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# Copying the World's Emperor: Dinglinger's Great Moghul and the French Model of Absolute Power

**Abstract**   The kings and princes of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Europe were steeped in the desire for absolute power. The most ambitious and successful ruler among them was Louis XIV. In Asia, Aurangzeb, the acting Great Moghul, was known as his equivalent. Both used the potential of courtly representations not only to illustrate, but to legitimize their claim to power. In order to document their grandeur and immortality, they let pictures of themselves be distributed; some images of the Great Moghul even reached Europe, where they were copied for travel literature. Johann Melchior Dinglinger, goldsmith at the court of the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland Augustus the Strong, used those images spread via print media to create his masterpiece *The Throne of the Great Moghul*. Dinglinger's aim was not to exhibit an exact effigy of the historical Great Moghul Aurangzeb and his splendid court, but to depict absolute power. However, the absolute monarch is inimitable. This article pursues Dinglinger's strategy to meet the problem of how to imitate the inimitable. For this, he used both formal and stylistic devices and imperial concepts of representation. The latter included Dinglinger's presentation of his cabinet piece to the king, which became a key moment in the understanding of the art work. It was that moment when Augustus the Strong's desire for absolute power was satisfied, comparable to the situation when the transsubstantiation of Louis XIV in juxtaposition with his portrait took place, as described by Louis Marin in his thesis on the portrait of the king. Ultimately, Dinglinger applied the practice of copying in order to erase the original.

**Keywords**   Copy, inimitability, Johann Melchior Dinglinger, Louis XIV, Louis Marin

## Introduction

In 1701, the court jeweller Johann Melchior Dinglinger began to work on his masterpiece *The Throne of the Great Moghul* (fig. 1), which he devoted to Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. In the same year, Hyacinthe Rigaud created what is probably the most famous portrait of Louis XIV, depicting him as an absolute ruler (fig. 2), and which hence-forth substituted for the king in his absence.

At this time, Roger de Piles had seen in his writings on art theory that color was brought into the strict rules of the French royal academy by occa-sionally paying tribute to the coloring of the Venetians and the qualities of the Dutch, in addition to the classical ideal. Before it was unanimously agreed upon—under the leadership of the first court painter and director of the *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*, Charles Le Brun, and the court historian and art critic, André Félibien—that Greek and Roman antiquities represented the only worthy model from which nature could be reproduced. In terms of the basic principles inherent to art—composition, expression, design, and color—such antiquities combined these in a harmonious way, and always with an emphasis on *dessin* over *couleur*. The most important tool of the budding artist therefore was copying, for nothing held so much weight as the right choice of model. Seldom were theory and practice so closely aligned as at the Royal Academy under the rule of Louis XIV.

As they were political enemies and never related by blood or marriage, the relationship between Louis XIV and Augustus the Strong remained always distant. Nevertheless, there was no greater model for the Saxon Elector-King than Louis XIV, who succeeded—by the means of his centralist government and his clever machinery of representation—to come closer to the ideal of the absolute ruler than any of the other ambitious princes in Europe. To realize his plans for the establishment of an absolute, con-trolled state, Augustus the Strong risked a lot. He converted to Catholicism to obtain the Polish crown, became entangled in daring warfare to defend his territory, and spent vast sums of the national budget to win the loy-alty of the nobility. Altogether, his political and military efforts remained—more or less—unsuccessful in the course of this reign. In fact, he attained more success in a different field—art. Shortly before the end of his life, Augustus the Strong was able to boast to being the owner of the richest treasury in Europe. Dinglinger's *Throne of the Great Moghul* is a mirror of this wealth, which is expressed not only in material categories, but also in its uniqueness and artistic perfection.

The treasury contained more than what we might call art in the tradi-tional sense; Dinglinger's cabinet piece has not really been considered to fall within the category of art, but as "a special genre of the virtuoso, courtly Kunstkammer object."[1] Dinglinger himself referred to Augustus the Strong

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1   Warncke 1988, 159: "die Sondergattung des virtuosen, höfischen Kunstkammer-stückes."

Figure 1: Johann Melchior Dinglinger, *The Throne of the Great Moghul,* Dresden, Green Vault.

as a Maecenas who admired and supported "all liberal arts and especially the art of enamellists and goldsmiths."[2] Dinglinger therefore associated

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2   J. M. Dinglinger, letter to Augustus the Strong from 11 October 1707, published in: Watzdorf 1962, vol. II, 388: "alle freyen Künste und sonderlich gegen die emaillir- und Goldarbeiter Kunst."

Figure 2: Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Louis XIV,* 1701/1702, Oil on Canvas, 179 × 190 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre.

his handicraft with the liberal arts, as well as with painting, graphics, sculpture, and architecture, which have helped artists to gain prestige by being part of the liberal arts and the academy since the Renaissance.[3] Although goldsmiths were not trained at the academy, their discipline was closely related to that of graphic artists. Cutlers and goldsmiths frequently became professional printmakers and engravers.[4] The goldsmith's art at the European courts served primarily the representational purposes of the king or prince. Such costly and complex imperial representations were not simply meant to decorate his power, but functioned as an important tool to enforce power interests and legitimize claims of sovereignty. Preparations for lavish festivals and court ceremonies were among Dinglinger's tasks at the Saxon court. Consequently, his work must always be understood in the context of a comprehensive ceremonial choreography.

If we approach the theme of the copy in the case of *The Throne of the Great Moghul*, we must critically examine the tools available to us as art historians. My study will not provide novel or detailed insights into Dinglinger's cabinet piece, but will instead demonstrate that the form-analytical comparison—the most common method of art history analysis—is dependent on today's inadequate concept of art and needs further resources in order to fully appreciate how Dinglinger's work utilized the concept of copying.

Investigating Dinglinger's piece as an object means to consider its historical, social, political, and economic context in dependence on the categories of time and space. The object obtains a history and this history enables comparison. We compare past and present, here and there or, sometimes, original and copy. This is a proven method and provides the scholar with an important tool. However, what happens when the presentation of an object like Dinglinger's cabinet piece becomes part of art itself? What happens to the categories of time and space, to historical comparisons in regard to performing a ceremonial act that is linked to its present time alone? This temporal component has also become apparent in analyzes of language and movement of the present volume (Sanchez-Stockhammer, Schwan). An original cannot be traced due to an indeterminate time span, so that there seem to exist only copies of copies. This immeasurability of time that passes between original and copy, or copy and copy, and the resulting assumed simultaneity result in the deletion of the original. Dinglinger's declared intention was to display absolute power which, a priori, excludes comparability, in the form of a unique art work. His goal was inimitability, what can basically be compared to the

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3   About 50 years later, the fine arts would be permanently disconnected from the liberal arts at the instigation of leading French intellectuals and aesthetics (Batteux, d'Alembert). See Pochat 1986, 351–354.

