

Books, Files, Slips, Clippings, Copies ... in Short the Stuff which Makes a Handbook. The Encyclopedia of the Folktale, its Library and Archives

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ABSTRACT

The “Enzyklopädie des Märchens” (Encyclopedia of the folktale) is a unique reference work on international traditional narrative and related topics that has been published in fifteen volumes during a period of forty years (1975-2015), preceded by a preparatory phase of about fifteen years. Its language of publication is German, but its outlook is worldwide and its authors come from more than fifty countries. It is outstanding that the project placed a wealth of material at the disposal of its contributors, especially texts from all over the world, arranged according to the Aarne/Thompson system, many of which had previously been translated for this purpose into German, especially from Slavic languages and other idioms of difficult access. Furthermore, it is remarkable that the founder of the Encyclopedia, Kurt Ranke, had associated researches into early modern and baroque texts, particularly sermons, with his project, especially the investigations of Elfriede Moser-Rath.

The present paper describes the Encyclopedia’s archives and the possibilities they offer to their users.

KEYWORDS

Historical and comparative folk narrative research; Archives; Classification; International scholarly contacts; Card indexes

RESUM

L'Enzyklopädie des Märchens (Enciclopèdia de contes populars) és una obra de referència única en la narrativa tradicional internacional i temes relacionats que s'ha publicat en quinze volums durant un període de quaranta anys (1975-2015), precedida per una fase de preparació d'uns quinze anys. Es va publicar en alemany, però la seva perspectiva és mundial i els seus autors provenen de més de cinquanta països. Destaca el fet que el projecte va posar una gran quantitat de material a disposició dels seus col·laboradors, especialment textos de tot el món, disposats d'acord amb el sistema d'Arne/Thompson, molts dels quals s'havien traduït prèviament a l'alemany per a aquest propòsit, sobretot de llengües eslaves i altres de difícil accés. A més, cal destacar que el fundador de l'enciclopèdia, Kurt Ranke, havia associat investigacions a textos de l'era moderna i barrocs, concretament sermons, amb aquest projecte, especialment les investigacions d'Elfriede Moser-Rath.

El present document descriu els arxius de l'enciclopèdia i les possibilitats que ofereixen als seus usuaris.

PARAULES CLAU

Recerca històrica i comparativa de la narrativa folklòrica; arxius; classificació; contactes acadèmics internacionals; fitxers

REBUT: 5/12/2016 | ACCEPTAT: 19/12/2016

In THE CHANSON FROM 1965 which made her famous, the French singer Barbara said: “Mais les contes de notre enfance,/ “Il était une fois”, commencent/ à Goettingen, à Goettingen” (Barbara 1998: 165-168). The town of Göttingen, half the size of Tarragona, full of half-timbered houses like those seen in fairy-tale illustrations¹ and a stopping-point on the so-called “German fairy-tale route” (Hemme 2009), is apparently more linked to the history of fairy tales in people’s minds than any other German town – for whatever reason. It is true that the Brothers Grimm lived and taught there in the 1830s, but they certainly had done their collection work earlier, first at the instigation of the romantic poet Clemens Brentano while they were students in Marburg, and then in Kassel where they lived for more than twenty years, working as librarians for Napoleon’s brother Jérôme, king of the shortlived kingdom of Westphalia, and later on at the Electoral Library of the land of Hessen-Kassel (Denecke 1990: 171-186; 186-195). They only spent about seven years as librarians and professors at the University of Göttingen, being evicted (in the case of Jacob, at a day’s notice) following their political protest against the abolition of the constitution by the king of Hanover (Von Thadden 1987).

More than 120 years later, and not at all in historical continuation of the Grimms’ work, Göttingen again became a center of folktale research through the establishment of the *Encyclopedia of the Folktale* (Enzyklopädie des Märchens) by Kurt Ranke (Shojaei Kawan 1986, 1998), who brought this ambitious research and publication project with him from Kiel to Göttingen when he was made professor of folkloristics there in 1960. Publication of the *Encyclopedia of the Folktale* began in 1974. In 2014, 14 volumes of alphabetically arranged articles on all kinds of folk narrative topics (tale types and motifs, related literary works, history of research, theories, stylistic and structural elements) had appeared; and the work, subtitled (and more correctly defined as a) Handbook of historical and comparative narrative research, was concluded in 2015 with a fourteenth volume reaching the letter Z as well as an appendix and index volume.

