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PROFESSIONAL NOTICES

The Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm Accepted into UNESCO's Memory of the World Registry

In June 2005 the Grimms' annotated reference copies of the Kinder- und Hausmärchen were officially inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Registry, which is dedicated to preserving the world's documentary heritage. The following text by Dr. Bernhard Lauer, director of the Brüder Grimm-Museum in Kassel, explains the foundation for the nomination, which led to UNESCO's ultimate recognition of the documentary importance of these texts from the founding years of fairy-tale studies.—Ed.

The *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*) of the Brothers Grimm are, next to the Luther Bible, the world's best-known and most widely distributed book of German cultural history. At the same time, they are the first systematic compilation and the first scientific documentation of the entire European and Oriental fairy-tale tradition. They have been translated into more than 160 languages and cultural dialects from all continents.

The *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* are like a concave mirror that captures a fairy-tale tradition marked by several cultures, compiles it in a new form, bundles it together, and reflects it in such a way that a new tradition emerges and, bound to the work itself, unfolds with worldwide impact. The worldwide distribution of the Grimms' fairy tales is also a demonstration of their exemplary character, which, rooted in German romanticism, takes up the poetry of the human realm of imagination and sets it down in a universally valid form. The uniqueness and global impact of this collection may be ascribed to the fact that the Brothers Grimm, in their literary encoding of the preliterary tradition, extended beyond the German and European frame of reference and created a universal pattern for the cross-cultural fairy-tale tradition.

The most significant preserved historical source for the origins and effect of the Grimms' fairy tales are the Kassel Handexemplare (Annotated Reference Copies) of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, with numerous supplements and notes written in the Grimms' own hand, as well as various other handwritten materials.

Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) Grimm, the famous German fairy-tale collectors and philologists, are among the great minds and personalities of the nineteenth century. They found recognition and appreciation not only in their own time and country but also far beyond to the present day, when they continue to enjoy manifold regard through out the world. With their groundbreaking collections and historical-critical research approach, which focuses on the language, history, and uniqueness of popular culture (of the *Volk*, i.e., “the people”), the brothers did more than just make an important contribution to the political unification of Germany in the nineteenth century. Through their scientific efforts and political activities, the latter of which were clearly marked by ethical principles (e.g., their participation in the protest of the Göttingen Seven in 1837 or Jacob Grimm's activity in the first German National Parliament in Frankfurt's St. Paul's Church in 1848), they always stood up for the principle of liberty founded upon law and history. Their historical and critical conception radiated out in an exemplary manner to other European peoples' search for identity and national rebirth and, in addition to Germanic philology and modern literary folklore, strongly influenced Celtic, Romanic, and Slavic philology, which were coming into being at that time. Above all, the Grimms achieved world fame through their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, which are found in millions of homes throughout the world.

Although the Brothers Grimm were born into and clearly marked by a time of awakening national consciousness and emerging national movements, they never conceived of their scientific research and collecting activities as being limited to the boundaries of their own country. Instead, they always cast their sights far beyond Germany's borders and included numerous other cultures and traditions in their research. Not only biographically—from the small Hessian town of Hanau, where they were born, to the country town of Steinau, to the Hessian electoral capital of Kassel, the university towns of Marburg and Göttingen and to the Prussian metropolis of Berlin, where they are buried—did their path lead them from small things to great, but they also climbed in their scientific endeavors, from the “small and insignificant,” ever higher, to far-reaching questions and correlations.

At the same time, the Brothers Grimm have—with their numerous literary editions, their great fairy-tale and legend collections, and their groundbreaking research, which spread into many scientific areas, as well as through a path of life marked by an unparalleled brotherly life and work partnership—built up a picture of Germany and of German tradition and history, the effect

of which carries on to this day. In this the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* play an important role; it is precisely this “poetry of the people” that is seen all over the world as a typically German tradition from which it is believed one may be able to discover and create “German thought,” “German existential orientation,” and “German being.” This is a very interesting phenomenon, for it was their fairy tales, of all things, to which the Brothers Grimm did not assign the designation “German”—unlike so many others of their great works. Moreover, these are merely called *Kinder- und Hausmärchen gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm* (*Children’s and Household Tales Collected by the Brothers Grimm*), and even at the beginning of the nineteenth century they opened up the entire German and European tradition pertaining to this genre, the “poetry of the people.”