4   Dinglinger came from a family of knife makers in Biberach, but was trained to be a goldsmith by his maternal uncle in Ulm. Some engravings by him also survive. See Watzdorf 1962, 15: "Oft gingen aus dem Messerschmiedehandwerk kunsthandwerkliche Spezialisten, Eisenschneider, Kupferstecher, Medailleure hervor – man denke an die Sadeler! –, die engste Zusammenarbeit mit dem Messerschmied verband. Häufig war der Goldschmied der Dritte im Bunde."

non-reproducibility of ID cards, banknotes, or credit cards as described by Schröter in this volume. Here, non-reproducibility served purposes of identity protection and preserved the social and political order. With these aspects of time, simultaneity, and comparability (in the context of the copy) in mind, the present essay will analyze Dinglinger's cabinet piece on the basis of representation strategies, including court ceremonies, as part of the art work and demonstrate the limits of object-related analyzes in art history. After a brief description of Dinglinger's *Throne of the Great Moghul*, we will select some formal aspects and trace the transformation of a ruler figure with the help of a chain of copies and variations. This will be followed by an in-depth study of the representative aspect of that work in dependence of an exemplary paper by André Félibien, royal chronicler to Louis XIV. Finally, we will revert to Dinglinger's cabinet piece and try to reveal his approach to copy and inimitability.

## Description of Dinglinger's *Throne of the Great Moghul*

It took Dinglinger seven years to complete *The Throne of the Great Moghul* and to finally give it to his royal addressee in 1708. This was only two years before Johann Friedrich Böttger discovered the recipe for making hard paste porcelain (see Weber). The elaborate masterpiece was housed in the electoral treasury—the *Geheime Verwahrung* (secret depot)—which was expanded into a publicly accessible museum known as the *Green Vault* in 1724. Within the latter, Dinglinger's showpiece initially held a prominent place in the *Pretiosensaal* (precious jewellery hall), and later on in the even more splendid *Juwelenzimmer* (jewel room).[5] Augustus the Strong had also opened his *Kunst- und Wunderkammer* to a select audience in the years before.

The cabinet piece by Dinglinger shows the birthday party of the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb (1658–1707), a contemporary of Augustus the Strong, which was celebrated with the ceremonial weighing of the ruler. The emperor wanted his subjects to weigh him in gold, silver, and rice, which were distributed among the poor afterwards. On the same occasion, the emperor's grandees paid homage to him with valuable presents. The representation of this event, which is composed of 165 tiny gold enamel figures (including animals, vessels, and splendor gifts) and was originally decorated with 5,223 diamonds, 189 rubies, 175 emeralds, 53 pearls, two cameos, and one sapphire,[6] contains a multitude of information. Dinglinger fell back to various sources in order to obtain this, including reading of "curious travel accounts of foreign and distant countries and nations,"[7]

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5  Cf. Syndram 1996, 15–16.
6  See e.g. Warncke 1988, 160.
7  "curiosen Reissen-Beschreibungen frembder und weit entlägner Länder und Nationen."

as he noted in his letter to the elector-king from 11 October 1707, and of ancient writers,[8] as he stated in his paper with a description of his cabinet piece.[9] In the older art historical investigations on the subject, especially by Erna von Watzdorf and Walter Holzhausen,[10] the various sources, such as the accounts and compendia by Athanasius Kircher, Joan Nieuhof, Olfert Dapper, Wouter Schouten, Arnoldus Montanus, Simon de Vries, Francois Bernier, and Jean-Babtiste Tavernier, were exactictly researched and categorized as travel literature.[11] Olfert Dapper's work *Asia,* translated into German in 1681, proved to be Dinglinger's main source, with which we will deal later. Dinglinger was able to use the well-stocked library of Augustus the Strong, as well as the books owned by his brother and collaborator Georg Christoph Dinglinger, for instance *Ost- und westindische Dinge* by Simon de Vries.[12] Dinglinger obviously preferred the rich image material of the travel literature, since the additional information that he received in the accompanying text passages helped him to create the total composition, the architectural arrangement, the individual figures, the costumes, the jewellery, and the vessels. It would, at least, explain why he did not use the album of Indian miniatures that was in Augustus' possession since the 1690s.[13]

The most recent and convincing study on *The Throne of the Great Moghul*, by Carsten-Peter Warncke and published in 1988, perfectly reconstructs the original composition of the mostly mobile objects on the basis of Dinglinger's paper describing his work.[14] It differs from previous approaches, particularly that of von Watzdorf, for which an engraving of the cabinet piece from 1739 by Christian Philipp Lindemann was decisive for the reconstruction.[15] The ascending architectural ensemble—opened to the viewer in front of a multi-unit reflecting back panel—is arranged on three floors, the quality of which increase simultaneously with their closeness to the Moghul emperor—the main focus of the depiction. The lower and middle levels are of silver and the upper one is made of gold. At the end of the tapered stairs, one can see the magnificent Peacock Throne (described in detail by Bernier and Tavernier) on which the Great Moghul sits cross-legged in an oriental manner, holding his sceptre in his right hand and distantly overlooking the event. His fanciful crowned head is

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8   Watzdorf 1962, vol. I, 131 and 134.
9   Watzdorf 1962, vol. II, 392–400.
10  Watzdorf 1962; Holzhausen 1939.
11  See *References*.
12  See Watzdorf 1962, vol. I, 134; Comp. Holzhausen 1939, 93 and esp. fn. 2: He maintained that all relevant books were in Georg Christoph's library and assumed a comparable one was available in Johann Melchior's house; J. M. Dinglinger was friends with the royal librarian Rüger.
13  Dating from 1689, it was first mentioned in the inventory of the cabinet of prints and drawings, Dresden, from 1738.
14  Warncke 1988; Dinglinger's tract in Watzdorf 1962, vol. II, 392–400. Syndram (2014, 102–113) published a transcription of the earliest copy of Dinglinger's description.
15  Watzdorf 1962, vol. I, 135, fig. 153.

framed by a big, golden sun with a halo and a majestic lion at its centre.[16] It is not the task of this paper to reconstruct the structure of the entire work again, so that, at this point, only the most important references to the involved characters and objects are provided in order to convey an overall impression and a basic understanding of the work, which will be necessary for further understanding of my investigation. By following Warncke's construction, the show of the dignitaries is performed hierarchically: the most prominent dignitary moves into the parade on the lowest level, while the lower ranking one has already reached the final section of the stairs in front of the throne: the *Chan Chanon* (Prince of Princes) and the *Mir Miron* (Lord of Lords), with palanquin carriers and entourage on the lower level, the *Chani Alem* (Prince of the People) and the *Primo Vezier* (Imperial Chancellor), with canopy carriers on the middle level, and the *Wasan bassi* (Treasurer), on the lower stairs and the *Omrahm Nabab* (Governor) on the upper stairs of the upper, golden floor.[17] Servants, followers, and other visitors of lesser rank move between these figures, carrying gifts or admiring them.