One of the main aims – if not the main aim altogether – of Ranke’s encyclopedic project, and the biggest group of entries within the whole work, was and is the documentation of the tales themselves, which circulate in a wide area encompassing Europe, the countries of the Mediterranean and the Orient, and which have also been brought by settlers to the Americas and many other parts of the world. The existence of so-called tale types — i. e. tales with similar content and structure which have been recorded from different countries and language areas – was, at the time when Ranke planned his project, documented in

1. Such as by Otto Ubbelohde (1867-1922), see Brüder Grimm (1997).

the international type catalogues by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson; for some of these these, book-length tale-type monographs existed, mostly published in the series “Folklore Fellow Communications”. Ranke’s purpose was, then, to include short monographs on the most widespread tale types in his forthcoming Encyclopedia. This means that of about 2000 types defined by the international catalogues (the exact number has up to now never been verified, despite the seemingly clear numerical system) roughly a thousand have been treated in the Encyclopedia. The library of our project, which grew out of Ranke’s own private library, and the text archives, which in turn developed out of Ranke’s library, together with our international network of contributors (some of whom attended the conference in Tarragona where this paper has been presented– most conspicuously Carme Oriol, our gracious hostess) provide the tools needed for writing these tale-type monographs.

There are very many national and regional archives – the biggest ones probably owned by relatively small nations (and young states) such as Ireland, Finland and Estonia – but Ranke needed an *international* text archive in order to provide the contributors to whom tale-type monographs were entrusted with a representative survey of texts for each type.

Ranke’s library reflects his international contacts with scholars from East, West, North and South. Nowadays, international contacts are an everyday phenomenon but in the decades after the second world war they were definitely not, and we have to bear in mind that the world was cut into two by the Iron Curtain – a situation which prevailed until the late 1980s. It is therefore remarkable how Ranke, who also held international positions as, for example, the first president of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, maintained scholarly contacts with researchers from countries like Russia and Czechoslovakia; a fact probably astonishing to outsiders is that it was most precarious to have any contacts with the German Democratic Republic and that academics from the GDR were denied the possibility of contributing to scholarly works published in Western Germany. In this East-West context I should also mention the help of Isidor Levin from Leningrad who provided both books and research reports from the Soviet Union through secret channels.²

Nowadays, scholarly collections of folktales mention, almost without exception, the tale types to which the narratives they contain belong. This was, however, much less the case in the days when Ranke started his encyclopedic project, and of course not the case at all for the classical collections of the nineteenth century – the tales of the Brothers Grimm and Afanas’ev, Emmanuel Cosquin and Asbjørnsen/Moe, Evald Tang Kristensen and Giuseppe Pitrè. Moreover, the editors of collections from socialist countries did not care for tale-type classification either – according to Marxist or rather Stalinist theory, typological efforts were branded and forbidden as cosmopolitanism and folktales were treated as the spiritual property of “the people”³ – whatever that means, and however bizarre it might seem in countries belonging to the Communist International or Comintern.

2. See, for example, Levin (1961, 1962).

3. See Voigt (1999), especially 379.

Ranke had therefore to classify the tales himself, and, as the books in our library and the texts in our text archives show, he read the tales in the books he himself owned and also in collections which he borrowed systematically from other libraries one after the other, and assigned them their places in the Arne/Thompson system; it must also be mentioned that he had some of the tales from the German tale archive in Marburg included,⁴ though not all of them. All of these classified texts from all of these books were then copied, arranged according to tale types and put into stackable green drawer-boxes. Some of the tale types fill one drawer; several smallish ones were put together when their numbers followed each other; others again cover three, four, five, six or more drawers and the texts had then to be arranged alphabetically, following the names of collectors or editors. Some of the tale types are very comprehensive, such as *The Theft of Fish* (tale type no. 1), the tale of *Cupid and Psyche* (types 425 ff.), and perhaps the most comprehensive is the *Cinderella* type 510 A which fills about twenty drawers – a pile going all the way from the floor to the ceiling. We must keep in mind, however, that – although the Encyclopedia owns an extraordinary and representative range of texts from tales collected worldwide – this is only a fraction of the printed material that actually exists.

