

## **Inventory-Making in Austria – Presentation of the CD-Rom-Project: “Customs in Salzburg Province” – Zeitgeist – Life Concepts – Rituals – Trends – Alternatives.<sup>1</sup>**

(text: Ulrike Kammerhofer-Aggermann, presented by Maria Walcher)

The following understandings and thoughts have been gathered around our CD-ROM project<sup>2</sup>:

### **Duration and continuation of the CD ROM project:**

- The CD-ROM project entitled “Customs and traditions in the state of Salzburg – spirit of the time, concepts for life, rituals, trends, alternatives” was a singular project that extended over five years. It was made possible by extraordinary subsidies from the federal and state governments, the European region of Salzburg-Berchtesgaden-Traunstein and a multitude of private companies.
- Continuation is not possible on the grounds of the financial and staff situation. Some sections of the CD-ROM do not need to be continued because all essential aspects of the cultural history of everyday life and festive times in the state of Salzburg have been described and presented in encyclopaedic form, as popular essays and as scientific treatises, each in a European context.
- It would be useful to make ongoing records of the long-term change in festive and everyday culture in ten-year intervals, possibly through the collaboration of several institutions. For this, public and private subsidies would again be necessary.

### **Bottom-up and top-down approaches in a permanent dialogue:**

- For us, essential feature of this CD-ROM series were the co-operation between scientists and lay persons, an interdisciplinary overview and the didactic opportunities offered by the medium. In this way, a link was achieved of scientific theories, methods and findings with reflections on popular opinions and projections. Every kind of cultural development, cultural work and cultural safeguarding should be done in this form.
- After all, when cultural work for the preservation and protection of intangible assets is done solely from the bottom up, it runs the risk of preserving and securing only the very last knowledge base as a status that is already limited and altered. With this, many cultural fields, historical knowledge and evaluations could be forgotten, thus turning errors and misinterpretations into an absolute yardstick. Because people measure time by their own lifespan, i.e. “ancient” and “always has been” is what their grandparents experienced and lived through.
- Work with intangible assets, which by themselves constitute a work in progress, always requires looking at historic processes of creation and time-specific views and evaluations. If such work is done only from the top down, it runs the risk of having a theoretical bias and ignoring popular opinions. It is only in the combination of practice and theory that a historical development can be found of foundations and facts, a change and transformation of interpretations and layers of needs specific for a given time and society, and a varying, often simultaneously different social meaning of phenomena of the SELF.
- With this CD-ROM project we included scientists, laypersons and didacticians into the discussion, clarifying issues of observance and evaluation that at first glance may be opposites, but at a closer look and within the dialogue were elucidated to be understandable as different approaches.

### **Cultural work to secure a European understanding:**

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<sup>1</sup> Bräuche im Salzburger Land. Zeitgeist – Lebenskonzepte – Rituale – Trends – Alternativen. Ed.: Lucia Luidold (*Head of the Department of Salzburgs Folk Culture*) and Ulrike Kammerhofer-Agermann (*Head of the Salzburg Institute for European Ethnology*), Melanie Lanterdinger (*Compilation*), Josef Wimmer (*Sound, Videos*), *Designing/Realization: interact!multimedia* (Christian Dobler, Alexander Gautsch). (= Salzburger Beiträge zur Volkskunde 13-16) Salzburg 2002-2005. Nr. 1: Im Winter und zur Weihnachtszeit (*Winter and Christmas Time*) 2002, 3-901681-05-1.—Nr. 2 Vom Frühling bis zum Herbst (*From Spring to Fall*) 2003: 3-901681-06-x.—Nr. 3: In Familie und Gesellschaft (*In Family and Society*) 2005: 3-901681-07-8. – Complete edition with booklet “aufgelistet und erklärt” (*listed and explained*) 2005: 3-901681-08-6. Single: 18,-, Complete: 54,- Euro. [http://www.salzburg.gv.at/themen/bildungsforschung/wissforsch/kontakt\\_forschung.htm](http://www.salzburg.gv.at/themen/bildungsforschung/wissforsch/kontakt_forschung.htm)

<sup>2</sup> This project of 3 CD-Roms was carried out in the years of 2000 to 2004, long before the UNESCO-Convention of 2003 was known in Austria. Nevertheless it seems to be an outstanding way for inventory-making.