Two aspects above all others account for the overwhelming worldwide success of the Grimms’ fairy-tale collection, a success that continues to this day: first, the special language and the poetic quality of the fairy-tale text, which was first and foremost polished by Wilhelm Grimm from one edition to the next into a specifically romantic, highly stylized narrative tone; and second, the artistic reception, that is, the change and adaptation into various media, which accompanied the reception of the fairy tales since the second edition of 1819 and was likewise strongly influenced by the fundamental principles of romanticism.

In the structure of the Grimms’ fairy-tale collection, a fundamental contradiction is set forth which to this day is of central significance to the history of their reception. On the one hand it was suggested through the Grimms’ preface and commentary to the fairy tales that the fairy-tale texts deal with “genuine, living, and original” folk poetry, the remnants of ancient popular traditions reaching back to preliterate times. Wilhelm Grimm, for example, wrote in 1812: “In all these tales lies ancient Germanic myth which was believed to have been lost.” In addition, the stylization of the storyteller Dorothea Viehmann as the Grimms’ “dyed-in-the-wool Hessian fairy-tale teller” and the numerous source references, such as “from the Main region,” “oral tradition from Hessen,” “from the Paderborn dialect,” or “from the Münsterland,” have supported the notion of a genuine German fairy-tale tradition. On the other hand, the exhaustive commentary given already in the first edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* clearly highlights the cross-cultural references and correlations of tradition in the Grimms’ fairy tales. Granted, in such fairy tales as “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Sleeping Beauty,” or “Cinderella,” by way of example, the Hessian and German lines of descent and patterns of interpretation are presented first. At the same time, however, references to Charles Perrault and the French fairy-tale tradition are always established. Finally, from one edition to the next the Brothers Grimm present and disclose all aspects of international fairy-tale tradition; as is generally

known, the first edition of 1812 and 1815 was followed by the publication of two separate commentary volumes in 1822 and 1856, respectively.

The documentary heritage of the Grimms' fairy-tale collection is of special significance in multiple respects. It stands paradigmatically for a central aspect of the Memory of the World program, that is to say, the promotion of awareness regarding the importance of the documentary materiality of this heritage as it has been passed down. For human societies, the compilation and focusing of oral and written tradition has always been a pivotal factor in the development of identity with completely new cultural patterns of codification and reception. In this respect, German romanticism created important philosophical foundations that still are being seen as a framework of the current understanding of cultural heritage. The fairy-tale collections of the Brothers Grimm may be viewed as the most exemplary and successful realization of this romantic program.

The Kassel Handexemplare (Annotated Reference Copies) of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* have already been part of various national and international exhibitions (most recently in Hanover at Expo 2000 in the German Pavilion), for which individual pages were reproduced in the respective catalogs and in the press coverage (most recently in *National Geographic* magazine). In addition, the Handexemplare have also been presented as part of various television productions (most recently on NHK in Japan). The Kassel Handexemplare come from the personal estate of the Brothers Grimm; the handwritten entries and notes refer, for the most part, to their great Kassel period (until 1829); some later entries were added during their Göttingen (1830–1837/38) and Berlin (1841–1859/63) periods.

After the founding, in 1897, of the Brüder Grimm-Gesellschaft e.V. (Brothers Grimm Association), whose first member was Herman Grimm, son of Wilhelm Grimm, the association acquired the Handexemplare of the Grimm brothers' most important works (including the *German Grammar* of 1819 et al.) for the Kassel Grimm collection. Since 1959 the Kassel Handexemplare have been preserved in the Brüder Grimm-Museum, Kassel.

“Hidden but Not Forgotten”: The Legacy of Hans Christian Andersen in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

In honor of the bicentenary of Hans Christian Andersen's birth, the Cotsen Children's Library of Princeton University will host an academic conference assessing Andersen's impact as the creator of some of the greatest literary fairy tales ever produced. Andersen's reputation remains undiminished, but he has been unaccountably neglected by scholars outside his native Denmark since World War II. Despite a resurgence of interest in the fairy tale as a genre, Andersen's works have inspired surprisingly little criticism in comparison to

those of Madame d'Aulnoy and the *conteuses*, Perrault, or the Grimms. The Cotsen-sponsored program will take a major step toward redressing this apparent critical imbalance by welcoming a roster of international scholars and writers to examine the nature of Andersen's legacy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Featured speakers include Julia Briggs, Hans-Heino Ewers, Jeffrey and Diana Crone Frank, Johan de Mylius, Naomi Woods, Jane Yolen, and Jack Zipes. The program will also include screenings of films based on Andersen's works, professional storytelling, and an exhibition of some of the Andersen-related treasures owned by the Cotsen Children's Library. The conference will take place November 10–12, 2005. For more information visit http://ccl.princeton.edu/Research/e396/hc_andersen.html.