

The Collaborative Folktale Project of a Family: The Synoptic Critical Edition of a 19th-Century Hungarian Folktale and Riddle Collection

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ABSTRACT

In 1862, a volume of tales was published under the title *Eredeti népmesék* ('Original Folktales') by László Arany, the then 18-year-old son of János Arany, the national poet of the period. *Eredeti népmesék* has been classified by folkloristics as the first canonical folktale collection in Hungary. Besides scholarly recognition, it has also become one of the most popular folktale collections of the past one and a half century, as selected tales from this collection have been continuously republished in schoolbooks and anthologies and have become a regular element in children's literature. After the Second World War, in the basement of the main building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, a huge pile of manuscripts had been found in very poor condition, consisting of, among others, various 19th-century folklore collections. In the 1960s, it was discovered that a part of these manuscripts was identical to the texts published in *Eredeti népmesék*. The vast majority of the manuscript tales had been recorded by the family members of János Arany, namely, his young daughter (Julianna Arany) and his wife (Julianna Ercsey), in the period between 1850 and 1862, presumably for family use. A comparison of the manuscript texts with their published versions revealed that in the editing process, László Arany significantly reworked the texts of the manuscript tales, implementing significant stylistic modifications. This article reports on the research project underlying the synoptic critical edition of the manuscript and published tales of the Arany family (2018). In the first part, the author presents the manuscript and published tales and their place in the history of Hungarian folkloristics, followed by an introduction of the members of the Arany family with an emphasis on their socio-cultural background, and concluding with a discussion of the roles they played in this collaborative folktale project as collectors, editors, copy editors, and theoreticians. The second part is a summary of the textological concept and techniques applied in the course of the development of the synoptic critical edition.

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KEYWORDS

folktale collection, Arany family, synoptic critical edition, textualization, textology

Eredeti népmesék [Original Folktales] (ARANY L. 1862), edited by László Arany, was published in 1862, and is still one of the most significant and influential collections of Hungarian folktales. The volume garnered unanimous high praise from contemporaries and later folklorists alike, pointing out the tales' excellent style of narration, that is, the collector-editor's authentic rendition of the style of Hungarian folk narratives. These folktales also greatly influenced oral traditions because of elementary school textbooks, children's literature (DOMOKOS 2018a, 2018b), and cheap, popular editions published in large quantities in the early 20th century. Familiarity with László Arany's folktales was prevalent in the repertoire of many (even illiterate) storytellers in the 20th century (KOVÁCS 1969). Due to their widespread popularity, the folktales of László Arany played a similar role in Hungarian culture as the Grimms' tales played in German culture. Not only did they bring about the popularization of certain folktale subjects, their style of narration became the standard storytelling style, which over time became established in the general consciousness as the "genuine," "true" and "natural" narrative style of Hungarian storytelling.

It was not merely the quality and significant impact of the texts in the anthology that attracted general attention but also the collector himself. An 18-year-old law student, László Arany (1844–1898) was the son of János Arany (1817–1882), the greatest poet of the period. Although this anthology was his first publication at the age of 18, readers were already familiar with his name, as Sándor Petőfi, his father's best friend, wrote a poem in the summer of 1847 to the then three-year-old boy (*Arany Lacinak*), which has remained one of the best known Hungarian nursery rhymes to this day.

László Arany was listed on the cover of the folktale anthology as collector. Neither the names (or other details) of the storytellers nor the location where the tales had been collected were indicated in the book, and he remained quite reticent about this by and by. After the Second World War, a vast, disorganized manuscript material was discovered in the cellar of the dilapidated building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on the Pest bank of the Danube, which contained, among other things, texts from 19th-century folklore collections. It was confirmed around the turn of the 1960s that some of these texts were identical or very similar to the texts published in *Eredeti népmesék*.

Comparing the handwriting of János Arany's family members revealed that the majority of the tale manuscripts that can be traced to *Eredeti népmesék* had been put to paper by László Arany's sister, Julianna Arany (1841–1865), and László Arany's mother, Julianna Ercsey (1818–1885), presumably in the 1850s. The discovery of the manuscript of *Eredeti népmesék* was a significant turning point in several respects. On the one hand, the Arany family's private documents had been destroyed when the villa of László Arany's widow in Buda was hit by a bomb in January 1945, so apart from correspondence saved by others, no other documents of theirs have survived. On the other hand, neither folklorists nor literary historians had been aware of the existence of the manuscripts of *Eredeti népmesék*. Thirdly, it became apparent from the manuscripts that László Arany's mother and sister both played a significant role in recording the folktales (GULYÁS 2018a).



The manuscripts correspond to the vast majority of the texts published in 1862. At the same time, the handwritten material is not identical to the final, print-ready version of the manuscript of *Eredeti népmesék* (the whereabouts of which is still unknown), but it seems that László Arany used these manuscripts for editing his collection of tales. Besides the many autograph corrections, the manuscripts written in ink also contain corrections made by another set of hands.

In addition to the transcripts of the Arany family's handwritten texts, the recently published critical edition (DOMOKOS – GULYÁS 2018) also includes the versions edited by László Arany that were published in 1862 under the title *Eredeti népmesék*. The synoptic edition's arrangement of the manuscript and print versions in a mirror layout on a two-page spread serves the purpose of enabling the comparison of the folktale manuscripts with the print versions of the texts.

In recent decades, the issue of authenticity in regard to 19th-century folklore collections has come up more and more frequently. According to this, works of folklore published in the 19th century were products of unreflected and unseen construction, that is, the texts of folklore collections underwent significant transformation in the process of editing and publishing in accordance with ideological, moral, and aesthetic expectations. This point of view is undoubtedly true. Nonetheless, this criticism has been very rarely supported in Hungarian folkloristics by case studies and meticulous textual analyses based on the comparison of manuscripts and published texts (GULYÁS 2010:225–246; 2014).

The critical edition of László Arany's anthology, *Eredeti népmesék*, makes such a comparison possible, since in this case we have at our disposal the autograph manuscripts of the recorders, the editors' corrections alongside the autograph corrections of the recorders, and finally the texts of the published anthology. The *joint publication* of these text versions allows the observation of the process of textualization, that is, how the tale text changed in the process of recording and publishing, and what changes the editor made to the manuscript texts when he made the tales intended for family use available to a national audience.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH OF FOLKTALES IN HUNGARIAN SCHOLARSHIP

After identifying the manuscripts of the collection of folktales published under the title *Eredeti népmesék*, Ágnes Kovács, a folklorist of the Ethnographic Research Group at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and editor-in-chief of the *Catalogue of Hungarian Folktales*, launched the exploration of the material and published two major studies on the subject (KOVÁCS 1969, 1982); nonetheless, the texts of the folktales remained in manuscript format.

The question arises as to why these texts had not been published for decades, seeing that the corpus is so crucial to the Hungarian folktale tradition. There are several reasons for this. One of these is that since folk literature, and especially epic genres, played a prominent role in János Arany's oeuvre as a creative writer and essayist, and they also indirectly influenced *Eredeti népmesék*, a research project like this is best carried out if the researcher has extensive folkloristic as well as literary historical knowledge regarding János Arany and the period's literary, poetic, and intellectual historical trends and approaches to folk literature. Therefore, the creation of the synoptic edition had been dovetailing the yearslong research project on the critical edition of the works of János Arany of the Institute of Literary Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.