Dinglinger divided his work, and correspondingly his paper, into three chapters, beginning with the "magnificence of the Great Moghul and his gorgeous throne,"[18] followed by the "splendour of the solemn parade of the grandees and their presents,"[19] and concluded by the elucidation of the hidden meanings of some of the presents which could only be deciphered after reading the ancient books. He did not fail to point out that such a court did not only exist in the past, but even today, particularly in the empire of the Great Moghul on the occasion of his birthday. The seemingly mythical richness of the oriental rulers had been brought closer to Augustus the Strong not only in terms of time, but of space, too, with the aid of Dinglinger's cabinet piece whose cost and effort were worthy of its model.[20] According to Warncke, baroque texts required a thorough knowledge of their contemporaries, such that they only reported on what was deemed necessary.[21] For this reason, Dinglinger mentioned those events, characters, gifts, and their meanings that were not based on common iconography, but on Oriental and antique sources.

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16  See Dinglinger's tract in Watzdorf 1962, vol. II, 392, in which he describes it as a symbol of the Great Moghul.
17  The proper names and their meaning are taken from Dinglinger's tract and can be found—with the same spelling—in Dapper, 1681, 149–150.
18  "Magnificenz des grossen Moguls und dessen prächtige[n] Thron"
19  "Splendeur des solennen Aufzugs derer Grandium nebst ihren Praesenten"
20  See the introduction of his tract in Watzdorf 1962, vol. II, 392. See also his letter of 11 October 1707 (Watzdorf 1962, vol. II, 388).
21  Warncke, 1988, 165.

## The object-related copy

Within Dinglinger's total conception, we will focus on a single figure among the countless others (fig. 3).

It is located on the left margin of the balustrade on the middle level, seen under a canopy carried by a servant. The figure is clear enough to be recognized in the foreground performance, but it is apparently too mean to be considered closely. It is among those figures that were marginally mentioned by Dinglinger at the end of the second chapter of his tract: "And, finally, there are eleven figures or dignitaries who observe the court and the presents as spectators."[22] Holzhausen, who discovered the graphic models for Dinglinger's *The Throne of the Great Moghul*, recognized the model for the entire spatial construction of the court in an engraving in Olfert Dapper's *Asia*, engraved by J. A. Bauer.[23] Beyond this, he learned that Dapper's portraits of the Moghul emperors *Shah Salim* (Jahangir) and



Figure 3 (left): Johann Melchior Dinglinger, *Audience Visitor* (Detail of Fig. 1).
Figure 4 (right): Anonymous, *Aurangzeb,* engraving, in Dapper, Olfert, 1672.

22  "Und letztlich sind noch Eilff andere Figuren oder Persohnen von Condition, als Spectatores, die den Etât und die Geschenke betrachten." Dinglinger, tract in Watzdorf 1962, vol. II, 393.
23  Dapper, 1681, fig. 15.

*Shah Orangzeb* (Aurangzeb) (fig. 4) emerged again in Dinglinger's work as audience members, with the latter being identical to our selected figure. Holzhausen sums his observation up as follows: "In this manner, the Great Moghul emerges twice at his birthday party, since he also sits on his throne!"[24]

However, this was not the case. In Dinglinger's work, which was created with several layers of meaning and was meticulously thought through, not only was each figure (including the presents) iconographically scrutinized, but so was every detail.[25] Consequently, if Dinglinger used the portrait of Aurangzeb as described by his main source, Olfert Dapper, but did not integrate it into its designated place, namely the throne of the Great Moghul, it would have been for a special reason.



Figure 5: Johann Melchior Dinglinger, *Aurangzeb* (Detail of Fig. 1).

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24  "Auf diese Weise kommt der Großmogul, da er ja auch auf seinem Thron sitzt, an seinem Geburtstagsfest zweimal vor!" Holzhausen 1939, 100.
25  We can conclude this from Dinglinger's total concept and his paper. Cf. Warncke's interpretation (Warncke 1988, 168–180).

Let us first look at Dinglinger's Aurangzeb on the throne (fig. 5) in comparison with the figure designed after Dapper's model (fig. 3). Apart from the crown, sceptre, and coat, it is especially the attitude that distinguishes both figures considerably. Dinglinger's Aurangzeb followed an illustration in Wouter Schouten's *Ost-Indische Reyse* from 1676.[26] In it, the emperor sits cross-legged on a cushion and is supported by another from behind. His arms are bent, his left hand resting on his thigh and his right holding the sceptre. His robe and turban—provided that it is freed of its fancy crown—are definitely related to contemporary Indian pictures of the Moghul fashion. The manner of the sitting position—as seen here in the example of Aurangzeb—is only known from Indian models of rulers or gods, although Schouten did not revert to an Indian miniature or sculpture, but to Dutch copies of them in travel literature. Dapper's Aurangzeb, in contrast, poses in a swinging contrapposto, his left arm on his hip and his right one holding the sceptre. The side-closures of his robe (*jama*) and trousers (*payjama*), the rich sash, and the tightly bound turban show that the engraver knew Moghul fashion from having viewed Indian miniatures. His attitude, however, is far from the typical posture of a Moghul potentate in Indian paintings in which his head and legs are in profile and his body in a three-quarter view. In fact, the pose of Dapper's figure resembles the posture which was attributed to nobles (and particularly rulers) in European paintings and which eventually became the epitome of an absolute ruler, with Hyacinthe Rigaud's portrait of Louis XIV of 1701/02 (fig. 2).[27] Therefore, it is obvious that Dinglinger chose a model that could be easily distinguished from the European and especially the French repertoire of courtly gestures and attitudes. It has not yet become clear why Dinglinger copied Dapper's figure of Aurangzeb and integrated it as a dignitary of inferior rank within the ceremonial act.

## The history of the copy and its original

To answer the question of why Dinglinger used Dapper's Aurangzeb in this fashion, it is necessary to examine earlier representations of Moghul emperors. As the few portraits of the Great Moghul in travel literature from the first half of the seventeenth century that actually followed Indian miniatures had never been copied by later authors,[28] the circle of relevant publications can be limited to only one book, *China illustrata*, by Athanasius Kircher, from 1667, in which the portrait of the Moghul Emperor Akbar can be found (fig. 6).

