



by Karl-Markus Gauß
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Non-Fiction

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The Laughing Losers of Roana

Die fröhlichen Untergeher von Roana

review

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Paul Zsolnay Verlag was founded in 1924 in Vienna. Its long tradition and high reputation have secured its place as one of the leading publishing houses in the German-speaking world. It places special emphasis on works from Central Europe and other international sources, and its impressive backlist comprises the complete works of Leo Perutz, Graham Greene, John Steinbeck and Colette. Publishing the novels by the bestselling Swedish author Henning Mankell has brought Zsolnay recognition in the crime fiction world. In 1996 Zsolnay Verlag was acquired by Carl Hanser Verlag in Munich, but its offices remain in Vienna.

press quotes

'His books are like a warning shot: diversity and tolerance can only be practised in the present by those who tread carefully with the inheritance of the past.' – *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

'He brings to mind that other great wanderer in forgotten worlds, W.G. Sebald.' – *Süddeutsche Zeitung*

about the author

Karl-Markus Gauß was born in Salzburg in 1954. The city is still home to him, and he is the editor of the academic journal *Literatur und Kritik*. He is a regular contributor to publications such as the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Presse*, *Die Zeit*, and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. His books have been translated into a multitude of languages and among the prizes he has received for his particular brand of reportage, literary travel writing and works on cultural and political subjects are the Charles Veillon European Essay Prize and the Georg Dehio Prize for writings on Eastern Europe. His special area of interest is in minorities on the edges of Europe.

Previous works include:

Das Europäische Alphabet (1998), *Die sterbenden Europäer* (2001); *Die Hundeesser von Svinia* (2004); *Die versprengten Deutschen* (2005) – all Zsolnay Verlag.

rights information

German literature is rich in its tradition of travel writing, and Karl-Markus Gauß is an experienced practitioner in the field. Feted with a host of prizes, he has made the exploration of minorities and the dispossessed on the edges of Europe his area of expertise, and his subjects hitherto have included the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe, Aromanians in the Balkans, Ruthenians in Belarus and the Sephardim in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In his fascinating and perceptive new book, he focuses on three remarkable ethnic groups: the Assyrian community in Sweden, the Cimbrians in Northern Italy, and the Karaites in Lithuania. The essays sparkle with a combination of wit and erudition; moreover they tackle the perennial question of what constitutes nationhood and whether a nation state can still exist in the twenty-first century.