On the other hand, historical folktale research was, in general, of secondary importance in Hungarian folkloristics; in fact, only in the last 15 years did the programmatic research of early (i.e., 18th–19th century)¹ folktales begin. From the 1940s, and especially after the Second World War, the so-called *Budapest School* for the study of the role of personality in storytelling, established by Gyula Ortutay, focused primarily on the pragmatics and use of stories: it studied the process of oral transmission, the storyteller's personality, repertoire, performance style, and the sociocultural functions of storytelling (DÉGH 1995). Between 1940 and 1995, numerous anthologies of folktales, featuring the repertoire of various local communities or individual storytellers and accompanied by scientific annotations, had been published, in keeping with the folktale interpretation trend that was almost monopolistic due to Ortutay's privileged position in scientific policy. *Folktales and Society* (DÉGH 1969), a monograph by Linda Dégh, one of Ortutay's students, even impacted international folktale research. Of course, the fact that from the late 1960s contextualist studies and performance had attracted increased attention also played a role in this.

Although historical studies on the links between literature, folklore, and intermediary cheap print (chapbook, almanac) had been carried out in Hungary, the Budapest School itself was much more interested in contemporary cultural research. Presumably, this was also due to the fact that, according to this approach, the historical folktale material published or preserved in the archives in manuscript form did not provide a way to study the performance, context, and use of folktales. This approach was generally characteristic of international folkloristics, too: studying historical texts containing insufficient or no contextual-performative data seemed rather problematic and irrelevant (APO 1995:14–155; ANTONEN 2013; GUNNEL et al. 2013).

The other key task of folktale research after 1945 was the creation of a catalog of tale types resulting from research that covered the entire Hungarian folktale repertoire. To date, ten volumes of the Hungarian folktale catalog – in line with the international tale type catalog – have been published, a significant undertaking even in international terms (MNK 1982–2001; UThER 1997:217).

The reason, then, that studying the early Hungarian folktale corpus was of secondary importance in recent decades is that Hungarian folktale scholarship had been focusing on two very large projects during this period. Firstly, unlike in Western or Northern European countries, it aspired to document traditional storytelling practices that still existed after the Second World War in the Hungarian-speaking area (including Hungarian communities in Romania, Yugoslavia/Serbia, Czechoslovakia/Slovakia, USSR/Ukraine), in accordance with the salvage paradigm. Secondly, it focused on the typologization of the already recorded tales, that is, on creating the *Catalogue of Hungarian Folktales*.

Traditional community storytelling had mostly waned by the late 20th century, surviving in only a few peripheral communities (e.g., among the Roma living in smaller villages). Storytelling itself, of course, persists in all sectors of society, but tales – so prominent in the canon of classical folkloristic genres – are being supplanted by other narrative genres in oral tradition (personal experience narratives, urban legends, humorous or horroristic prose narratives, etc.). At the same

¹To the best of our knowledge, the manuscript of the first Hungarian folktale collection can be dated to 1789, but it remained unknown until 1917. Prior to that, some Hungarian-language fairy tales (tales of magic) have been known sporadically from the late 18th century. Information about earlier, 16th–17th century Hungarian folktale tradition is minimal.



time, there is great interest and nostalgia for the folktale genre explored (and preferred) by folkloristics among middle-class and urban intellectuals, and the “re-learning” of vernacular storytelling is taking place within the framework of institutional, state-supported *folklorism*. Contemporary storytelling thus exists mostly as a stage performance or as a form of bibliotherapy.

Meanwhile, thousands of pages of Hungarian folktale manuscripts recorded in the 19th century languish in archives, practically locked away from the public. Curiously, not only the manuscript but also the published historical tale corpus is largely inaccessible, for until recently the most important 19th-century folktale collections usually had only one edition, the first one, of which only a few copies have survived even in larger public libraries. Change was obviously brought about by the possibilities of digitization on the one hand, the re-evaluation of editorial and philological work on the other, as well as an emergent need for the interpretation of these historical texts. The Arany family’s collection of folktales is the first critical edition of Hungarian historical folktales.

THE FOLKTALE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE ARANY FAMILY

The Arany family’s manuscripts of tales and riddles are located in the Department of Manuscripts at the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, dispersed in four volumes among other collections.² The Arany manuscripts consist of a total of 123 sheets. Of these, riddles make up seven pages.

In 1862, the anthology titled *Eredeti népmesék* included 36 tales and 54 riddles. In the holdings of the Department of Manuscripts at the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a total of 33 tales (thirty complete and three bearing a title but unfinished), one short tale fragment without a title, as well as 78 riddle manuscripts can be linked to the Arany family. This corpus contains the manuscripts of 30 of the tales and all of the riddles published in *Eredeti népmesék*.

In the manuscript tale material of the Arany family, five tales had been recorded by János Arany’s wife, Julianna Ercsey.³ One of the tales was penned in the young adult handwriting of László Arany,⁴ an earlier fragment of which can also be tied to Juliska Arany. 17 tales can be attributed entirely to Juliska Arany (Fig. 1).⁵ Six tales and presumably an additional fragment

²Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (accepted abbreviation: MTA KIK Kt.). Irod. 4-r. 409/I., 409/II., 409/III., Ms. 10.020/VIII.

³*Ráadó és Anyicska/Ráadó and Anyicska* (ATU 313), *Az aranyhajú hercegisasszony/The golden-haired princess* (ATU 403+404), *A veres tehén/The ginger cow* (ATU 511+361*), *Gagyfi gazda/Master Gagyfi* (ATU 560), *Dongó meg Mohácsi/Dongó and Mohácsi* (ATU 1525E+1641+1654).

⁴*A szép lány meg az ördög/The fair maiden and the devil* (ATU 407).

⁵*A vak király/The blind king* (ATU 550), *A boltos három lyánya/The shopkeeper’s three daughters* (ATU 923), *A cigány fiú/The Gypsy boy* (ATU 1628*), *Az özike/The fawn* (ATU 450), *A tündérkisasszony és a cigánylány/The fairy maiden and the Gypsy girl* (ATU 408), *Az ördög-szerető/The devil lover* (ATU 407), *Jankó és a három elátkozott királykisasszony/Johnny and the three accursed princesses* (ATU 400+518), *Az ördög és a két lány/The devil and the two girls* (ATU 480D*), *A nyelves királykisasszony/The cheeky princess* (ATU 853), *A farkas-tanya/The wolves’ house* (ATU 210), *The pig bladder, the straw, and the ember* (ATU 295), *Wolfie* (ATU 20C+20A), *A kakaska és a jérczike/Little rooster and little hen* (ATU 2021), *A két koszorú/The two wreaths* (ATU 883B+510B), *A kóró és a kis madár/The weed and the little bird* (ATU 2034A*), *A kis ködmön/The little furcoat* (ATU 1450+1384), *Bolond Jankó/Foolish Johnny* (ATU 1696+1691+1653).



