



Berlin, April 21, 2017

SPK Appeals U.S. District Court Decision on Guelph Treasure Art Restitution Lawsuit

The *Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, or SPK) and the Federal Republic of Germany were named in a lawsuit (*Philipp and Stiebel vs. Federal Republic of Germany and Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz*) on February 23, 2015 filed before the United States District Court in Washington, D.C., seeking restitution of a collection of medieval relics known as the “*Welfenschatz*” or “Guelph Treasure”. SPK believes the case should not be heard in U.S. court and therefore filed a Motion to Dismiss. On March 31, 2017, the judge issued a decision denying several elements of the motion, and today SPK will file an appeal of this decision.

Prof. Dr. Hermann Parzinger, President of SPK, said: “SPK’s appeal of the U.S. District Court’s decision reflects our long-held belief that the *Welfenschatz* case should not be heard in U.S. Court. We also maintain that the Guelph Treasure’s sale in 1935 was not a forced sale due to Nazi persecution, and that this case is without merit. This view is based on the thorough research we’ve conducted, and was confirmed by the German ‘Advisory Commission on the return of cultural property seized as a result of Nazi persecution, especially Jewish property’, which concluded in 2014 that restitution in this case was not appropriate.

“SPK’s long-standing practice shows that we are committed to the fair and just resolution of legitimate claims to Nazi-confiscated art, consistent with the Washington Conference Principles – this has not changed.”

Since 1999, claimants alleging Nazi-looted art have submitted more than 50 restitution claims to SPK, which has responded by returning more than 350 works of art and more than 1,000 books from its collections. Those restituted objects include a van Gogh drawing, a work by Munch, and “*Der Watzmann*” by Caspar David Friedrich.

SPK is represented in this matter in the United States by the law firm of Wigin and Dana.

Further information about the Guelph Treasure and a detailed historical review of the sale in 1935, based on SPK’s provenance research: www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/en/priorities/provenance-research-and-issues-of-ownership/in-focus-the-guelph-treasure.html

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