Together with the copying work, Ranke took care that works from lesser known languages were translated, especially Russian and other Slavonic texts. This enabled me, for example, who am mainly acquainted with English and the Romance languages, to have access to works such as *Narodni pripovjesti u Varaždinu i okolici*, a Croatian dialect collection by M. K. Valjavec (Zagreb 1890, second edition), or a Chinese collection entitled *Yizu minjian gushi xuan* (Shanghai 1982), Demetrios Loukatos' Greek collection *Neoellenika laographika keimena* (Athens 1957), or V. N. Dobrovol'skij's *Smolenskij etnografičeskij sbornik* (St. Petersburg/Moscow 1891-1903, 4 vols.). One of the several Hungarian tale-type catalogues, published by Berze Nagy (1957), provides extensive summaries of the different versions of each tale type which he has registered, conveying a fascinating panorama of the wealth and diversity of Hungarian folk narrative. Probably the most comprehensive translation that has been made for the purposes of the Encyclopedia is that of *Latviešu pasakas un teikas* (Riga 1925-1937), a fifteen-volume edition of Latvian folktales and legends by Pēteris Šmits. These are only a few examples. Sadly enough, one has to state that as time goes by the script is fading, and it is a question whether it will be feasible, and also deemed worthwhile by academic institutions and other possible sponsors, to save these texts for whatever future they might have once the Encyclopedia has been completed. A group of Latvian scholars, by the way, plans to publish the Encyclopedia's German translation of the Šmits collection on the Internet, together with the original; vols. 13-15 are already online⁵ – but we are not at present informed how far they have got with this scheme.

The text archive is made accessible through two card indexes: firstly, an index of tale types which enumerates, type by type, every single text version of which a copy is contained in our green drawers; and secondly and inversely, an index of

4. Zentralarchiv der deutschen Volkserzaehlung, Philipps-Universitaet Marburg, Institut fuer Europaeische Ethnologie/Kulturwissenschaft.

5. <http://pasakas.lfk.lv/wiki/Main_Page> [last access: December 2016].

sources stating, for each work from which texts have been copied and placed in the archives, to which international tale types these texts correspond.

An essential tool has been, for very many years, the so-called supplementary index. It was in 1961 that Stith Thompson's second enlarged edition of Antti Aarne's first international tale type catalogue had appeared, and records of all the other indexes that had been published since that time were kept in folders that filled several shelves and recorded these more recent attestations tale type by tale type. In the Encyclopedia's tale-type monograph entries we were thus able to indicate any international additions to the former Aarne/Thompson documentation. Just to quote an example: as far as the Iberian Peninsula is concerned, there were, along with the all-Spanish catalogue by Camarena and Chevalier, Josep M. Pujol's "Contribució a l'índex de tipus de la rondalla catalana", the first preliminary work for the recent Catalan index, published together with Carme Oriol, as well as Carlos González Sanz' catalogue of Aragonese folktales. Copies from all additional catalogues were sent to the authors of tale type monographs as a basic source of information for writing such an entry, and in the tale type monographs published by the Encyclopedia almost invariably a note is found stating: "Ergaenzend zu AaTh" ("In addition to AaTh (Aarne/Thompson)")... followed by a mostly rather lengthy enumeration of the more recent catalogues where the tale type in question appears.

One day Heda Jason from Israel came to visit our institute, and when she saw the many, many folders containing additions to the Aarne/Thompson types she said: "You have to publish this". This is how Hans-Jörg Uther's revision of the Aarne/Thompson index, a project he completed within four years, was begun. The old files constituting the supplementary index have made space (because space in fact was scarce in our archive rooms – a cellar in the building next door to our working premises) for the files established within the framework of the Uther project. When the Aarne/Thompson/Uther index appeared, the note "In addition to AaTh" disappeared for some while from the Encyclopedia's tale-type monographs, but catalogues continued to be published. Therefore we find, in the very last fascicles of the Encyclopedia, a new form of reference, namely "Ergaenzend zu AaTh" ("In addition to ATU"), although the list of catalogues comprises no more than a handful.

A very valuable and indeed unique part of the Encyclopedia's archives is the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tale material collected and classified by Elfriede Moser-Rath. A native of Vienna, she collected, while living in Munich in the 1950s and 1960s, a large quantity of historical books, especially baroque sermon literature. Most of these works are of an entertaining nature including those that fulfilled the particular needs of preachers. German folklorists' interest in this line of research was innovative on a national as well as an international level at this time – and Ranke, who expressly wanted all types of sources to be made available for his encyclopedic project, invited Elfriede Moser-Rath to Göttingen, where she remained as a professor and a member of the team of the Encyclopedia until 1991. Texts that she found to be of interest were transcribed on cards and classified by type and motif. Among the many books she made accessible for our purposes were the works of the famous preacher Abraham a Sancta Clara (1644-1709), Otho Melander's *Jocorum atque seriorum libri* (1604) or

Johann Peter de Memel's *Lustige Gesellschaft: Comes Facundus in via pro vehiculo* (1656), to name but a few.