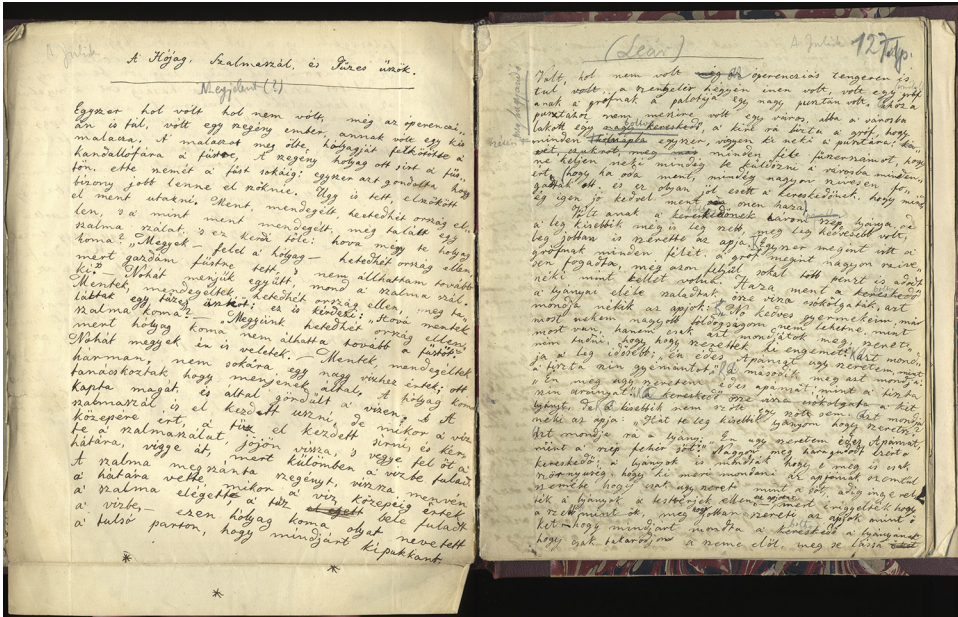


Fig. 1. Pages of the tales A Hójag, Szalmaszál, és Túzes úszók (The pig bladder, the straw, and the ember) and Lear recorded by Juliska Arany (MTA KIK Kt.)

had been put to paper by an unidentified recorder.⁶ It is possible that it was the young László Arany who recorded these tales, but this cannot be verified, because unlike in the case of his mother or sister, there are no other autograph manuscripts of László Arany from the 1850s allowing the handwriting to be definitely attributed to him.

In some of the tale manuscripts, the cooperation of several recorders can be detected.⁷ In three of Julianna Ercsey's tales, another person (presumably Juliska Arany) added a few lines in the text of the tales, after which the mother continued writing the manuscript. Four other tales⁸ were written jointly by Juliska Arany and the unknown recorder, taking turns paragraph by paragraph or page by page. Most of the riddles (with the exception of one text, which can be attributed to László Arany) were written down by Juliska Arany (VARGHA 2018) (Fig. 2).

The vast majority of the Arany family's extant manuscripts of folktales and riddles can thus be attributed to Juliska Arany and the unknown recorder, and to a lesser extent to Julianna Ercsey. The manuscripts are not dated, but based on a distinctive change in the handwriting of

⁶A kis malacz és a farkasok /The piglet and the wolves (ATU 121), Fehérlófia/Son of the White Horse (ATU 301), Babszem Jankó/Johnny Bean (ATU 700+650A), A macska és az egér/The mouse and the cat (ATU 2034), A kis gömböc/The small haggis (ATU 2028), Iczinke-piczinke / Teeny tiny (ATU 2016).

⁷Ráadó and Anyicska, Dongó and Mohácsi, The golden-haired princess.

⁸Szuszka és az ördög/Susie and the devil (ATU 328), A szomorú királykisasszony/The sad princess (ATU 571), Panczi-manczi (ATU 500+501), Az özvegy ember és az özvegy asszony/The widower and the widow (ATU 480).





Fig. 2. Riddles by Juliska Arany (MTA KIK Kt.)

the adolescent Juliska Arany, the transcript can be dated around the 1850s (especially between 1854 and 1856).

The manuscripts were written in pen by the recorders, and they themselves made corrections in the texts (spelling mistakes, corrections of words, less often deletion or insertion of sentences, etc.). It is evident that they made an effort to put flawless, complete texts on paper (i.e., not drafts or excerpts) that included the recorders' corrections. Scribbles and sketches in certain spots suggest that most of the manuscripts were not considered finalized, clean versions.

In addition to autograph corrections, a person other than the recorders also corrected the texts in pencil and/or pen. I call these texts *interim texts*: they reflect the transitional state between the first, autograph record and the published, finalized text. Ex post corrections occur at several levels: lines, underscores, circles, crosses, numbers, stars, paragraph markers, from single small strokes to multi-line text suggestions. In many cases, the person making the corrections ex post (presumably László Arany) also added titles to the tales (originally, the recorders usually indicated with a horizontal line on the first page of the manuscript that it needed a title) or changed the existing titles of the manuscript tales (the texts were published in 1862 in accordance with these changes). Most of the changes are stylistic in nature, but there are also changes at the plot level (motif, sujet).

THE PUBLISHED TEXTS: EREDETI NÉPMESÉK

The plain, 328-sheet book with no illustrations was published in the summer of 1862, with the designation "Eredeti népmesék, Collected by László Arany". The volume contained 31 tales with



titles, followed by 54 riddles with numbers, followed by five catch tales with numbers, as well as the solutions to the riddles. The 36 tales are distributed across genres as follows: sixteen tales of magic, eight formula tales, five animal tales, two novella tales, three jokes, and two non-typologized tale closing motifs as catch tales.

According to the notes in the manuscripts, László Arany kept track of the tale types that had been published already, and tried to publish tales that were considered a novelty. He sought to expand the known folktale corpus not only in terms of types but also in terms of genres: the publication of animal tales, catch tales, and formula tales told primarily to children was a novelty compared to the material of earlier Hungarian folktale collections.

László Arany's textualization method, revealed through the comparison of the manuscript and print folktale texts, basically consisted of the following processes: inserting, deleting, and substituting motifs and episodes, that is, modifying the *sujet* or plot as compared to the manuscript records. In the folktale called *Fehérlófia* (Son of the White Mare, ATU 301), for example, the battle between the hero and the third dragon, which in the manuscript version of the unknown recorder shows them transforming into glass and porcelain and rolling down the hill, is replaced with a more conventional battle: Fehérlófia slams the dragon into the ground neck deep and then cuts off his head. In the tale of the *Forgotten Bride* (ATU 313), he inserted the motif missing from his mother's manuscript version but present in his father's 1847 verse tale, according to which the face of the girl starts burning while she is on the run, signaling that her pursuer is nearing. In the margins of the manuscript of the same tale, he indicates with the word *ring* that the lovers' betrothal scene lacks the motif of the exchanging of rings, even though the ring plays an important role in the recognition scene later, in the closing of the tale, which is why in the published text he remedied this omission in the scene.

Nonetheless, most of the changes are not about plot but about punctuation and spelling, or stylistic in nature. László Arany's typical processes included the insertion of vernacular idioms and proverbial similes, the replacement of foreign, international loan words with Hungarian equivalents (e.g., *dinom-dánom* [razzle-dazzle] instead of *bál* [ball]), using more vernacular, rustic names for tools and animals (*lopótök* [bottle gourd] instead of *üveg lopó* [glass siphon], *komondor* instead of *agár* [hound]).

