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Introduction

What is a copy? What would be a correct response? One might agree at once, that the answer is much too complex to be given in a few sentences. With this volume, we would like to suggest a basis for a better understanding of both the potential of the copy and the act of copying, by revealing the network of interaction between humans, notions, perceptions, objects, and practices that underlie them from an interdisciplinary and transcultural perspective. The individual contributions in this book emerged from an interdisciplinary workshop by the same name that took place in Heidelberg, Germany, on February 14 and 15, 2014. The workshop aimed to bring together as broad a range of academic disciplines and individual positions as possible. Stimulated by the rich and fruitful discussions that have emerged from this venue, we decided to share our ideas and results with the broader audience by translating them into this volume. In its introduction, we first discuss possible understandings of the copy and copying, and then argue for the necessity of both an interdisciplinary and a transcultural approach. Subsequently, we summarise the different contributions of the volume by embedding the “copy” within a network of associated concepts and liberating it from temporal or disciplinary boundaries. Finally, we attempt to merge the different lines of thought in order to lay the basis for a more integrated understanding of the “copy” and “copying”.

Conceptualizing the “copy” and “copying”

There has never been a consensus of what constitutes a “copy”. What we perceive as a “copy” is very much bound to our individual experience and, therefore, depends on individual perceptions of the world.¹ The ascribing of “copy” to something has always been dynamic and contextual. Therefore, definitions of terms such as “copy,” “imitation,” “original,” and “authenticity,” to name several, have been continuously redefined and re-established in societal discourses since antiquity, and even earlier. Neither in the public nor the academic discourse has there ever been an agreement on how to define the “copy”—even though this subject and the related practice of copying have been the topic of several recent volumes in a broad

1 Schütz and Luckmann 1979; Habermas 1981.

range of disciplines.² There is no particular understanding associated with any geographical (e.g. “Western” or “European”) or assumed cultural boundaries, or within any temporal or disciplinary frame. The replacement of “copy” with related terms like “imitation,” “mimesis,” “reproduction,” or “series” depends on the linguistic choice of the individual user. So far, no attempts to systematically differentiate these terms have been successful. As a consequence, studies have focused on the development of the understanding of a specific term through time, or its contemporary use in different contexts across the globe. Several disciplines, be it art history,³ classical archaeology,⁴ anthropology,⁵ aesthetic theory,⁶ philosophy,⁷ sociology,⁸ or even politics have produced important contributions with regard to the definition and differentiation of the copy.⁹ Klaus Junker and Adrian Stähli have even defined the discourse on the “copy” and the “original” as a key constituent of classical archaeology.¹⁰ The same is true for philosophy, where debates on “mimesis” are almost as old as the discipline itself, and still have not been solved.¹¹ Susanne Knaller’s study of the understanding of “authenticity” in (Early) Modern European thinking is a good example of this kind of current research. She aims to understand and define the term by exhibiting temporal dynamics.¹² Modernity seems to have led to a rather negative idea of the copy in many parts of the world, especially in Europe and the Americas. As for art history, the pejorative meaning of the copy still dominates the discourse, despite numerous excellent studies over the last thirty years that have convincingly argued in favor of the copy’s creative and transformative potential.¹³ Moreover, translation studies have had an important conceptual impact on the entanglement between the copy and translation.¹⁴ Hillel Schwartz reveals the narrow definition of the copy in Europe and North America as being rooted in a cult of the copy that gets its life from a striving for uniqueness and ends with a moral appeal to Western societies: “Whatever we come up with, authenticity can no longer be

2 E.g. Schwartz 1996; Fehrmann et al. 2004; Bartsch et al. 2010; Boon 2010; Wong 2013.

3 E.g. Haverkamp-Begemann 1988; Preciado 1989; Naredi-Rainer 2001; Bartsch et al. 2010; Müller et al. 2011; Cupperi 2014.

4 E.g. Barbanera 2005; Junker and Stähli 2008a; Settis and Anguissola 2015.

5 E.g. Taussig 1993; Schwarz 2000; Kalshoven 2010; Küchler 2010.

6 E.g. Sörbom 1966; Bhabha 1994; Bachmann-Medick 1997; Knaller 2006.

7 E.g. Plato, *Republic*; Plutarch, *Vita Thesei*; Benjamin (1933) 1966; (1936) 2002.

8 E.g. Tarde 1903; Gebauer and Wulf 1992.

9 E.g. Mitchell 2011.

10 Junker and Stähli 2008b, 1.

11 Plato, *Republic*.

12 Knaller 2006.

13 E.g. Preciado 1989; Wong 2013; Cupperi 2014; cf. Haverkamp-Begemann 1988, 13: “[E]ach copy constitutes a dialogue between the interpreter and the interpreted; this dialogue fosters new solutions to problems shared by the two artists and creates new ideas.”

