texts*, is that the central subject of this dissertation is the recorded folktale text, instead of the traditional *verbally transmitted folk-tale*.

The wealth of Hungarian folktale manuscripts and folktale sources in different publications provide the opportunity for philological analyses targetting the research of the genetic relationship between different texts.

My firm belief is that the systematic realization and utilisation of this methodology, namely the micro-philological research of genetic text chains, can broaden our knowledge of folktales, and can be useful especially in revealing the methods of the spreading of folktales, much more effectively than the tradition-based aspect had done.

The migration process of the 19th century the Hungarian folk-tale texts, namely the print-based spread of folktales, can only be studied with great difficulties, because they are to be found in various unexplored sources of texts, such as Hungarian and German language folklore anthologies, journal and periodical articles, chapbooks, etc.)

During my research, I took great effort to explore numerous different kind of folktale sources containing folktale texts with folktale transmissions.

The wide range of manuscript sources that were studied include a declaration of debt, a literate correspondence, society records, folktale-texts, and fairy tales-based literary fairy tales, an overview that shows great diversity, just like the studied printed sources, including cheap popular booklets, reading books, juvenile anthologies, and journals.)

To be able to handle all these heterogeneous sources, I worked out a simplified tipology by distinguishing two main categories. Under *primary sources* were categorized all texts and folklore collections which included a folktale itself (plots or complete texts identified as folktales by folklore researchers). Other sources that were containing some information of any reference data to folk-tales (specifically to the collector, narrator, location of tale-telling) were categorized under *secondary sources*.

A great chunk of sources among the primary sources that served as the fundamentum of this dissertation, was the hundreds of unpublished Hungarian folktale manuscripts recorded during classical tale-collecting movements in the 19th century, and now stored in the Manuscript Archive of the Library of Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This precious corpora is highly deserve further folklore text research.

Among the 19th century folklore corpora, we can also easily distinguish another great pool of classical folklore source material, in which significantly less clues of editing and esthetic modifications can be detected, or in other cases, the type of editorial text modifications clearly differ from the literary expectations for that time period.

Texts and genetic text chains

In the background of every single folktale text that is sent for publication, there lie several folktales based in folklore. This dissertation analyzes the textology of the classical period of the 19th century Hungarian folktale collecting movements from this methodological point of view.

As previously discussed, the central subject of the dissertation is the *text* of the folktale rather than the highly incomprehensible subject of verbally transmitted folktale itself.

One of the main features of folklore texts is the anonimity of the author, resulting that folklorists have historically neglected the narrators and their creative contributions behind the written folklore text.

Another aspect is that the verbally presented folktale as a performance is far different from the folktale that is recorded later in the form of a written sketch, or specifically in cases where there is no performance, only a creative writing process may exist.

It is also of importance that the verbally told folktale variances may be transformed into different written texts with time, a fact that contributes to subjects of study.

According to the methodological suggestion of the dissertation every single text of a folktale (meaning related text variations not type variations) should be gathered and studied simultaneously.

It is fundamental that the 19th century folklore corpus be examined and all genetically linked texts be collected, so that a so called 'genetical text chain' can be created, - even if not all texts can be found ever by research, meaning that the chain may not be complete.

Due to the above mentioned method, which is the collection of genetically related folklore text variations, folklorists will have a practical way to clearly outline the history of the written transition, and tradition, of folklore texts.

From this point of view, every folktale is a result of this creative textual process, which is reconstructable, and, it aims the focus on intermediate authors and editors of folktale-texts.

All in all, the aim of this research concept is not only to understand of the methodology of folktale creation, and its publishing history in its micro-context in 19th century, but also to widen our knowledge on the classical period of Hungarian folk-tale collecting activity.

Dissertation structure and Research results

The dissertation consists of ten chapters each based on a case-study. These chapters are categorized into four aspects: chapters about verbal, written and visual appearance of folktale, and also some chapters present the biographies and *ouevres* of some unknown folktale-collectors from the period of 1850-1860s. Beside philological analyses, the non-textual appearances of folktales are also considered and discussed.

Two chapters are dedicated to reveal some background aspects of art history and legal history of folktales in the 19th century.

The first chapter of the dissertation presents information about the very first Hungarian institutionalized folktale collecting movement held by the Kisfaludy Society in 1840s, also, the publishing history of first Hungarian folklore anthology is presented in order to reveal the methodological difficulties of folklore prose collecting as antecedent of folklore textology of the researched era.

There was a remarkable moment in the history of folktale-collecting methodology when in September 1845 the Kisfaludy Society outlined and legitimized the practice of written recording of the plot only of folktales, by which later one can (re)create the whole text of folk-tale by the plots.

The second chapter presents the attempt to identify the sources of some folktales that were published in cheap popular booklets in the Transdanubian region (by Sándor Czéh of Mosonmagyaróvár), and in the press house of Lipót Réthy (from Szarvas) in 1850s.

Text-genealogies of some of these tales are suitable for the presentation of the existing fundamental textual connections between the different source-types of folktales.

The chapter discusses that popular booklets of Lipót Réthy clearly correlate with the famous anthology of János Erdélyi, also, that the tales from Czéh's press house are related to Arnold Ipolyi (Hungarian bishop and historian, author of 'Hungarian Mythology', 1854).