On the one hand, László Arany's text modifications make the realm of the tale more folkloristic (through idioms, proverbial similes, and vernacular phrases); on the other hand, some of his typical solutions include inserting the motif of divine providence, introducing common fairytale numbers (trinity), using dialogs between actors instead of the narrator's summary/description, and inserting a narrator's commentary explaining the actions of the characters. In general, the logic of the published texts is much more explicit and rational compared to the manuscripts: László Arany expounds the implied connections, explains them to the reader, uses forward and backward references, thus making the tales more coherent and transparent (GULYÁS 2010:225–234).

One of the reasons for the oft-condemned editorial rewriting of folktales, a common practice in the 19th and early 20th centuries (KOVÁCS 1961), may have been the attempt to compensate for the changes resulting from the shift in medium. When only the pure text of an oral performance is recorded in writing, the text loses a significant part of its effect, that which stems from the simultaneous presence of the storyteller and the audience, their shared knowledge, and the information and experiences carried by nonverbal communication. Therefore, in the medium of writing, such a text cannot function properly in terms of linear reading, that is, this



effect must be reintroduced by some means, as compensation for the lost performative aspects (GULYÁS 2015:25).

THE ARANY FAMILY: TELLERS, RECORDERS, PUBLISHERS, AND THEORETICIANS OF FOLKTALES

The uniqueness of the tale corpus in question also stems from the fact that it is a family collection. Family members were involved in this collaborative folktale project in different ways. In the following, I present the four members of the Arany family, starting with their biography – with special regard to their socio-cultural position – and concluding with each family member's role in the folktale project.

JÁNOS ARANY (1817–1882)

The head of the family was born in the market town of Nagyszalonta (Salonta, Romania), in a Protestant family of theoretically noble privilege but practically poor peasant status. He began his literary career relatively late and with almost no publication history: he submitted his verse epics to literary competitions anonymously, which helped this rural civil servant become one of the top poets in the country by the age of 30, and remain one of the most important authors of the Hungarian literary canon. Arany represented the apex of a literary movement that considered the integration of folk literature indispensable to the birth of a national literature. He himself often used legends, tales, and ballads known from oral tradition as the basis of his works. His very first published poem in 1847 was a fairytale in verse, the first Hungarian written version of the tale type of the forgotten bride (*The Tale of Rose and Violet: A folktale*, ATU 313, AaTh 313C). Starting in 1851, he was first a grammar school teacher in Nagykőrös, a small town near the capital, then in 1860, having had moved to Pest, he became the director of the Kisfaludy Society, a literary society that also coordinated the collection of folklore, the editor of literary and art magazines, and from 1865 secretary general of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Having come from a family of poor peasants, János Arany's career reflects extraordinary social mobility; culturally speaking, he went from the world of oral tradition and cheap print to the pinnacle of elite literature and scholarship (SZILÁGYI 2017).

One of the fundamental questions about the creation of this manuscript collection of folktales may be the following: what was it that prompted a housewife in her thirties, Julianna Ercsey, the adolescent Juliska Arany, and the child László Arany, living in a small town in the 1850s, to record more than a hundred pages of folktales? It is conceivable that the recording and publishing of tales may have been influenced by János Arany's interest in folktales. In the mid-1850s, when a significant portion of the folktale manuscripts in question were being produced, János Arany, as a teacher in Nagykőrös, was planning to publish a grammar school textbook that would have introduced the different narrative genres, one chapter of which would have been about folktales. The textbook was completed, but alas, it was not published, its manuscript got lost, and only the introduction and table of contents survived. In this period, there were only a few dozen folktales published in Hungarian, and certain genres of tales have never seen print at all. Therefore, it is possible that Arany asked his family members to transcribe the tales they



knew in order to expand his compendium. There was precedence for such a practice in the family: in 1853, two short animal and formula tales (ATU 295, ATU 2034A*) were published in a children’s textbook based on the narration of the then 12-year-old Juliska Arany (GÁSPÁR – KOVÁCSI 1853:2–3, 25–27).

The folktale’s debut in Hungarian elite culture and print media was rather late and laborious in comparison to other genres of folk literature (i.e., orally transmitted and endowed with aesthetic value), having played a secondary role both in folklore collections and the interpretive discourses on them. This situation was described by Pál Gyulai, a friend of the Arany family and a leading literary critic of the era, in his review of László Arany’s folktale anthology: “Folktales are disdained among even the least educated” (GYULAI 1862:386). A change in the appreciation of folktales, considered a genre of domestic servants and children, took place at the turn of the 1860s: from then on, the publication of folktale anthologies increased, followed by an expansion of children’s literature, which included folktales, from the mid-1880s onwards.

Thus, it is particularly noteworthy that in the middle of the 19th century, amid a general indifference or rejection of folktales, János Arany advocated the collection and publication of folktales in several of his writings between 1855 and 1861, providing analyses and guidelines. Arany expressly preferred the medium of oral tradition over literacy and written historical works, because it maintains knowledge relevant to the community within the framework of poetic construction. To Arany, the existence of *poetic composition* in fairy tales is what distinguished it from all other oral epic genres (GULYÁS 2017).

In 1861, Arany published a Hungarian translation of an English review of John Francis Campbell’s *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*.⁹ With his commentary in the review, he intended to draw attention to the importance and ways of collecting Hungarian folktales by following the Scottish example (GULYÁS 2016). It was also in 1861 that he published his essay-length critique of László Merényi’s anthology of folktales, *Eredeti népmesék* [Original Folktales].¹⁰ In it, he emphasizes the communal nature of oral culture, the immediacy between performer and audience, instantaneous feedback, shared knowledge, and “solidarity” (in contrast to written works). He provides a detailed summary of the criteria of a “capable tale collector,” the most important of which, in his view, is that the tale collector should be an outstanding storyteller. This enables the collector to correct any problems with the text performed during collection, in writing.

That is, around 1860–1861 (i.e., the period immediately preceding the publication of *Eredeti népmesék*), János Arany had addressed the issue of collecting and publishing folktales on several occasions. Directly or indirectly, his approach to folktales has certainly left its mark on László Arany’s concept of text. There are no textual corrections by János Arany in the extant tale manuscripts, but there must have been one (or more) version(s) that reflected later phases of the corpus, even though the whereabouts of these are unknown. In any case, in 1867, László Arany wrote that he considers what his father wrote in his critique of Merényi’s folktales to be the guidelines for himself and all other folktale collectors (ARANY L. 1867:225).

⁹AJÖM XI. 65–73. Source: *The Athenaeum* No. 1726. (London, Saturday, 24 November 1860), 701–702.

¹⁰AJÖM XI. 326–342. On the folktale collection of László Merényi, see DOMOKOS 2015:192–220.



JULIANNA ERCSEY (1818–1885)

János Arany's wife, Julianna Ercsey, was also born into a Calvinist family in Nagyszalonta; her father was a lawyer, her paternal grandfather a Calvinist pastor. According to an earlier hypothesis, she was an illegitimate child from his father's relationship with his housekeeper, but there is no trace of this in the civil registers. This circumstance may be relevant because earlier scholarship attributed Juliska and László Arany's knowledge of folklore to the fact that their grandmother, Julianna Ercsey's mother, had been a maid, who, having been excluded from elite culture, must have been the source of folklore knowledge for her daughter and indirectly her grandchildren. We know little about Julianna Ercsey's education and schooling. In 1847, János Arany described his wife in a letter as follows: "my wife does not paint, play the piano, or change clothes ten times a day: but she reads Petőfi's poems, is a good mother, and a good Hungarian housewife."¹¹ All relevant sources consistently describe Julianna Ercsey as an excellent housewife who surrounded her husband with great care and devotion. As for her writing praxis, Julianna Ercsey carried on regular correspondence with her brothers and friends in Nagyszalonta and Nagykőrös for decades. Her extant written documents, in addition to the manuscripts of the tales, consist of about half a hundred letters.

