Title:
Final settlement of the dispute between the Swiss Cantons of Zurich and Saint-Gall regarding cultural goods transferred from Saint-Gall to Zurich during the Battles of Villmergen (27 April 2006)

Content:
Thanks to the intervention of a mediator team from the Swiss Confederation as provided for in Art. 44 (3) of the Swiss Constitution, the dispute between the Cantons of Zurich and Saint-Gall over cultural objects displaced during the religious wars of 1712 (“Battles of Villmergen”) was ultimately settled in April 2006 by an inventive settlement agreement after 8 years of unsuccessful negotiations between representatives of the two Swiss Cantons. In the Peace Treaty of 15 June 1718, Zurich had agreed to return most of the cultural objects taken from the Abbey of Saint-Gall, except for some 100 items, such as manuscripts, books, paintings, astronomical devices and the Prince-Abbot Bernhard Muller’s cosmographical Globe. Subsequent requests by Saint-Gall addressed to Zurich in 1735 for the return of the remaining books and manuscripts and in particular of the Terrestrial and Celestial Globe remained unsuccessful. Zurich subsequently denied having taken these objects during the religious wars. The negotiations were triggered as late as 1996 by a letter from a reader to the editor of a journal from Saint-Gall, claiming for the Canton’s ownership of the cultural goods that had remained in the Central Library and National Museum in Zurich. The letter raised a public debate, which induced the involvement of the Cantonal Executive Council of Saint-Gall. Only then did it become a concern for both Cantons which apparently had forgotten about the matter long ago.

See also: Anne Laure Bandle, Raphael Contel, Marc-André Renold, “Case Ancient Manuscripts and Globe – Saint-Gall and Zurich,” Platform ArThemis (http://unige.ch/art-adr), Art-Law Centre, University of Geneva

Settlement full text (German)