In the third chapter the socio-historical context of (folk)tale-telling situation is discussed. The social context of verbally told folktales in the 19th century and important personalities of former tale-tellers are neglected by folklorists. Furthermore, in the majority of cases, there is no available information whatsoever about tale tellers or the actual situation of tale-telling, although the 'Budapest School of Tale Research' is known for having put these aspects into focus of contemporary collecting.

This chapter first introduces the 19th century Hungarian tale tellers, in the second part, a tale manuscript is analyzed. This manuscript was recorded by Gergely Marosi, a Unitarian teacher, who contributed to the folklore collection initiated by János Kriza (who published his Transylvanian folklore collection entitled *Vadrózsák* 'Wild Roses' 1863). Through the meticulous analyses of the manuscript and

related documents, the chapter reveals the tale-recording method of Marosi, who out of linguistic interest, recorded the context of the tale-telling performance as well, which was not typical in the period. Also, the chapter gives a concise biography and a reconstruction of the repertoire of Gergely Gotthárd (who was an excellent informant of Marosi).

The fourth chapter introduces tale iconography of the 19th century based on certain illustrations. Illustrators of two significant Hungarian folktale-collections are presented in detail, namely *Mährchen der Magyaren* by Georg von Gaal ('Folk-tales of the Hungarians' 1822) and János Erdélyi's *Magyar népmesék* ('Hungarian Folktales', 1855). In the second part the author of the visual narration of *Hungarian mythology* as an art concept (materialized Tündér Ilona 'Fairy Ilona'- murals in the staircase of Vigadó by Mór Than and Károly Lotz, 1866) is indicated as the tale-collector Arnold Ipolyi.

The next three chapters present the folklore-related ouevres of three important yet unexplored folktale-collectors of 19th century.

The folklore collecting activity of Benedek Csaplár, a Piarist priest and schoolmaster is significant considering that he was his great collecting-network that consisted of his students during the Bach-era. Csaplár is known to be a member of Arnold Ipolyi's network of folklore collectors, although, his association with other collectors (e.g. Pál Gyulai and the Kisfaludy Society) can be proved as well.

The extensive but unexplored correspondence of Benedek Csaplár and Arnold Ipolyi offers a good chance to identify Csaplár's student-collectors and to reveal Ipolyi's principles of folk-tale-collecting activity.

The two units of the next chapter is connected by the central figure of Gábor Kazinczy whose oeuvre is a fine example of how complicated relations prevailed among the translation, collection and compilation of tales in 19th century. Exploring various sources, the never-published folk-tale collection is presented, a collection movement which was initiated and headed by Gábor Kazinczy in the 1850s-1860s in north-eastern Hungarian villages among the 'palóc' ethnic group. The chapter also presents the biography of Kazinczy's tale-writer and collector József Beke, a schoolmaster of the Calvinist church in Sajóvelezd. His principles for his folktale collecting method complements with curiously Kazinczy's principles. Well-known fact is that rural clericals and schoolmasters used to play an essential role in folklore collecting. The profound biography of Beke represents the linking point of a typical rural intellectual to the possibilities of folklore collecting in the middle of 19th century.

László Merényi was a collector who produced the most published folk-tale collection by far during the studied period, however, he is mostly mentioned in literature regarding his first collection in a review by János Arany. In this chapter various manuscript sources are discussed and his biography is presented in the light of his unsuccessful Transylvanian collecting trip, which led to the first appreciated, later criticized author being completely decanonized.

In the eighth chapter an unexplored side of Pál Gyulai's (the great Hungarian critic) complex oeuvre is revealed and discussed, however, so far hardly any information has been known about his folklore collection activity. He was a teacher of the Calvinist College of Kolozsvár from 1858 to 1862. During these years he made his students record folklore corpora, mainly folk-tales. In this chapter his students are identified, Gyulai's folk-tale collection and connection his folk-tales and literary tales is identified, along with a thorough study of the editing history of his longest tale-poem namely *A gonosz mostoha* 'The Evil Stepmother' (1862).

There is always a creative process behind the discrepancies of the folktale told during the traditional tale-telling situation and the recorded or written folktale text which is modified by both the reader's expectations and practical technical abbreviations. The problem of copyright (or 'author's right', as it was called in 19th century Hungary) has been explored by studies in legal history and literary history. When the copyright of folk poetry comes into question, the investigation of this issue may shed some light upon the history of ideas relating to folklore as well.

In the last chapter of the dissertation I wish to contribute to the understanding of the concepts of folk poetry by analyzing some 19th century (1830-1880) legal sources. The introduction of the aspect of

legal history into the investigation of folklore texts is motivated by the fact that, in the period under survey, the collection of verbal folk poetry primarily meant not on-site, in situ recording of texts, but, rather, a recording and/or (re)construction of texts based upon recollection. I utilize the historical elements of copyright discourse in the exploration of 19th century manuscripts and published folklore collections, focusing on the publishing history of these folklore texts in order to understand the contemporary meaning and use of such basic terms as folklore *collector*, *collection*, *editor* and *publisher*, and, in general, the meaning of authorship in folklore collections.

The usage of definition of a more stable folklore text for Hungarian folktales recorded in the 19th century results in the need for research (as a methodological suggestion) of 'genetic text chains', which is presumptive behind every single folktale.

Instead of the verbal or the written form of the greatly varying folk-tales, the investigation and evaluation of genetic text chains, or the observation of the spreading of written folklore texts in micro-context, could be a relevant and valuable method in folklore text research, because the manifestation of textual modifications of folktales carries us near to the main principles of folktale collecting activity in 19th century.