JULISKA ARANY (1841–1865)

In his letters, János Arany described his daughter as a smart, imaginative child with poetic and artistic talents who was keen on reciting poems at the age of three or four.¹² In 1850, the textbook writer and schoolbook editor János Gáspár noted the excellent storytelling skills of nine-year-old Juliska (*AJÖM XV*. 313, 691), and in 1853, as mentioned above, he even published two of her short tales. In 1851 the family moved to Nagykőrös. The Arany children first visited the capital, Pest, in 1853. 12-year-old Juliska was especially impressed by the theater,¹³ wanting to become an actress, and subsequently she and her friends performed in several amateur productions in Nagykőrös. According to her contemporaries, she was a lively, sensitive, smart, and conscientious girl with remarkably good performing skills. Meanwhile, János Arany (who in his teenage years also tried, unsuccessfully, to become an actor) watched his daughter's artistic talents and ambitions with concern mixed with pride, not fully supportive of them.¹⁴ At the age of twenty, Juliska Arany had written to her girlfriend that even if she had other ambitions, her upbringing eventually made her realize that she would only find happiness in a quiet household and within family life.¹⁵

It is likely that if Juliska Arany had attended school, her formal education would have ended at the age of 12, around 1853–1854. Nevertheless, her letters indicate that her knowledge and cultural awareness was more substantial than those of small-town ladies. She studied both

¹¹János Arany's letter to Sándor Petőfi, Nagyszalonta, 28 February 1847. *AJÖM XV*:60.

¹²János Arany's letter to István Szilágyi, Nagyszalonta, 1 August 1845. *AJÖM XV*:15.

¹³János Arany's letter to Mihály Tompa, Nagykőrös, 1 September 1853. *AJÖM XVI*:298.

¹⁴János Arany's letter to Mihály Tompa, Nagykőrös, 4 December 1853. *AJÖM XVI*:352–353.

¹⁵Juliska Arany's letter to Dánielné Lengyel, Pest, 8 November 1861. *ROLLA 1944*:49.



French and German privately, through her father she was acquainted with the figures of the contemporary literary and cultural scenes, and she was an avid reader of contemporary fiction. Starting in 1857, at the invitation of Antal Csengery and his wife,¹⁶ she often stayed in the capital for months, where she regularly attended theater performances and concerts. The list of books owned by Juliska Arany numbers about eighty, consisting predominantly of literary works. She got engaged to Kálmán Széll, a Calvinist pastor from Nagyszalonta who had previously studied in Göttingen and Geneva, in the spring of 1863. On this occasion, the only photograph depicting all members of the Arany family together was taken (Fig. 3), and this is the only extant photograph of Juliska Arany. She died in 1865 at the age of 24. In addition to the manuscripts of tales and riddles, about forty of her letters survive.



Fig. 3. The Arany Family in 1863: Behind Juliska is her fiancé, and behind Jánosné Arany is her son, László Arany. (Petőfi Literary Museum, 2017.231.1.)

¹⁶Antal Csengery was a prominent and influential politician, essayist, and scholar of the era, and his wife, Róza König, was one of the first Hungarian translators of Andersen's tales in the early 1850s.



LÁSZLÓ ARANY (1844–1898)

After graduating from law school, László Arany's career followed three parallel paths: literature, science, and financial and legal administration. He worked as the legal director of one of the major Hungarian banks, traveling all over Western and Southern Europe. At a very young age (1867), he was elected to the most important scientific and literary societies, then to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1872), and finally to the National Assembly (1887). He wrote several articles on linguistics, political history, literary history, and literary criticism, and even drafted the Hungarian Copyright Act (Fig. 4). After the death of János Arany (1882), he mostly focused on overseeing his father's legacy, compiling and publishing his manuscripts.

László Arany was a highly educated and extremely talented poet and translator, but his disposition was always characterized by his eschewing of publicity. As the son of the national poet, he did not want to gain an undeserved reputation. He hid his literary aspirations even from his own family. He won prestigious contests with several of his narrative poems, but he always submitted these anonymously or with codenames, and even after the announcement of his winning, he did not reveal his identity for a long time. The ironic-disillusioned narrative poem *Déliabok hőse* (1872), reflecting a Byronic-Pushkinic influence, remains one of the prominent works of the Hungarian literary canon.



Fig. 4. László Arany in 1883 (MTA KIK Kt. Ms 10206/3.)



In contemporary Hungarian society, László Arany was a tremendously gifted man in all respects. Aside from his poetic talent, education, language skills, legal and financial knowledge, witty and mercilessly offish criticism, his contemporaries also recalled a tall, athletic man who represented the dispassionate reticence and sarcastic, dry temperament of an English gentleman. From a social point of view, therefore, he was destined for greatness, but his formally extremely successful career failed to fulfill his artistic and scientific potential. Despite his notable talent, László Arany gave up writing poetry and literature in the mid-1870s, scaled down his work as an essayist, and published his writings in the press largely anonymously, making it impossible to reconstruct his entire oeuvre. In his last years, he battled depression, which he could hardly conceal even through his self-discipline. Thus, the career choices and lifepaths of Juliska Arany and László Arany seemed to reflect the ambivalent attitudes (aspiration and wistfulness) underlying the changes in the social status of their father, János Arany, which can be discerned in Arany's work as a constant sense of alienation and displacement (SZILÁGYI 2017:15–30).

Eredeti népmesék was László Arany's first publication, and it was not accompanied by interpretive paratexts. Thus, his views on tales can only be partially reconstructed based on later sources (GULYÁS 2018b). Most of these writings were published in the 1860s, encompassing various critiques of folklore collections and a comprehensive study of folktales. The image that emerges from these is as follows:

László Arany equates authentic storytelling with the *peasant* way of storytelling: the ideal storyteller is thus a capable peasant storyteller one listens to during communal spinning or corn-shucking sessions. (Soldiers, for example, were not capable storytellers, in Arany's opinion, because having left their villages and integrated into new communities in far-away countries, they used an artificial, affective style of storytelling.) Folktale collectors may, to some extent, amend the text of a tale performed orally during its transcription if they do not use solutions alien to the peasant storyteller. But by no means shall they have the "imagination" of a literary author, that is, they shall not invent the plot. Textualization, alien to folk orality and criticized by László Arany, include processes such as classicization, use of grandiloquent language and euphemisms, idealization, overelaboration, and exaggeration arising from unfamiliarity with the vernacular language.

For László Arany, the paragon of folktale style was represented by the tales of the Brothers Grimm, which he later unambiguously expressed in a letter, emphasizing that every writer's oeuvre should be held to its own standard: "When it comes to folktales, the tales of the Brothers Grimm to me are the pinnacle; but if I held Andersen to this standard, I would have to eschew him; even though he, too, has proven himself."¹⁷ He also praised von Hahn's anthology of Greek and Albanian folktales, in relation to which he described the paragon of tale style as follows: "It includes everything necessary and nothing superfluous" (Y. L. 1864:210).

