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## Memory of the World

UNESCO's programme aiming at preservation and dissemination of valuable archive holdings and library collections worldwide

### Germany - Kinder- und



### Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)

**Some elements regarding the provenance, history and ownership of the personal annotated copies (Handexemplare) of the Kinder- und Hausmärchen have been questioned and are presently being studied.**

The "Kinder- und Hausmärchen" (Children's and Household Tales; hereafter KHM) of the Brothers Grimm are, next to the Luther Bible, the most well-known and most widely distributed book worldwide of German cultural history. They are at the same time the first systematic compilation and the first scientific documentation of the entire European and Oriental fairy tale tradition. Translations exist in over 160 languages and cultural dialects from all continents.

The KHM 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 Grimm fairy tales is also a demonstration of their exemplary character, which, rooted in German romanticism, takes up the poetry of man's 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 pre-literary 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 KHM with numerous supplements and notes handwritten by the Grimms themselves, as well as various other handwritten materials.

>> **Website:** [Brüder Grimm-Archiv - the Kassel Annotated Reference Copies \(Kasseler Handexemplare\) of the Children's and Household Tales of the Brothers Grimm](#)

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a global perspective

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