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26  Schouten 1676, book III, 165. See Holzhausen 1939, 100.
27  Rigaud's portrait was often copied throughout Europe and had become famous.
28  In Laet 1631, title page; Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas 1625 (two engravings in the travel account by Edward Terry); Boulaye-le-Gouz 1653; Comp. with Mitter 1977, 68–72.
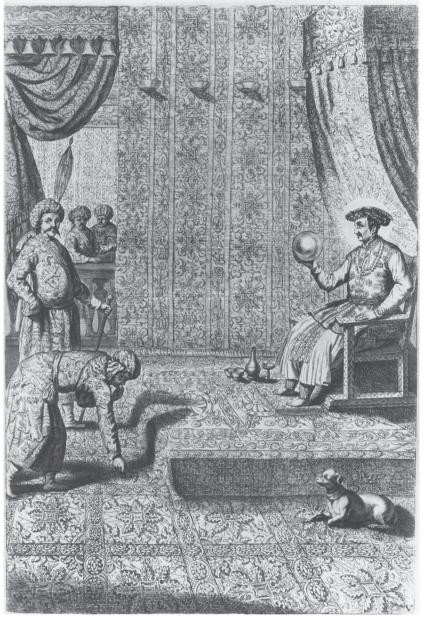
Figure 6: Anonymous, *Akbar* [Jahangir], engraving, in Athanasius Kircher's
*China monumentis,[...] illustrata,* 1667.

Figure 7: Abul Hasan (?), *Jahangir,* 1617, Gouache on Cotton, 210 × 141 cm, private collection.

Major parts of Dinglinger's description of the sun pyramid were based on Kircher's work. Olfert Dapper also used Kircher's book several times, both in his literary descriptions and for the illustrations. Consequently, we have to assume that Dapper as well as Dinglinger knew Kircher's portrait of the Moghul emperor.

In the portrait, Akbar sits in profile on a throne of European provenance, his bare feet resting on a low footstool. His head is framed by a radiant nimbus; his raised hand holds a large globe. At his feet are a long-necked bottle and three drinking vessels. The figure of the Great Moghul is covered by a canopy. The whole throne area is on a platform, providing the king's body with adequate space. The platform is surrounded by richly decorated room elements, carpets and an opened curtain. A dog crouches in front of the podium next to the sovereign. Four visitors are present in the audience, of which only the front man attends to the emperor with a deep bow. Two of the remaining three visitors look at the viewer; the last one turns to his neighbor.

Athanasius Kircher was not only a well-known author and polymath, but also an enthusiastic collector.[29] His so-called *Museum Kircherianum* in Rome, where he spent most of his life at the Jesuit College, was one of the largest and most famous cabinets of curiosities of his time. In a collection catalogue,[30] a portrait of *Regum Tartariae* that is mentioned within the chapter *De variis Picturis & Effigiebus* could have served as a model for Kircher's engraving. He himself wrote in his book, "The fathers sent to Rome a picture or likeness of him [Akbar] in the dress which he used for public audiences."[31] A few decades ago, an unusual miniature (life-sized and applied to cotton) with the portrait of Jahangir, son of Akbar, was sold at an auction.[32] This picture (fig. 7) was undoubtedly copied by Kircher's engraver.[33]

It helps to distinguish the different models of the engraving from each other. Since a detailed comparison between original and copy is not relevant to our present study, it should suffice to refer to two key aspects: First, the Indian model is limited solely to the figure of the Great Moghul, including the throne, nimbus, globe, footstool (in the original a folded carpet), and the drinking vessels. Everything else—canopy, platform, decoration, and other figures—sprang from the imagination of the European engraver, or at least from European models. Second, a certain communication is evident between the ruler, the audience member standing at the left margin and focusing on the viewer, and the viewer him or herself by the view coordinates. The emperor looks in the direction of the

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29  The list of recent publications on Athanasius Kircher is very long. I select only a few of them: Fletcher 1988; Lo Sardo 1999; Lo Sardo 2001; Findlen 2004.
30  Sepibus 1678.
31  Kircher 1987, 71.
32  Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures 1995, 74–83. Last sold: Bonhams, *Islamic and Indian Art London*, New Bond Street, 5 April 2011, auction 18801, lot 322.
33  See Crill and Jariwala 2010, 76–77. For a detailed investigation of the portrait, see in Forberg 2015, 144–148 and Forberg 2016, 227–230.

visitor, who, on the other hand, passes his gaze in an optical extension to the viewer. Eye contact with the viewer was a well-established iconographic instrument in European art meant to highlight the authenticity of contemporary events, in this case the encounter with the Great Moghul. What is even more important for our study is the juxtaposition of the two figures in a clearly distinguished body language that, seemingly for demonstration purposes, separates two cultures from each other. Akbar, whom we know (thanks to the original) to be Jahangir, has his head and feet, following the norm, in profile and his upper body in a three-quarter view. These aspects of the pose belonged to the rigid rules of portraiture at the courts of the Moghul empire and its surrounding principalities. The visitor, however, displaying his whole body in a three-quarter view, has his right arm on his hip, while the other rests on a stick. We remember observing the same pose in Dinglinger's audience visitors and Dapper's portrait of Aurangzeb. The pose is repeated in courtly representations in European art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as persistently as the Moghul pose is repeated in portraits of Indian princes. It had initially been developed from discussions and descriptions of the nobleman, particularly after the example of *Il Cortegiano*, by Baldassare Castiglione.[34] It was essential to translate the—taken literally—indescribable elegance of the nobleman, which so obviously distinguished him from the rest of the society, into a picture. Seventeenth-century authors agreed on the subject, stating that it was "hard to describe" and "cannot be imitated."[35] Castiglione himself based his work on the assumption that grace "is often a gift of nature and the heavens."[36] Formulations of grace were soon followed by those of "civility," which were translated by contemporary painters into natural movement and an elegant *contrapposto*.[37] Anthonis van Dyck seems to have found the most convincing depiction at his time, when he made the *Portrait of Charles I, King of England at the Hunt* (about 1635),[38] although he did not invent this posture, but was rather inspired by diverse portraits of noblemen and rulers by Titian, on which some portraits by Bronzino and Parmigianino might also have depended.[39] Although this posture was generally used in place of the grandeur of the nobleman, it was especially established at the court of Louis XIV and became a symbol of absolute power as mentioned

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34  Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, first published in 1528 (Castiglione 1528), later translated into numerous European languages and frequently edited throughout the centuries since then.
35  Roodenburg 2004, 10.
36  Roodenburg 2004, 10.
37  Roodenburg 2004, 120.
38  Schneider 1994, 128–131.
39  This posture can be traced to fifteenth-century portraits of aristocrats, particularly in pictures by Piero della Francesca, Antoniazzo Romano, Andrea Mantegna, and Sandro Botticelli, though not in individual portraits. An exception is the famous sculpture of David by Donatello, which is, however, not from a contemporary aristocratic context.