According to László Arany, the narrative style of the folktale presented to the public in print reflects the style of the collector, not of the storyteller. Thus, the collector-editor is not merely documenting the folklore text but also creating it to some extent. This is the approach that was then canonized in 1876, in the Hungarian copyright act, the text of which was drafted by László Arany. According to this, the copyright of folklore anthologies belongs to the editor, i.e., the

¹⁷László Arany's letter to Lajos Tolnai, Budapest, 4 April 1878. ARANY L. 1960:490.



person who put the oral tradition considered public property in a written form and created its style (DOMOKOS 2015:344–382).

László Arany's treatise on Hungarian folktales was published in 1867 (ARANY L. 1867). This was the first meticulous and comprehensive analysis of Hungarian folktales since the publication of Imre Henszlmann's 1847 study *A népmese Magyarországon* [The Folktale in Hungary], focusing primarily on the issues of genre, theme, and narration.

In addition to his knowledge of all Hungarian folktales ever published (about 240), the 23-year-old author also demonstrated his impressive knowledge of foreign tales and folk literature. He relied primarily upon the work of the Brothers Grimm, as well as representatives of comparative folklore philology, such as Theodor Benfey, Félix Liebrecht, and Reinhold Koehler, and was a regular reader of *Orient und Occident*, a journal published quarterly in Göttingen and edited by Benfey. His comparative examples included Dutch and Norwegian songs, Swedish and Danish ballads, Italian and Spanish romances, Finnish and Vogul folk poetry, Sami, English, Malagasy, and Indian tales, the Serbian tales of Vuk Karadžić, and the Romanian tales of Arthur and Albert Schott. He was thoroughly familiar with the classic collections of European, Indian, and Arabic tales, as well as the works of Straparola, Basile, Perrault, and referenced parallels found in the *Arabian Nights*, the *Panchatantra*, and the *Mahabharata*, respectively. His list of similarities in terms of motif also included epics that were considered oral tradition (the Eddas, the epic poems of Homer and Ossian). He wrote general evaluative commentaries on the neighboring Germanic, Slavic, and Romanian tales, as well as Swedish, Danish, and English tales.

The backbone of his treatise is the distinction and categorization of tale genres. László Arany (following Henszlmann) distinguished three main genre categories: 1. symbolic tales (tales of magic), 2. didactic tales, 3. absurd or weird tales (jokes, children's tales, formula tales, tall tales). László Arany did not see folktales as a homogeneous genre. One of his objectives was to demonstrate the diversity of forms they take, even ones that collectors did not previously consider worth documenting (such as children's tales, animal tales, tall tales). One novel feature of his tale interpretation was his appreciation for not only the content or meaning of the tale but also its form. He considered the study of rhythmic prose tales to be important for the reconstruction/creation of a specific form of Hungarian poetry. He saw folktales in general, and more broadly speaking folk literature, as one of most important foundations for a national poetry.

Between 1872 and 1882, László Arany was the first editor of the representative series titled *Collection of Hungarian Folklore*, authoring its comparative-typological notes on folktales and legends (with an international perspective). This series established and canonized the standards of the scholarly publication of folklore for decades.

THE ROLE OF JULISKA ARANY, JULIANNA ERCSEY, AND LÁSZLÓ ARANY IN THE CREATION OF THE FOLKTALE COLLECTION

One of the main conceptual problems regarding the tale manuscripts stems from the interpretation of the roles of Julianna Ercsey and Juliska Arany. One plausible hypothesis is that the recorder and the storyteller are the same person, i.e., mother and daughter were documenting their own folktale lore, so the manuscript collection basically represents the folktale repertoire of



Juliska Arany and her mother. However, this opinion is subject to some reservations, as no direct evidence supports the identity of the recorders and the storytellers.

The tale manuscripts of the Arany family bear no name, signature, or any other sign that would indicate the identity of the storyteller or recorder. The identification of the manuscripts was based on the similarity/sameness of the titles and subjects of the folktales with the texts published in *Eredeti népmesék*, as well as the penmanship of the manuscripts. We are not aware of any statements by any of the three main figures (Julianna Ercsey, Juliska Arany, László Arany), private or public, regarding the mother's and/or sister's role in the storytelling or collecting. *Eredeti népmesék* has no paratext that would indicate the identity of the recorders/collectors of the texts or the storytellers. As mentioned before, the estate of the Arany family was destroyed in 1945, and among the surviving letters of Julianna Ercsey and Juliska Arany, there are none that discuss storytelling, tale collecting, or folktales in general. Neither are there any indications in László Arany's extant letters or published writings that his sister and mother had contributed to his collection of tales.

While the identity of the recorders can be established based on their handwriting, the identity of the storytellers is uncertain. The subjects either said nothing about it, or the documents in which they did refer to or discuss the collection of tales had been destroyed. Nonetheless, some of János Arany's private and László Arany's (very brief) public comments on how the tales had been recorded have survived. Besides the two of them, we are aware of only two other contemporaries who had some knowledge of Juliska Arany's role as a storyteller and/or collector of tales.

According to two of László Arany's comments, he himself recorded tales at the age of ten (around 1854), and collected them in Nagykőrös (ARANY L. 1867:221).¹⁸ János Arany, on the other hand, wrote in a letter to his poet friend Mihály Tompa in 1862 that the tales were collected by his son *and* daughter.¹⁹ Pál Gyulai, who knew János Arany and his family well, wrote at the turn of the century (after all family members had died) that the tales had been recorded by Juliska and László Arany, and the final manuscript, compiled by László Arany, had been corrected by János Arany (ALÖM IV:5-6). To date, the latter statement has not been confirmed by other data, but it is rather unlikely that János Arany, who considered the issue of collecting and publishing folktales an important task, would have been unaware that his son, living in the same household, was compiling a collection of folktales.

From this perspective, then, it is indeed a unique family collection of tales, where the creation of the corpus involved various family members in various ways and to various extents, but implying some kind of collaboration, as storytellers, tale recorders, editors, and proofreaders. If the two collectors, identified by their contemporaries as Juliska Arany and László Arany, recorded the tales they knew, and their mother also wrote down a few tales, the collecting did take place within the family household, and the corpus was in fact created by collecting and writing down the tales the family members knew.

Even if this were the case, it remains uncertain whether the recorder and the storyteller were the same person. It is also conceivable that family members dictated to each other. If one of them narrated a tale slowly and the other one recorded it, the correspondence between

¹⁸László Arany's letter to Mihály Tompa, Pest, 18 July 1862. TOMPA 1964:378.

¹⁹János Arany's letter to Mihály Tompa, Pest, 20 June 1862. AJÖM XVIII:64.



storyteller and story would be the opposite of what the person recording it might suggest. It can be considered a unique collaboration where in the tale manuscript of Julianna Ercsey, the transcribing is taken over by the daughter (in the middle of a sentence), then continued and finished by the original recorder (the mother), and where a tale is transcribed by Juliska Arany and the unknown recorder taking turns. If, on the other hand, two individuals take turns transcribing the text of a folktale, it suggests that they are not documenting their own lore, but presumably recording in writing the storytelling and dictation of a third individual.

