

Castle Schlitz: Fountain once stolen by the Nazis?

by Eckhard Kruse

The famous nymphs fountain (“Nymphenbrunnen”) in the park of Castle Schlitz, supposedly got here after its expropriation by the Nazis. However, owner of the castle, Armin Hoeck, expressed doubts regarding the allegations made by a Berlin lawyer.

Hohen Demzin. Lots of people “tied the knot” at the nymphs fountain. Countless wedding pictures were taken here. Owner of Castle Schlitz in the municipality of Hohen Demzin, Armin Hoeck, knows that only too well. But suddenly there is a big question mark over the idyll and future of the famous fountain in the park of Castle Schlitz. A Berlin law firm investigates claims of heirs of Jewish newspaper publisher Rudolf Mosse. The fountain is believed to have once been in the courtyard of the Berlin Mosse-Palace and been stolen and auctioned along with 400 other art objects by the Nazis in 1934. The fountain was supposedly taken down and reconstructed in the park of Castle Schlitz in 1935. We are pretty sure about this, says lawyer Prof. Dr. Jan Hegemann. In his view the fountain counts as looted art. Actually the fountain is called: “Three Dancing Girls.” It was built in 1903 by sculptor Walter Schott for Rudolf Mosse. In 1935, banker Emil Georg von Strauß supposedly was the owner of the art object. According to the lawyer, he put up the fountain in the park of his Castle Schlitz. Eversince, tourists and locals enjoy it. Because today, the park is open to the public, stresses Armin Hoeck. “This topic comes to me as news,” says the Castle owner. He assumes that its previous owner lawfully purchased the fountain. He questions the statements made by the lawyers. “It has yet to be proven if that is indeed the fountain,” emphasizes Armin Hoeck. As several copies exist. In addition to that he would like to know whether the fountain had been expropriated and auctioned or had just been purchased. Until then he will not worry about this. However, he would be the last one not to be open to this topic, should everything that was alleged be in fact proven. “But I will do everything to make sure that the fountain stays at Castle Schlitz,” stresses Hoeck. He is also bothered by the fact that there are people who try to make money off such restitution claims. Even if expropriation by the Nazis can be proven, it is not sure that the fountain will disappear from Castle Schlitz. According to the lawyer, there will be negotiations. The heirs will possibly settle for compensation.