Two other card indexes that should be mentioned are the materials for the *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* by Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen (Santa Barbara *et alii* 2004) and the excerpts from German schoolbooks from the years 1770-1920, made by Ingrid Tomkowiak for her book *Lesebuchgeschichten* (Berlin/New York 1993).

The Encyclopedia also draws on more ephemeral sources, especially newspaper cuttings. They are collected in a big steel filing cabinet and arranged according to Encyclopedia headwords for which they were found to have relevance, for example reports on sensationalist theories implying that the fairy tale of Snow White has a historical background,⁶ legends on the witches' sabbat on the summit of the Harz mountains,⁷ or the opening of a museum in Heiligenstadt for the poet Theodor Storm who was also a tale collector.

I may also say a few words on the financing of the project: Initially, Kurt Ranke obtained money from the Volkswagen fund and the German state lottery, until his project came under the aegis of the German Research Foundation. This financial support helped to build up the archives and to employ staff, but the Encyclopedia, being regarded as a project of finite duration, was not authorized to establish its own library. I have mentioned that the archives were fed by Ranke's private library, the library of the Folklore Institute in Göttingen and loans from various external sources. However, in 1980, when the Encyclopedia became a project of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences, it finally received permission to buy its own books, among other sources from the estates of Kurt Ranke and Elfriede Moser. At the same time as receiving book gifts from scholars all around the world, the Encyclopedia purchases the most relevant recent publications in the field as well as interesting antiquarian items.

As the project has drawn to a close, what has become of its resources? As you see in the pictures, the green archive drawers containing tales arranged according to Aarne/Thompson numbers originally filled the walls of our working space in the yellow villa on Friedlaender Weg. Then in the beginning of the 1980s when the library was established and all the newly purchased books arrived, the green drawers had to be removed. They were put into two rather narrow cellar rooms in another university building next door. But they could be consulted without difficulty and we were now working very conveniently in one of the best libraries specializing in folk narrative research, and for whatever minor or major purpose we were able to consult many sources on the spot.

Only at a very late stage of its existence was it decided to relocate the Encyclopedia for the remainder of its working existence to a large, newly built interdisciplinary centre. Much more satisfactory premises were provided for the archives. On the other hand, it was a blow for all concerned that – in breach of former promises – we were separated from our books. They are now assimilated into a much larger library – albeit as a special collection. As a consequence, immediate consultation was no longer possible and we were subject to the rules laid down by the library administration. Formerly, there was an idea that after the

6. See Shojaei Kawan (2007: 136, notes 70 and 71).

7. See Koehler-Zuelch (1993).

completion of the Encyclopedia the library and the archives could be integrated into a centre of folk narrative research. Unfortunately, none of this came about. No doubt, at least the books will remain accessible on the university campus. But what will become of the text archives? Although this may seem too obvious to need stating, these archives give access to a wealth of international material in the form of classifications as well as translations, and that material has not been made of use in its entirety; it should interest folk narrative scholars as long as the discipline exists.

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Pictures



1. From the late 1970s until 2012, the Encyclopedia was housed on the upper floor of this building on Friedlaender Weg 2 in Goettingen. The rest of the building was occupied by the institute of folklore.



2. Kurt Ranke (1908-1985), founder of the Encyclopedia (1957) and its editor-in-chief (1972-1985) and director (1957-1985), in his office at the yellow house on Friedlaender Weg 2 (1979).



3. Rudolf Schenda (1930-2000), co-editor of the Encyclopedia (1977-1993), at his farewell party (1979) in the central office/archive room of the Encyclopedia on Friedlaender Weg 2 when he left Goettingen to become professor of folk literature in Zurich.



4. From left to right: Sigurd Graf von Pfeil (folklorist), Ulrich Quinten (student assistant), Elfriede Moser-Rath (1926-1993, member of the editorial team of the Encyclopedia 1972-1993), Ines Koehler-Zuelch (member of the editorial team 1974-2006, co-editor 2006-2015, director 2008-2010), Brigitte Schmutzler-Braun and Sonja Adelheid Schreiner (both collaborators in Schenda's project on popular reading habits) at Schenda's farewell party (1979).