above.[40] It was copied many times by the rulers of neighboring states, just as by Augustus the Strong.[41]

The pose of the nobleman was also popular and distributed in the Netherlands, so that Dapper's choice for the design of his portrait of Aurangzeb is comprehensible. Kircher describes his portrayal of the Great Moghul as follows:

> In a public assembly he gleamed in his majesty. [...] Few monarchs had dressed of similar beauty, for he exhibited himself to view adorned with a diadem made of gold, pearls, and precious stones of great price, and shining like that of a divinity. [...] In his hand he held a sphere, through which he showed himself to be the lord of the world and the greatest power.[42]

What he is describing is the image of an absolute monarch. Dapper had no doubt of the Moghul emperor's absolute power, but probably of the choice of the devices that Kircher used for his representation. Therefore, he dispensed with the Indian model (or its copy in Kircher's book) and replaced it with the ruler type in European portraiture. What we observe in this chain of copies can therefore be called a negotiation with the foreign formulation and style of absolute power, rather than a translation of it.[43] When Dinglinger designed his figure of the visitor at the court of the Great Moghul, he was aware of the fact that a European figure in oriental costume placed within an exotic surrounding did not make an Indian potentate. Moreover, the awareness of a difference between the European and Indian type of an absolute ruler provided him with additional tools for the creation of his multi-layered cabinet piece. Consequently, Dinglinger marginalized the posture of a European potentate—at this time already personified by Louis XIV—in the figure of the audience visitor of inferior rank comparable with Kircher's audience member. This statement is not meant to be a contradiction to the abovementioned portraits of Augustus the Strong, where the "absolutistic contrapposto" was copied following the French model. With his model of the regally seated Great Moghul, Dinglinger created a figure which could clearly be distinguished from European—and particularly from French—models, and which offered an alternative to the inflationary formulation of absolute power. For this reason, the well-informed viewer, like Augustus the Strong (who knew the contemporary travel literature), was able to relate to the transformation of Dapper's original figure of the emperor Aurangzeb that lost the status of the absolute in favor of the rank of a minor court officer. The probable intention behind this transcultural displacement was not the conveyance of an

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40  See Schneider 1994, 132–133.
41  See the portraits by Louis de Silvestre, Augustus's favourite painter.
42  Kircher 1987, 71.
43  Cf. the translation concept demonstrated in Michael Falser's essay in this volume. In addition see Forberg 2015, 10–12, and ibid. 2016, 215–216.

alternative model of the absolute monarch (this is why the term translation would be insufficient), but rather the substitution of a symbolic figurehead (including its posture) with the aid of a non-European "authentic" figure (including its posture). In this formal act, which is based on the comparability of the Indian and the European model, or of the Indian original with its European copy, a political *calculatio* dominates.

The degradation of the European absolutist posture in Dinglinger's work had, therefore, a political dimension within this complex system of representation. Therein, the political position of Saxony-Poland is unmistakably determined by symbolic references to its friends—Russia and Denmark—and its enemy, France. The complex structure of overlapping levels of meaning can only be understood with the aid of concrete knowledge about coronation and welcome ceremonies at the courts of Louis XIV and Augustus the Strong, as would have been known to a courtier of that time, and which Dinglinger could quote from contemporary publications.[44] Dinglinger thus emancipated himself from the French model by developing new creative means, again and again, and confronted the French king with outright hostility, as revealed to the insider by the piece's unambiguous symbolism.[45]

Consequently, Dinglinger's masterpiece not only caused astonishment and admiration among its viewers regarding the immeasurable richness of an Oriental sovereign, but, above this, it demonstrated the superiority of Augustus the Strong as absolute monarch. In the first case, it was enough to check the material quality; the second case required a smart composition of representation strategies. Dinglinger's tract points out that the multi-level courtly representation was part of the artistic achievement of its creator.[46] Due to this fact, the figure of the Moghul emperor, until now analytically considered in terms of form and its copying history only, must be included within an investigation that especially considers courtly representation as a means of establishing and legitimizing absolute power.

## Courtly representation as part of an art work, or, the idea-related copy

The most important tool of courtly representation was imitation. Based on the fact that France served as a (positive or negative) role model, it is worth learning from studies which deal with the royal representations of Louis XIV in order to grasp Dinglinger's idea of copying the imperial court of the

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44  See Museum of Prints and Drawings, Bureau IX, and countless documents of Saxon festivals from the former *Oberhofmarschallamt* in Dresden, which are now conserved in *Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Archiv des Landesamtes für Denkmalpflege, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden*, and in the Museum of Prints and Drawings. See Schnitzer 2000, 12–29, and Miksch 2000.
45  See Warncke 1988, 173–176.
46  Cf. Warncke 1988, 180.

Great Moghul. Augustus stored publications on and descriptions of royal ceremonies at Louis' court separately in a cabinet called *Bureau IX*, at the Museum of prints and drawings.[47] He used these as a source of inspiration or imitation for the preparation of his own festivals.[48]

Historians often point to the fact that the absolute monarch in itself does not and cannot exist, but only the ideal of the absolute monarch is possible. We will first ask what the royal portrait, in this case that of Louis XIV, displays against the background of representations of absolute power. For this purpose, we will look to the famous thesis on the portrait of the king by Louis Marin,[49] which he wrote in continuation of the even more famous thesis on the king's two bodies by Ernst Kantorowicz.[50] Kantorowicz had already observed that royal representation as a political means had become highly important at European courts of the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period. His most remarkable achievement was the discovery of the principle of the king's two bodies, which could be illustrated best with funeral rites. Amy Schmitter summarized his thesis in a few words:

> The dead body in the coffin was no longer the King, for death did not dissolve the King into his two bodies, but merely created a corpse, while the substance of the King's body transferred to that of the effigy in an act of political transubstantiation. [...] As long as no living body bears the Dignity, the effigy seemed to display the real presence of the king qua King. Indeed what one saw when one looked even at the living King was not a natural body at all [...], but the Majesty ordained by God appearing externally.[51]

The two bodies of the king consisted consequently of a human (historical) body and a political body. Instead of the king's two bodies in medieval representational systems, the portrait of the absolute monarch, according to Marin, combines three bodies: a physical historical body, a juridico-political body, and a semiotic sacramental body.[52]

This is preceded by establishing that two different levels of meanings are hidden in the phenomenon of representation: first, representation in the sense of medieval effigies, as a substitute of the living; and second, representation in the sense of absolute power that becomes real only in its representation. Consequently, representation is not only an instrument of power, it *is* power.[53]

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47  Heucher 1738, 96 and following pages. See Schnitzer 2000, 26–27.
48  More details in Schnitzer and Hölscher 2000, esp. 146–177.
49  Marin 2005.
50  Kantorowicz 1957.
51  Schmitter 2002, 413.
52  Marin 1988, 14.
53  Marin 1988, 5–6.

