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POSSIBILITĂȚI DE CERCETARE A UNEI REȚELE A CULEGĂTORILOR DE
FOLCLOR.

ABORDAREA ANTOLOGIEI DE FOLCLOR „VADRÓZSÁK” (TRANDAFIRI
SĂLBATICI)

A 19TH CENTURY FOLKLORE COLLECTING NETWORK AS A RESEARCH
PROBLEM.

POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THE VADRÓZSÁK [WILD ROSES]

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The present dissertation is a work that reveals sources, as none of the sources relating to the data collection network or its background, the basic sources from the church history of the Unitarian Church have been revealed or published. In this work I attempted to place these various types of sources in the history of data collection in the 19th century, so that they would be interpretable in the whole picture of the 19th century data collection. For this reason, the data that I could not place into a bigger picture have footnotes where I indicated my own opinion as to where they fit in the puzzle. An example for this type of data was the data that related to *Vadrózsák* only tangentially, which indicated what different collectors thought of each other's results and methodology compared to how they placed their own works. To adumbrate such a system, all of the collections need to be explored, but until we reach that point, I consider it important to collect the peaces of the puzzle. It follows from the genre of this thesis and from the microhistorical perspective it takes that it primarily attempted to explore sources that are related to the data collecting network of the 19th century. Such an aspect was by no means characteristic of the research on folkloristic collections in the 19th century. As a result, numerous private and public collections relating to *Vadrózsák* were explored. Research on sources relating to the everyday life of the collectors of *Vadrózsák* – that is, sources on Transylvanian Unitarian priests and teachers – is included as well.

1. The first chapter of the thesis claims that in the case of 19th century collectors and collections, we face absolutely unknown collectors and texts or collections of texts. To support this claim, I pointed to the fact that we can barely find one or two collectors or collections out of the 30 (or even more, if we count smaller collectors as well) persons listed, whose identity, collection and role in the collection is satisfactorily revealed. In the case of the others, we mostly find half jobs, jobs that were only started but never accomplished; we barely find completed researches, which is also true of the basic sources pertaining to a collection. Many collectors did not even attempt looking up manuscripts. Without exploring these sources of fundamental importance, it is not possible to ask questions about 19th century collections such as: What poetic traditions played a role in the case of individual collectors, who was influenced by these traditions and where, which social class do they belong to? How

did the collectors alter the texts after they noted them, how did the principal collector alter them when the texts were prepared for publishing and are there any observable tendencies pertaining to the place, the social class, education or any other factor in the way they create the texts? In what way did the media, schools and personal relationships affect the participation in the collection? Is there a relation between practicing literature and engagement into collection, and if there is, what kind of relation is it?

2. In the second part of the first chapter I proved, using the canon created in the middle of the 19th century, that its frozenness played a huge role in the fact that the majority of the collectors got shoved to the margins of the canon, and excluded from subsequent research. I proposed, at the same time, that there could have been a significant gap between the folkloristic claims and conception of the collectors formulated (and later accepted as facts) in the center (that is, in Pest) and on the periphery (that is, anywhere far from the center). For this reason, we need to treat the big claims about 19th century collections very carefully (for example claims that collectors did not care about variants and that they only cared about certain genres, that they transformed the texts, etc.).

3. During the overview of the history of research of *Vadrózsák* and János Kriza I studied the seemingly huge bibliography of Kriza, and I tried to replace the oral traditions around the collection with data supported by sources. To achieve this, I had to reevaluate the validity of claims made by those that were considered the major researchers of Kriza in the field, those whose claims, for this reason, were accepted without criticism. One of the two main constructions treated in the thesis is a story about the correspondence of Kriza created by József Faragó (according to which there existed a corpus of letters known only by Faragó, who copied them all, but which got destroyed later, which fact made Faragó the only witness of those letters). The other story was created by Pál Gergely, who was not even a folklorist, yet every folklorist later on accepted his story about the manuscripts kept in the cellar of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for 80 years, part of which was burnt by workers, and the other part became mildewed because of the lack of care. I propose that all these exaggerating claims lacking foundation were due to different theoretical aspects. I am not in the position to judge how frequently one created stories without adequate sources in that era, but I believe that the cases described by myself will be adequate parts of a study presenting the theory of science of the field in the second half of the 20th century.

4. In the following chapters, I tried to illustrate, by means of case studies of varying length, the kinds of contexts one should use to approach the collection system of *Vadrózsák*.

4.1 First, I argued that the collection lead by János Kriza can by no means be considered as an event without any precedence, nor can it be considered the straightforward continuation of collections lead in Hungary. Instead, we can consider the media, trip journals, the relatively open-minded professors of Protestant educational institutes and in the reading circles lead by them (or sometimes even without their leadership), in student societies, student journals and the activities of some Transylvanian intellectuals as factors that had an influence on it. The present thesis aimed at showing the relation between the members of the collector system of *Vadrózsák* and the reading societies of other Unitarian colleges and other reading circles, as well as the signs referring to ethnopoetics.

4.2 In the next chapter, I present the history of the collection of *Vadrózsák* from its start to its publishing, by revealing a correspondence discovered by the end of 2012. Also, with the help of the sources, I present the people who joined the collection, their role and the intensity and scope of their work, in order to show how dynamic the process of the collection was.

4.3 In this chapter I pointed to the possible results one can yield when one has the full range of texts and collectors, and how much such results contradict previous claims form the literature. By uncovering the person and the activity of Elek Lőrinczi, one gets a more elaborate picture than the ones presented by Ágnes Kovács and József Faragó. Based on the texts revealed, it becomes obvious how Mihály Kiss elaborated the tale collection of Elek Lőrinczi. From this it became clear that the folkloric conception of Mihály Kiss and János Kriza was quite the same, while the picture Elek Benedek and László Arany had about folktales were quite different from the one Kriza had in mind.

4.4 The Unitarian teacher Tiboldi István, considered a *bad collector*, I introduced through the roles he played in the social life of Seklerland. By adumbrating the personality of him, the teacher, the poet and the collector, we could get a fuller picture of what kind of a collector he really was, what did Kriza hold of him when he involved Tiboldi (with the help of Elek Jakab) in the collection of folk poetry, and what was the attitude of Tiboldi towards this task. It becomes clear that the claims about Tiboldi as a bad collector were based on mere assumptions. In a short subsection (in which I try to answer the question of how well Tiboldi did that he read the tale collection of György Gaal one year after it got published, going against the thought of Ágnes Kovács, who disapproved of this), we also get an answer to the question of how well-equipped were the public and private libraries with folkloristic collections.

4.5 Lastly, I present the role of Sándor Ürmösi in the collection, the Unitarian pastor who joined the collectors earliest, and I try to answer the question in what ways such a

problematic, autonomous, alcoholic priest could participate in the collection and how well he accommodated to Kriza's guidelines. This microhistoric case study reveals the life and thoughts of a conflict-generating priest through the lens of the scripts of the Unitarian bishop and it lets us see the Unitarian milieu in which the collectors of *Vadrózsák* lead their everyday lives.

KEYWORDS

folklore gathering network; Unitarian; Transylvanian Hungarian; Unitarian College of Cluj; bishop; church historical sources; 19th century; Wold Roses [Vadrózsák]