



## Press Release

### **The Advisory Commission recommends to the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin not to restitute the *Portrait of Alfred Kerr* by Lovis Corinth to the heirs of Robert Graetz**

### **Appointment of a new member to the Advisory Commission**

22 July 2021

1. The Advisory Commission on the return of cultural property seized as a result of Nazi persecution, especially from Jewish property, chaired by Prof. Hans-Jürgen Papier, decided unanimously on 12 July 2021 in the case of the heirs of Robert Graetz versus Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin to recommend that the painting *Portrait of Alfred Kerr* by Lovis Corinth not be restituted to the heirs of Robert Graetz.

The painting was part of the extensive art collection of Robert Graetz. Graetz was a successful entrepreneur and partner in the company Glass & Graetz oHG in Berlin. Because of his Jewish ancestry, he and his family were persecuted individually and collectively. His children from his first marriage managed to escape abroad; the son of his second wife, Bluma Graetz, was taken to England on a Kindertransport. After the invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, Bluma Graetz was classified as an "enemy of the state" because of her nationality and extradited to Russia via Turkey, where she had to perform forced labor for six years. Robert Graetz was deported on 14 April 1942 on the 14<sup>th</sup> Transport to the Trawniki concentration camp near Lublin. A last message to his daughter has survived from the Warsaw Ghetto, dated 16 June 1942. He was declared dead on 31 December 1945.

In light of the Graetz family's fate of persecution, the Commission assumes that most of the family's extensive art collection was lost during National Socialism as a result of persecution. In the opinion of the Advisory Commission, however, it has not been demonstrated with sufficient probability that the painting in dispute was also seized from Robert Graetz as a result of persecution and that he may have been the primary victim. In addition, a settlement concluded in 1957 precludes the restitution of the property in this case. In this settlement, the heirs of Robert Graetz reached an agreement with the owners of the painting at the time regarding the sale of the painting to the

Schiller Theater. On the basis of the settlement, the heirs of Robert Graetz received part of the proceeds of the sale as compensation. In its overall assessment, the Advisory Commission has therefore come to the conclusion that the painting is not to be restituted to the heirs of Robert Graetz.

However, the Advisory Commission attaches importance to the statement that the history of the painting is linked with three – if one adds the sitter, with four – fates of oppression and persecution. The Advisory Commission recommends that the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin acknowledge this provenance in an appropriate manner in its future display of the *Portrait of Alfred Kerr*.

The complete recommendation is available at [beratende-kommission.de](http://beratende-kommission.de).

2. In agreement with the ministers of culture and the cultural senators of the federal states and the national municipal associations, Monika Grütters, Minister of State for Culture, has appointed the former State Premier of North-Rhine Westphalia, Professor Jürgen Rüttgers, to the Advisory Commission on the return of cultural property seized as a result of Nazi persecution, especially from Jewish property. The appointment of a new member had become necessary following the retirement of Prof. Dietmar von der Pfordten.

Beratende Kommission  
im Zusammenhang mit der Rückgabe  
NS-verfolgungsbedingt entzogenen Kulturguts,  
insbesondere aus jüdischem Besitz

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