Similarly, we may want to entertain the hypothesis that someone from outside the family may have been telling the stories while the members of the Arany family wrote them down (it is also possible that the unknown recorder was someone from outside the family). However, there are no abbreviations in the manuscripts, elements that are common in transcriptions of tales by dictation. Similarly, there is no “source citation” (from whom, when, where the tales had been recorded).

We should also keep in mind that putting the oral performance of a prose text on paper in pen and ink is a rather complicated task, but it is an equally difficult task for storytellers to record their own repertoire of stories in writing, as they must tell the story (whether silently, to themselves, or out loud) at the same time as they put it on paper.

Should it be confirmed that Julianna Ercsey and her children were documenting their own repertoire of stories with these texts, it would make them the most well-known 19th-century Hungarian storytellers, as Hungarian collectors of tales usually did not even record the names of storytellers at the time, let alone other data about them, and we know of very few Hungarian female storytellers and even fewer female collectors of tales from the 19th century (GULYÁS 2019).

Against this background, the question then arises: why did the members of the Arany family – father and son who valued folktales so highly – keep silent about Julianna Ercsey and Juliska Arany’s knowledge of folktales and their role in the creation of the folktale collection? And why had these family members themselves never mentioned this in their private correspondence?

The silence that surrounded the mother and daughter’s tales can be interpreted in several ways. Since most of the family-related documents were destroyed in 1945, it is conceivable that this silence did not extend to their private sphere. What is certain, however, is that neither László Arany nor János Arany alluded publicly to the fact that *Eredeti népmesék* had been created with the help of Julianna Ercsey and Juliska Arany, who, as recorders and/or storytellers, had in fact created an “original version” of the corpus that sits at the intersection of orality and manuscript literacy, without which the texts of *Eredeti népmesék* could not have been created.

The fact that Julianna Ercsey and Juliska Arany’s knowledge of folktales remained obscure is all the more curious, as the recording of tales was by no means an obvious activity in this period among small-town women of a similar level of education. Different types of texts of popular literacy were present in the writing praxis of women with no formal education. In handwritten notebooks, they jotted down texts with magical-religious functions (e.g., apocryphal prayers), made notes with economic functions (household ledger, recipe), but also wrote letters with the purposes of maintaining family and social contacts, entered records in memory books, and (occasionally) composed texts expressing their individual identity (diary, memoir) (KESZEG 2008:116–140, 168–170). In any case, writing down folktale texts was not one of the typical writing praxes, so it would have deserved attention for that reason alone.



There may be several reasons for this contradiction, which, like so many of the explanations regarding this manuscript collection of tales, are mere assumptions.

On the one hand, as discussed above, in László Arany's view, the authorship of works of folklore belongs to the person that developed the style of the published tales. That is, folktales are public domain, but when they move from oral tradition to print literature, and thus to a wider public, the ultimate narrator is not the original storyteller but the editor who created the permanent, written form. The published tale becomes the quasi *property* of the editor on account of the *creative* work performed during the written narration of the tales.

On the other hand, it is possible that the issue itself is unhistorical, having lost sight of the contemporary context due to the unprecedented privileged position of the Arany family. After all, in 19th-century Hungarian folktale publications, the names of storytellers, or even tale collectors, were rarely indicated, volumes generally bearing only the editor's name, while the sources of the tales and the circumstances of storytelling and collecting were only mentioned occasionally and incidentally. In this respect, László Arany's *Eredeti népmesék* did not deviate from the general practice.

Thirdly, another reason for this silence may also have been the contemporary opinion that (middle-class) women going public with their work creates problems with regard to their femininity and role in society. In 1858, Pál Gyulai, a friend of the family, published an intensely debated piece on women writers, one of the basic tenets of which was that women's literary work is a fundamental fallacy (GYULAI 1908). Firstly, because women are inherently incapable of higher levels of abstraction and creation outside the performing arts, and secondly, because leaving the family circle and going public entails both objectification and exposure: the woman's effect and treatment becomes uncontrollable, receiving a kind of attention and gaze that can have certain devastating existential and moral consequences. They are allowed to write, of course, but publishing is dangerous. It is conceivable, therefore, that the female members of the Arany family, known for its reticence, did not wish to expose themselves to the public in this way.

THE TEXTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES OF THE SYNOPTIC CRITICAL EDITION

Critical editions of folktales in general, and synoptic editions in particular, have no tradition in Hungarian folkloristics. Therefore, in the absence of precedent, the structure of the edition and all processes had to be developed based on the specific features of the corpus and the possibilities arising from them. In international scholarship, the work of Heinz Rölleke served as an inspiration, who published the Grimm collection's original manuscript texts and the authorized variants side-by-side on two-page spreads (RÖLLEKE 1975; RÖLLEKE – MARQUARDT 1986).²⁰

The corpus consists of texts originating in oral, handwritten, and print literature, reflecting their intersections and interoperability. Due to the intermedial nature of the corpus, it was also necessary to deviate from the usual conventions of literary history and philology. Thus, the 1862

²⁰For a comparison of László Arany's tales with the Grimms' tales, see Mariann Domokos' study in the current issue of *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica*.



print version did not become the main text, nor did the application of the principle of *ultima manus* seem expedient. There are several reasons for this. On the one hand, the manuscripts come from several (partly identifiable, partly unidentified) individuals. On the other hand, with due respect for the text finalized by László Arany, this version was not the only one considered worthy of publication. The authorized version has been available by means of the 1862 edition, but with the discovery of the manuscripts, it became possible to document the process by which the text developed, from oral to handwritten to print version. The shift in media brought the tales from a limited, familiar, small community audience to a national readership, allowing them to exert their impact in literature and oral tradition through macro- and micro-dissemination (BOTTIGHEIMER 2006). Variation is usually considered a fundamental mechanism of oral tradition, but variation is also a feature of manuscript literature, as only print literature is capable of producing physically completely identical texts (within a specific edition).

Therefore, instead of establishing and codifying a single main text, the synoptic edition of the folktale collection presents three text versions side by side: 1. the *primary text*, presumably coming from oral tradition, put on paper by the recorders; 2. the *intermediate text*, which bears the subsequent corrections of the recorders and another individual; 3. the *finalized text* published by László Arany.

The handwritten texts are on the left-hand (*verso*) side, and the corresponding texts, published in 1862 and edited by László Arany, on the right-hand (*recto*) side. In the primary text of the recorders, we marked the corrections by which the intermediate text was created by indexing: text elements that were later deleted, corrected, or rewritten were subscripted, while those that had been inserted, that is, to which they were corrected, were superscripted. To distinguish between autograph corrections and those that came from someone else, the indexed text elements that came from an individual other than the recorder were *italicized*. Changes to punctuation are not indexed, but punctuation marks that were corrected or marked for deletion are enclosed in angle brackets (< >) within the main text. If anything called for additional textual information beyond indexing, these are provided in a footnote at the bottom of the page (Fig. 5).

The transcripts of the manuscripts are faithful, the peculiarities and inconsistencies of orthography and punctuation not emended, as they may be relevant in terms of cultural history. At the same time, obvious slips of the pen, inkspots, i.e., non-restrictive elements are not indicated separately. Only one major editorial intervention was indicated: since in most cases the published tale text was much longer than the manuscript version, the texts on the left-hand side and on the right-hand side would have diverged so much after a few pages that it would have been impossible to compare the two versions, even though comparability was one of the main objectives of the publication. Therefore, we tried to make sure typographically (by inserting blank or indented paragraphs and pages) that each two-page spread bore the unit of manuscript and print tale text that corresponded contentwise.