This statement needs further explanation. Power, following Marin, is nothing more than the ability to exert an action on something or someone. It is not an action per se, though. The execution of force (power in the most vulgar and general sense), however, is power through elimination, recognizable in the confrontation with another power. The essence of force is absolute. By means of representation, power will be transferred into signs and legitimized by law. Provided that power is the desire for the absolute of all powers, representation is consequently the imaginary satisfaction of this desire and, at the same time, its real deferred satisfaction. On the basis of different examples, Marin traces the transformation of the desire for absolute power into the imaginary absolute of the monarch. In so doing, he meets inevitably with the theme of the Eucharist, simplified in the declaration "This is my body," which was already essential to Kantorowicz's thesis, where he proved the juridical and political model function of the catholic theology of the *Corpus Mysticum* for the theory of kingship. Marin's main source is the logic by Port-Royal that introduces the contiguity between the Eucharist symbols of Christ and the political signs of the monarch (as in "the portrait of Caesar is Caesar" or "the portrait of Louis XIV is Louis XIV"), but only with the intention to trace an insuperable boundary between them. It is this boundary that the desire for absolute power crosses, with the fantastic representation of the absolute monarch. By crossing this boundary, the body of the king would become visible in three senses, as mentioned above: "as sacramental body it is really present in the visual and written currencies, as historical body it is visible as represented, absence becomes presence again in 'image;' as political body it is visible as symbolic fiction signified in its name, right, and law."[54] The sacramental body, which is the portrait of the king as absolute monarch, resolves the tension between the historical and the political body of the king by arranging the complete exchange between the two of them. How can representation be the satisfaction of this highly-desired absolute power? As Marin stated, "The portrait of the king that the king contemplates offers him the icon of the absolute monarch he desires to be, to the point of recognizing and identifying himself through and in it at the very moment when the referent of the portrait absents himself from it. The king is only truly king, that is, monarch, in images."[55]

Marin's thesis becomes clearer in the example of the portrait of Louis XIV by Charles Le Brun, for whose investigation Marin draws on the writings by André Félibien. The selected portrait of Louis XIV does not exist anymore, but only Félibien's description remains.[56] It is actually, according to Marin, not a description of the portrait, but of the "real" king.[57] He uses the same tools as the painter. He codifies the sublime characteristics of the

54  Marin 1988, 13.
55  Marin 1988, 7–8.
56  Félibien 1671, 85–112.
57  Marin 1988, 208.

king in signs and symbols wherein he locates the mystery of the king. Le Brun added the allegories of abundance, renown, and victory, which Félibien transferred into the sublime features of the king: goodness, majesty, and power. Félibien repeatedly encountered the theme of the copy in his description, which was a depiction of the absolute monarch at the same time. The aim of his depiction was to highlight the inimitability of the king as a logical consequence of his quality as an absolute potentate. The formulation of inimitability can be found in the countless eulogies of different kings and electors in baroque times, which, however, seldom amounted to more than an assertion. In contrast to most contemporary writers, Félibien succeeded in synchronizing the portrait of the king, the representation of the absolute, with the sacramental body of the king and, in consequence, to take it to the same level as the theological discourse on the Eucharist; he praises the real presence of the king's body not in an allegorical, but in a direct sense. Its presence is believed, for it is seen the same way as in the case of Christ. "This is my body" is an absolute statement that has no adequate translation.[58] Nevertheless, Félibien dealt repeatedly with the term "copy" in his description of Le Brun's portrait, obviously without recognizing any contradiction to the postulated inimitability of the king.

Louis XIV, as well as Augustus the Strong and probably the rest of the ambitious kings in Europe, compared themselves preferably with Alexander the Great. In his description of the king, Félibien repeated the well-known anecdote that only Lysipp and Apelles were allowed to portray Alexander the Great, and added afterwards that, however, others were allowed to copy the original portraits that were also just copies of the original or the real king. Marin quotes Félibien as follows: "In this hierarchy of representations the first model, Alexander (in flesh and blood, if I may say so), is effaced as at the other end of the [mimetic] chain the last copies come dense and monumental. Alexander's portrait is only a representation, a reminder in images and tombs of the historic body of the deceased prince; it is only a memory."[59] In order to surpass the boundaries of representation as a memorandum, Félibien recognizes the king as the model of the great heavenly king—as the masterpiece of heavenly power. This comparison is beyond the purpose of legitimating power. He thus marks the picture of the king as the portrait of the absolute and not as the portrait of the royal person as in Alexander's case. "Consequently […], to make the king's portrait, that is, to make a copy of the king's portrait, is not only to reproduce and multiply the links of the mimetic chain but also to celebrate, as officiating priest chosen by Heaven, the ritual of the royal mystery of the transubstantiation of the prince's body."[60]

Hence, the perfect imitation that diminishes the portrait as a replica of the king (as in Alexander's case) was not the ideal of both the court

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58  Cf. Marin 1988, 11 and 209.
59  Marin 1988, 210.
60  Marin 1988, 211.

painter and the chronicler. If resemblance played only a marginal role, how could the king Louis XIV be distinguished? The king could be identified by characteristics and virtues that recur in traditional depictions of antique demigods or, as Félibien described it, by the aid of "that bearing and that size, so great, noble, and at ease, with which the Ancients formed their demigods …"[61]

Marin asks the most important question at the end: Why was Félibien's description of this portrait necessary, since the king was, more or less, the only recipient of the picture that hung in his cabinet?[62] Marin's crucial conclusion is that the absolute monarch who does not exist in reality exists only by means of his representation. Not until the king and his portrait were juxtaposed did the king reveal himself as absolute monarch. This is what Marin calls the mystery of the transubstantiation of the king's body, or, in his own words: "The king's portrait in its mystery would be this sacramental body that would at once operate the political body of the kingdom in the historical body of the prince and lift the historical body up into the political body."[63] Or, as we read in his introduction, "The portrait of the king […] offers him the icon of the absolute monarch he desires to be, to the point of recognizing and identifying himself through and in it at the very moment when the referent of the portrait absents himself from it." With the idea of a representation of the ahistorical absolute monarch, the question regarding the original and the copy has become irrelevant and the aim of inimitability has been reached.