- For any cultural work, whether scientific or practical, it is necessary for public bodies to remember their educational obligations. Every effort in this direction is also a step to secure a local as much as European understanding. Similarly, transnational as much as local projects of this kind are necessary in order to offer multi-layered positive responses to people's questions regarding their purpose. Joining up with history, presenting action out of European traditions – these are among the most important elements of European identities today.

#### **Project work:**

- With this, it appears to be particularly useful and to the point to develop cultural projects in collaboration with experts in project work, in the scientific fields and sciences, and in local communities. In such co-operative ventures projects can be developed close to the people's needs. Through such co-operation and proactive contributions it is possible to achieve ready participation and identification on the part of the people.
- Cultural theory insights and outcomes of local as well as regional long-term developments make it clear that traditions and all their expressions will remain living parts of everyday life only for as long as their contents correspond to the people's value perceptions and their understanding of themselves in an everyday context. For this reason it is necessary to ensure an adaptation in the process from the bottom up.
- Through such co-operation it is possible to explain relatively new local developments, which are today shown as historical customs, from historical needs in the context of their time, where such needs no longer exist today or are no longer tenable in view of modern protective regulations or interpretations of the law.

#### **National – international: no longer opposites:**

- The CD-ROM project entitled “Customs and traditions in the state of Salzburg – spirit of the time, concepts for life, rituals, trends, alternatives” also demonstrated that local as well as national idiosyncrasies and international common interests are not necessarily contradictions in terms.
- On the one hand we found that many local and national features and idiosyncrasies are rooted in common European customs and traditions that have developed along different lines – changed in one country, become stylised and strengthened in another. Through such a close historical look we find new aspects of common cultural traditions – such as the Lungau Samson, dating back to the Baroque, which derives from Spanish processions in the high Middle Ages, same as the gigantic figures paraded in Belgium and France.
- On the other hand, a tolerant dialogue and delving into one's own cultural heritage enables insights into the social importance of such traditions, and thus also generates respect for the traditions of others.
- To this end, however, it is necessary on the part of public bodies to enable and encourage such an open exchange aimed at realising the equivalence of cultures. In this sense culture is recognised as a crucial capacity of people to find a purpose that serves to improve and beautify life. Since the 1970s (I.M. Greverus) culture has been seen as a key determinant of humanity.

#### **What we wish for Salzburg, or rather for Austria:**

- We wish that cultural work in the field of everyday cultures is no longer done solely along the lines of:
  - the transfiguring aspects of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Romanticism and Historicism, nature mythology and national wellspring theories);
  - the distorting aspects of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (racist and class struggle instrumentalisation); and
  - the resulting marketing of the 1960s carried out solely for touristic purposes.
 We thus wish for an effort to explore the depths along the dimensions outlined above for the benefit of the present.
- We wish that the cultural heritage is handled in line with today's laws; that its handling includes aspects of today's human rights, nature preservation laws, animal rights, etc.; that it follows the requirements of gender mainstreaming and takes account of a fruitful cohabitation of population groups and cultures.
- We wish that archives and collections of all kinds will continue to be preserved and used, something that appears no longer certain if public funds continue to be reduced and cut.

- Last but not least we wish that all responsible parties are always fully aware that subsidies and projects make for superficial evaluations that may well change living cultures or values in the population – it is necessary to have a care!
- We do not wish for culture to be turned into event items that are only for consumption, nor do we wish for a culture of national self-admiration, demarcation or presumption.
- For these reasons we hope that UNESCO's activities will provide support in safeguarding our intangible heritage
  - by way of safe archiving,
  - by way of its introduction into university and school curricula,
  - by way of research projects,
  - as well as an active cultural work that chiefly disseminates knowledge and personality-developing experience,
  - and thus provides an impetus for further activities at the individual and personal level.