5. From left to right: Inge Hoepfner (student assistant), Ines Koehler-Zuelch, Anne Uther, Hans-Jörg Uther (member of the editorial team 1973-2009, co-editor 2009-2015, director 2010-2015) at the party in the central office/archive room following Uther's doctoral examination (1980).



6. Rainer Wehse (member of the editorial team 1975-1985) during the removal of the green text boxes from the central office room of the yellow house to the cellar of the grey house next door.



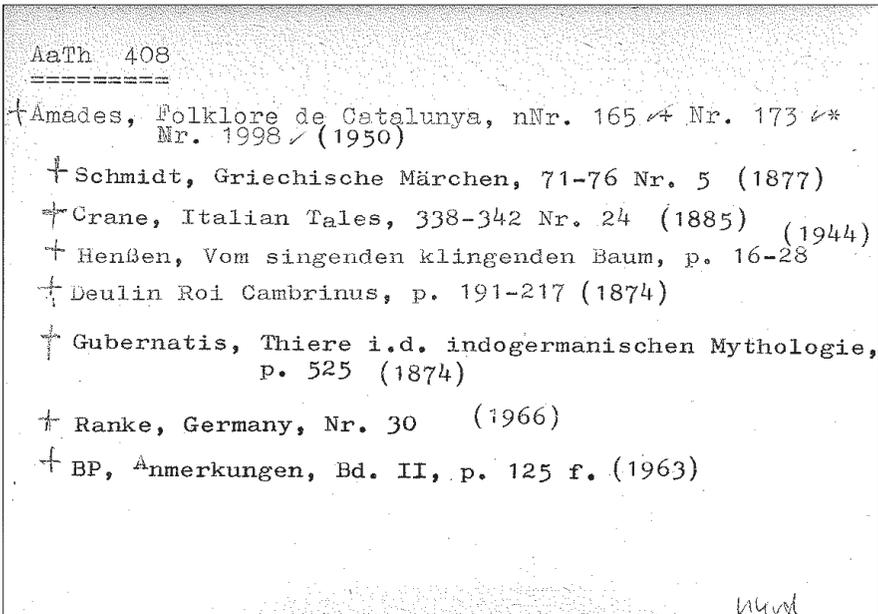
7. Carme Oriol (left) at the farewell party following her stay as a visiting researcher (1994) with Ulrich Marzolph (member of the editorial team 1986-2015) and Christine Shojaei Kawan (member of the editorial team 1979-2015). As can be seen, the central office room has been transformed into a library.



8. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, co-editor (1983-1985), editor-in-chief (1985-2015) and director (1985-2008) of the Encyclopedia, opens the ISFNR conference organized by the Encyclopedia in 1998 at the university's auditorium on Wilhelmsplatz.



9. Axel Fuellgrabe, secretary of the Encyclopedia (1979-2015), during the ISFNR conference.



10. The index of tale types enumerates all texts available in the Encyclopedia's text archives by Aarne/Thompson (AT) numbers. Here we see one of the many cards listing the texts corresponding to a very widespread tale type, AT 408. Titles are quoted in an abbreviated form.

Bertran i Bros, Pau: El rondallari català. Estudi preliminar. i edició de Josep M. Pujol. Barcelona 1989 (Arxius del folklore català 2).

Bertran i Bros, P.: El rondallari català. ed. J. M. Pujol. Barcelona 1989.

p. 3- 10; num. 1 = AT 301 B
p. 11- 18; num. 2 = AT 956 B
p. 19- 24; num. 3 = AT 707
p. 27- 34; num. 5 = AT 653 A + 654
p. 39- 43; num. 7 = AT 403 A
p. 44- 46; num. 8 = AT 425 A + 425 B (D&T)
p. 47 sq.; num. 9 = AT 1529
p. 49- 51; num. 10 = AT 1654
p. 52- 59; num. 11 = AT 1000 + 1007 + 1062 + 1049 + 1060 +
1115 + 1088 + 1004 + 1029
p. 63 sq.; num. 13 = AT 425 C
p. 65- 67; num. 14 = AT 310
p. 68- 74; num. 15 = AT 709
p. 75- 78; num. 16 = AT 1650
p. 79- 82; num. 17 = AT 401 I-II
p. 83- 89; num. 18 = AT 303

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II. The index of sources contains all works the texts of which have been included in the Encyclopedia's text archives. On top of the first page, the title of the source is cited in all details, and then in a shorter form (which is used in the Encyclopedia's notes). This is followed by a list of pages and numbers of the texts and the AT numbers to which the texts correspond.