## The timelessness of the inimitable

This inimitability is exactly what Dinglinger intended to portray with *The Throne of the Great Moghul*. In his letter to Augustus the Strong on the occasion of the presentation of his cabinet piece on 11 October 1707, accompanied with a request for paying the bill, he excuses the costs of the production with the following words:

> The size of the work as mentioned above is all of silver, but the throne with its figures and presents is all of pure gold, adorned with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and pearls, and made in an artful and delicate manner, enamelled and molten with the most pleasant colours, that, without praising myself, a work of this kind has never been made by an artist and will never be made in the future, since most [of the artists] do not have the capacity to achieve this, but even if there is one, he would have been prevented from taking

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61  Félibien 1671, 102–103 (in Marin 1988, 212).
62  Marin 1988, 212.
63  Marin 1988, 209.

such a hazard by the great expense and the length of time, so that nothing similar can be found in a gentleman's collection.[64]

Dinglinger's statement is clearly more pragmatic than Félibien's intellectual subtleness, but is also rich in information. Dinglinger highlights the singularity of the work, which encompasses not only the artistic skills of the goldsmith, but also his entrepreneurial ability and his readiness to take a risk. At the same time, he places his work within the representational system at the royal court, when he says that the cabinet piece will not be found in any other royal collection. The so-called *Green Vault* corresponded to former encyclopaedic collections, and it was built up and continually enlarged by Saxon electors from the sixteenth century on.[65] It consisted of *artificialia* as well as of *naturalia*, *scientifica*, and *exotica*, in order to reflect the macrocosm in a micro form. Besides other functions, royal collections of that time had a strong representational character. Diverse objects of Dinglinger's *The Throne of the Great Moghul*, especially the presents, were part of these encyclopaedic collections. The votive hands, for instance, could be found in Athanasius Kircher's museum, whereas the miniature coffee set was a copy of the *Golden Coffee Set* made by none other than Dinglinger himself, which became a fresh member of the Saxon treasury shortly before Dinglinger began working on his new masterpiece. It was also the destiny of *The Throne of the Great Moghul* to become a part of the Saxon treasury. The encyclopaedic collection, as a miniaturist mirror of a macrocosm, underlined the king's goal of universal learning that was a part of the ideal of the absolute ruler.[66] The Kunstkammer had, consequently, a manifest function within the ceremonial court life and was used as a means to demonstrate his absolutist ambition for availability of and control over the country, the people, and their products. The main focus of Dinglinger's cabinet piece was on the courtly feasts and ceremonies in general that existed at the Moghul court, as well as in Saxony.[67] Visiting the Kunstkammer or the treasury was sometimes a part of the welcome ceremony of local and foreign visitors. A lot of details in this work, as seen above, consciously address certain recipients—particularly, Saxon courti-

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64 "Obbeschriebene größe des Wercks ist alles von Silber, der Thron aber mit den Figuren und praesenten alles von klaren Golde, mit Diamant, Schmaragd, Rubin, und Perlen garnisiret, auf das allerartigste und zierlichste verfertiget, mit den angenehmsten coloriten emaillirt und geschmeltzt, daß, ohne unzeitigen und eigen Ruhm zumelden, dergleichen Arbeit noch niehmaln von einen Künstler ist vorgestellet worden, auch nach der Zeit nicht geschehen wird, inmassen viel(e) die capacité nicht haben, solches zu praestiren, wo auch dieses wäre, hindert doch dasselbe der große Verlag und noch mehr die länge der Zeit, sothanen Hazard zu thun, dahero dergleichen Stück in keines großen Herrn Cabinet sich nirgend finden wird."
65 See Kolb, Lupfer, and Roth 2010.
66 Cf. Warncke 1988, 170.
67 Warncke (1988, 170–171) also mentions further important aspects of Dinglinger's cabinet piece as indicative of the dining ceremony or the royal hunt mirroring Augustus the Strong's absolutistic ambitions.

ers, ambassadors, friends, and enemies. The theatrical character of *The Throne of the Great Moghul* corresponds with the court ceremonial.[68] Part of Dinglinger's concept of the representation was the presentation of the cabinet piece to the king by the artist.

Dinglinger's letter to the king would have been inappropriate if he had praised only his own artistic gifts. The fame that touches the artist also belonged to the king, who engaged singular artists and subjects like Dinglinger who created singular works that could not be found in other treasuries. It is the high quality and the unconditional devotion of his subjects which made the monarch unique and powerful—and therefore inimatable. This is what Dinglinger expressed in *The Throne of the Great Moghul*, where the grandees of the empire paid homage to the king with luxurious presents. Dinglinger knew this fact from Olfert Dapper's description of the Moghul court, which repeatedly pointed out that there was no nobility by inheritance in the Moghul empire:

> The *Omrahen* or gentlemen at the court of the Moghul are not children or sons (as one could think) of his house or lineage comparable to France or elsewhere, since every country of the kingdom belongs to the property of the king, consequently, neither dukes nor margraves nor any other house that has its own estate or patrimony can be found [...] All property of the entire kingdom belongs exclusively to the king, so that nobody possesses a foot of estate, unless he wins the king's favour, for this reason they all are focused on him and humbly request his favour and grace. [...] When a gentleman dies, he loses the whole estate to the king again—that what was presented to him by the king as well as what he himself acquired.[69]

This extent of absolute control of his subjects was not possible in Europe, although the French king Louis XIV succeeded in controlling the aristocratic layer by means of its (forced) presence at the court—a level of power that Augustus the Strong, despite endless and expensive efforts, never managed to achieve. Nevertheless, Dinglinger's cabinet piece has to be regarded in this context. The artist's "present" of *The Throne of the Great*

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68  An in-depth study of the theatrical aspects of the cabinet piece can be found in Warncke 2004 and Baader 2013.
69  Dapper 1681, 138 and 146: "Die Omrahen oder Herren am Hofe des Mogols/ sind keine Kinder oder Söhne (wie man etwan denken mögte) von seinem Hause oder Geschlecht / wie in Frankreich oder anderswo/ dann indem alle Länder des Königreichs dem König eigenthümlich zustehen/ so folget daraus/ daß allda keine Herzogen noch Markgrafen/ noch einig ander Geschlecht/ so mit Ländereyen begabet/ oder Vätterliche Erbgüter hat/ gefunden werden. [...] Aller Grund und Boden des ganzen Königreichs gehört dem König eigenthümlich zu/ also daß niemand einen Fußbreit Landes besitzet/ als durch des Königs Gunst und Geschenk/ dannenhero sie alle auf ihn ihr Absehen haben/ und seine Wohlgewogenheit und Gnade demüthigst verlangen. [...] Wann ein Edelmann stirbt/ so verfallen alle seine Güter/ sowohl diejenigen/ die er vom König überkommen/ als die er selbst erworben/ wieder an den König."