The order of the tale texts follows the order of the 1862 edition, as the original order of the tale manuscripts could not be established. The riddles are an exception to this, as the manuscript version of these has not fallen apart, thus the original order of the texts could be reconstructed.

Each tale is accompanied by a comprehensive, detailed endnote. These indicate the location of the manuscript, identify the recorder along with a general description of the manuscript, and provide information on the publication of the text (the 1862 first edition and subsequent editions until 1949), the place of their contemporary critical and popular reception (e.g., book reviews, studies, schoolbooks, children's books), their genre classification, and type number. Moreover,



[14.] A FEHÉR LÓ FIA.¹

FEHÉRLÓFIA.

[9r] Egyszer volt, hol nem volt, még az óperenciás tengeren is túl volt, volt a világ egy fehér ló.>³ Azt a fehér ló egyszer meg fiadott lett neki egy fia ^(gyermek) azt egész hét esztendeig szoptatta, akkor felküide egy magas fára, hogy húzza lejjának a helyát.>⁴ a fiu fel mászott, de csak félig tudta le húzni.>⁵ Akkor a fehér ló megint szoptatta hét esztendeig, ^(akkor) megint felküide egy magas cserfára, hogy húzza lejjának a helyát a fiu lehuzta.>⁶ Akkor azt mondja a fehér ló: „No fiam, már látom elég erős vagy, hát csak menj el világra, én meg, meg döglök.>” a val meg döglött a fehér ló.>⁷ K. A fiu el indult világra, a mint ment, mendégelt, elő talált egy rengeteg erdőt, annak a közepén talált egy embert ki a ^(legnagyobb) elő fákat tördelte, mint más a szalma|szálat.>⁸ Azt mondja ^(Kisfiú név.) a fehér ló fia: „Jó napot” ^(adon lsten.) „Jó napot te kutya.>”⁹ „Gyere no, – mondja a fehér ló fia – én vagyok az.”¹⁰ Megbirkodottak, de alig csavarított ^(szó) a fehér ló fia a fá tördelőn, mindjárt főt ^(höz) vágta. Azt mondja a fá tördelő: „Már látom erősebb vagy mint én, v ^(gy) be szolgálatodba.” A fehér ló fia befogadta, ^(már ekkor ketten voltak.) a mint|mennek, mendégélnek, elő találnek egy kő morzsolót, a ki a követ úgy morsoalta mint más a tolyás helyát.>¹¹ Azt mondja a fehér ló fia: „Jó napot.” Jó napot te kutya, hallottam híret annak|a fehér ló fiának, szeretnék velem megbirkozni.” Gyere no, – mondja a fehér ló fia – én vagyok az.” megbirkóztak, de alig csavarított a fehér ló fia tize, tizenketőt, mindjárt főt ^(höz) vágta.>¹²

[202.] Egyszer volt, hol nem volt, még az óperenciás tengeren is túl volt, volt a világon egy fehér ló. Ez a fehér ló egyszer megellett, lett neki egy fia, azt hét esztendeig szoptatta, akkor azt mondta neki:

– Látod fiam azt a nagy fát?

– Látom.

– Eredj fel annak a legetetejébe, húzd le a kérégt.

A fiu felmászott, megpróbálta, a mit a fehér ló mondott, de nem tudta megtenni. Akkor az anyja megint szoptatta hét esztendeig, megint felküide egy még nagyobb fára, hogy húzza le a kérégt; a fiu le is húzta. Erre azt mondta neki a fehér ló:

– No fiam, már látom elég erős vagy, hát csak eredj el a világra, én meg megdöglöm.

Avval megdöglött. A fiu elindult világra, a mint ment-mendégelt, elő talált egy rengeteg [203.] erdőt, abba be is ment. Csak bódorgott, csak bódorgott, egyszer egy emberhez ért, ki a legerősebb fákat is úgy nyitte, mint más ember a kenderet.

– Jó napot adjon Isten! mondja Fehérlófia.

– Jó napot te kutya! hallottam híret annak a Fehérlófiának, szeretnék velem megbirkózni.

– Gyere no, én vagyok!

Megbirkóztak, de alig csavarított egyet Fehérlófia Fanyüvő, mindjárt földhöz vágta.

– Már látom hogy erősebb vagy, mint én, – mondja Fanyüvő – hanem tegyük össze a kenyerünket, végy be szolgálatodba. Fehérlófia befogadta; már itt ketten voltak.

A mint mennek, mendégélnek, elő találnak egy embert, a ki a követ úgy morzsolta, mint más a kenyeret.

– Jó napot adjon Isten! mondja Fehérlófia.

– Jó napot te kutya! hallottam híret annak a Fehérlófiának, szeretnék velem megbirkózni.

– Gyere no, én vagyok!

Megbirkóztak, de alig csavarított Fehérlófia [204.] Kőmorzsolón hármát-négyet, mindjárt földhöz vágta.

- 1 A mese szövegét egyelőre azonosítatlan lejegyző írta le.
- 2 Tintával írt vessző tintával áthúzza, ceruzával kettőspontra javítva.
- 3 Tintával írt vessző ceruzával pontra javítva.
- 4 Tintával írt vessző ceruzával pontosvesszőre javítva.
- 5 Tintával írt és áthúzott pont, ceruzával pontra javítva.
- 6 Tintával írt vessző ceruzával pontra javítva.
- 7 Tintával írt vessző ceruzával pontra javítva.
- 8 Tintával írt vessző ceruzával pontra javítva.
- 9 Tintával írt vessző ceruzával felkiallított javítva.
- 10 Ceruzával húzott függőleges vonal a két mondat között.
- 11 A tintával besúrt mondat végén ceruzával írott pont.
- 12 Tintával írt vessző ceruzával pontra javítva.

Fig. 5. The manuscript and published version of the tale of *A Fehér ló fia / Fehérlófia* [Son of the White Mare] as represented in the critical edition

they briefly outline the international literature on the tale type (with special regard to the earliest known records and distribution of the type), and review the 19th-century Hungarian manuscript and print variants of the given tale type. At the end of the notes, there is a glossary of archaic or vernacular terms that occur in the tales. The notes are intended to position the tales of the Arany family within the network of Hungarian and European, oral and literary textual traditions. Due to the limited availability of sources and historical research to date, the brief notes on the riddles contain data of the manuscripts, first editions, and 19th-century Hungarian parallels.

The notes are followed by a table containing basic data about the Arany family's manuscript tales and László Arany's tales published in 1862 (title variations, location, recorder, genre, type number), a list of books of tales published until 2016 under the name of László Arany, photos of members of the Arany family and the manuscripts, and finally an index of names.

IN CONCLUSION

Eredeti népmesék is a work of significant editorial intervention yet aspiring to represent oral tradition (*Buchmärchen*), and its text formation processes and impact on Hungarian culture are



similar to those of the Grimms' tales. The "original manuscript" discovered after the Second World War created an opportunity to present the differences between manuscript and published texts, that is, the *process* of text formation, in a two-page spread format of a synoptic edition. By exploring the manuscripts of the folktale collection canonized as a national classic, and by identifying the recorders, the outlines of a family collaboration that allowed for different roles emerge from a period when transferring tale texts from oral tradition into manuscript and print literature was far from common.

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