*Moghul* exactly corresponds with the Moghul court ritual as Dinglinger depicted it. That is, nobody was allowed to approach the emperor without a present, as Dapper explained: "This king notices a considerable increase of his wealth and a multiplication of his treasuries through the presents he receives. Because nobody—neither foreigner nor subject—is allowed to appear before the king without any present."[70] Based on this fact, the Moghul emperor had the most splendid court in the entire orient and possessed the biggest treasury.[71] "He has, as it is said, seventeen *Karoras* of pure gold in his treasury, one *Karoras* is equivalent to 1,000 tons of gold, besides his jewels and other treasuries."[72] Therefore, the presentation of the gifts becomes a symbol for the absolute loyalty of the king's subjects and, at the same time, for his wealth. In this game of giving and receiving, the emperor alone decided who had to give and receive what, when, and how much. It was an excellent metaphor of absolute control and power—to such an extent unknown in Europe.

Dinglinger followed his own model of *The Throne of the Great Moghul* and demonstrated his loyalty to the elector-king. Dinglinger, too, was a favorite of Augustus; he acquired wealth and prestige during his services for the king, and possessed a splendid house in Dresden, where even the Tsar preferred to live in during his stay in Dresden, in 1711.[73] Dinglinger's *Golden Coffee Set*, valued at 50,000 thaler, and *The Throne of the Great Moghul*, valued at 60,000 were, as we saw above, not commissioned works, but produced at his own risk and expense, and only offered to the king upon their completion (though for sale). It was not until the artwork was sold that it was—both allegorically and financially—finished, so that the cabinet piece could live up to its promise.

Comparable to the portrait of Louis XIV, Dinglinger did not aim to copy the outward appearance or the historical person of the monarch, but to represent absolute power. While the transubstantiation of King Louis XIV took place at the moment of the juxtaposition of the king and his portrait, it occurred, in the case of Augustus the Strong, in the act of receiving and accepting the cabinet piece by the king following the model of the Moghul court ceremonial. In the moment Augustus accepted Dinglinger's piece, he had become the absolute ruler who enjoyed the absolute loyalty of his subjects, made them rich at will, and received invaluable presents that made him the owner of the richest treasury (at least in Europe). Dinglinger consciously avoided references to the French model and chose the Moghul one.

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70  Dapper 1681, 146: "Dieser König empfindet einen merklichen Wachsthum seines Reichthums/ und Vermehrung seiner Schätze/ durch die ihme gethane Geschenke und Präsenten. Dann niemand/ er sey ein Frembdling oder Unterthan/ darf vor ihm erscheinen/ er bringe dann einig Geschenk mit."
71  Dapper 1681, 142.
72  Dapper 1681, 145: "er hat/ wie man vorgiebt/ in seiner Schatz-kammer am paarem Gelde liegen/ siebenzehen […] Karoras/ einen jeden Karoras auf 1000. Tonnen Goldes gerechnet/auser seinen Juwelen und andern Kostbarkeiten."
73  Eberle 2014, 11.

## Conclusion

In consideration of space and time, of the exposition of the art work, and of its ceremonial framework, the figure of the Great Moghul is formally not comprehensible. Dinglinger's idea of the transubstantiation of the king into an absolute monarch, probably inspired by Félibien, would have been meaningless if only the figure of the historical Great Moghul Aurangzeb had served as a model for Augustus the Strong. Instead, his model was not the figure of the Great Moghul, but of the absolute monarch. However, the absolute is inimitable. How did Dinglinger solve the dilemma that is inherent in the imitation of something inimitable? He solved it by means of emulation and elimination.

Dapper's figure of Aurangzeb, with its French absolutistic posture, was simply marginalised and, with it, the possibility of French superiority denied. In the transubstantiation of Augustus the Strong, in the moment he accepted the "present", the satisfaction of his desire for absolute power not only became true, but, in addition, provided a model he could keep in his hands and play with. It was no longer Aurangzeb who dominated the game, but Augustus the Strong. Here we find some similarities to the concept of the Japanese Palace in Dresden, which was introduced by Julia Weber in this volume, where Augustus the Strong eventually sought an open contest with the emperor of China. In both cases, neither the Great Moghul nor the Chinese emperor had been the actual addressee, but it was the subjects in Dinglinger's case and the foreign visitors—ambassadors and potentates of neighboring states—in the case of the Japanese Palace. The difference between both the works is especially apparent in their use of the concept of the copy. Dinglinger's intention was, from the beginning, to emulate the French model with the aid of an Asiatic alternative. In the case of the Meissen Porcelain, it was a chain of prior possibilities for copying that nursed the idea of emulation. Although the object itself did not change, it was its perception and meaning that changed, in the end, due to different assessments regarding the categories of the copy and the fake. Finally, the porcelain gained the status of an original that allowed Augustus the Strong to compete with the Chinese emperor. This is exactly the point where Dinglinger's work differs from the porcelain: Dinglinger never sought an open contest with the Great Moghul, even if Augustus the Strong eventually played with the figure of Aurangzeb. Dinglinger's achievement was his innovative idea to exhibit absolute power and realize it with the help of a ceremonial act. The latter was a single and unrepeatable performance that prevented imitation and thus comparability. We compared this phenomenon, at the beginning of this essay, with the performance of choreography (Schwan).

We have dealt with a formal copy, that is, the copy of Dapper's figure of Aurangzeb, and a copy of an idea. This is the idea of absolute power, which became manifest at the court and in the ceremony of the Great Moghul. Dinglinger used the power of the copy to manipulate the original until it

had been annihilated. Finally, there can only be one original: the absolute monarch, that is Augustus the Strong as absolute monarch, is unique and inimitable. The question of the original and the copy has become irrelevant. As the original can only be an original in the reflection of its copy, the absolute exists beyond the categories of original and copy. This meant, in terms of its main addressees—Augustus the Strong's subjects—that the absolute was the only and legitimized instrument of power that guaranteed social order and wealth (in a way comparable to the necessity of the non-reproducibility of ID-cards and banknotes as analyzed by Schröter in the present volume). The transformation of Augustus the Strong into an absolute monarch is part of the art work, causing it to differ from art objects, due to it being a momentary and unrepeatable act. It extinguishes the historical dimension of the art work, and, as a result, its comparability and the existence of an original and a copy.

## Figures

Fig. 1: © bpk | Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden | Jürgen Karpinski.
Fig. 2: © bpk | RMN – Grand Palais | Gérard Blot.
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Fig. 4: Photo: Author.
Fig. 5: © bpk | Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden | Jürgen Karpinski.
Fig. 6: Amsterdam: Jacobum à Meurs, 1667, after p. 78. Photo: Author.
Fig. 7: After Forberg 2015, fig. 106.

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