14 Cf. Bachmann-Medick 1997 defines (literary) translations as a creative process of interpretation and contextualization (cf. also Forberg 2015, 10–12; Hutter 1980; Bartsch et al. 2010).

rooted in singularity, in what the Greeks called the *idion* [...] [The impostors] may call us away from the despair of uniqueness toward more companionate lives."¹⁵ In an ethnohistoric case study, Michael Taussig elaborates on the dialectics between the practice of copying and the construction of alterity in the framework of managing otherness.¹⁶ Without a doubt, the discourse on the copy has had a strong impact on the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of our lives, surpassing mere academic debate. The diversity of the concept seems to prevent generally-accepted definition—with the exception of UNESCO's aim to achieve common definitions within the heritage discourse on a global scale. However, it is worth noting that the members of these international organisations represent different modern nation states and, as such, are steeped in national discourses that are almost impossible to overcome.

Many of the relevant studies on this subject are characterised by an approach that aims to transgress disciplines, times, and regions. Nevertheless, most of them are written from a single discipline's perspective. We, the editors, are completely aware that our selection of disciplines for the workshop and the subsequent publication as well as our knowledge of disciplinary approaches to the "copy" is very much determined by our own disciplinary backgrounds (namely, archaeology and art history). We are neither able to oversee all disciplinary discourses nor to do justice to all those authors who have contributed to the topic until now. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the different perspectives exemplified in the contributions to this volume are able to reinforce ongoing disciplinary discourses by stimulating the transgression of disciplinary and cultural boundaries to obtain an open, dynamic, and transcultural perspective.

It is not the aim of this volume to present, contrast, or even assess different understandings of the "copy" in temporal or spatial perspectives. This book is not written as a reader on the "copy." Instead, it should inspire and incite ongoing discussions by presenting new perspectives on the topic. The contributors of this volume were free to define their own understanding of the term and all related practices and were not asked to adhere to terms used by the editors. As a consequence, this volume presents a variety of interpretations, rather than a common understanding of the relevant terms. We, the editors, are aware that we use the term "copy" to mean phenomena that might be termed "reproduction" or "imitation" by others. By using "copy," we create a topic from an etic perspective (i.e. the analytical perspective of the scientist). In our view, this usage does not run the risk of oversimplifying or homogenising very different, complex phenomena and practices, as long as the individual understanding of the term is explicitly presented. It is the task of the different contributors to shed light on emic perceptions (i.e. that of the past or present actors) of what we chose to discuss under the framework of the "copy." Even if critical

15 Schwartz 1996, 17.

16 Taussig 1993.

voices against the use of the term have been raised and alternative terms proposed, we are convinced that studying practices of the secondary or derivative requires the use of the term “copy.”¹⁷ Moreover, as will be shown below, an integrated interdisciplinary and transcultural approach is necessary both to do justice to the “copy” and to understand its potential.

Defining something as a “copy” always requires something else to be defined as the “original.” The definition of both phenomena is always relational. Both aspects are linked to each other within a network and it is only the introduction of notions of authenticity and originality that can lead to different assessments of value. From an analytical point of view, the definition of the copy always requires the designation as something secondary or derivative, even if the primary, i.e. the so-called original, is more or less fictitious and only established at the same instant at which something is perceived as a copy. For example, anyone visiting a museum can experience this dependency of original and copy, whenever (s)he is told that what (s)he perceives to be a unique “original” is just the “copy” of a lost “original.” In this very moment, the copy and the original are constituted simultaneously in interdependence. The designation of the copy, as well as its analysis, therefore always requires a diachronic and contextual perspective. It is the permanent change of human perception, in all its dimensions, that gives the copy and its related practice, i.e. copying, such an interesting inherent dynamic.¹⁸ The situational dependence of the dynamics of the copy also points to the necessity to embed every analysis of notions of the “copy” in a particular (historical, geographical, etc.) context. Without that context, concepts and dynamics of the “copy” cannot be understood. To sum up, we use “copy” to denominate a phenomenon that is—in all or at least some of its features—related to something else (i.e. the original). It was created later than the original and assumes (through an intentional act by the one who copies) one or several features of the original. It can exist without the spectator being aware of its secondary position, but only the realisation of the relatedness and temporal difference enables the understanding of something as a copy.

This is equally true of copying as a social practice, i.e. as the practical realisation of something that might be deemed a “copy.”¹⁹ In our own understanding, “copying” means intentionally (re-)producing an object, practice, sound, movement, or idea that is perceived by oneself and/or others as having a secondary position to another object, practice, etc. that is—at the same time—understood as the “original.” Basically everything can be copied: mimetic behaviour is a fundamental trait of human learning. From childhood through education to professional practice: all are informed by the practice of copying. Copying means perceiving and defining something as original and, at the same time, translating it and

17 Cf. Fehrmann et al. 2004.

18 Merleau-Ponty 1966; Olsen 2006; Stockhammer 2015.

19 Cf. Ortland 2015.

mastering its traits, in order to make it one's own and thereby opening up the potential to transform the copy into a new original. The perception of original and copy and the practice of copying are indistinguishably entangled, as practice always means perceiving²⁰ and vice versa²¹. Copying is, therefore, an intimate act based on the intense engagement with another person, object, or practice. Copying has the potential to shape both the copy and the original; concept and practice condition each other.

The “copy” and “copying” from a transcultural and interdisciplinary perspective

The dynamics of the “copy” and “copying” constitute their crucial role in transcultural studies. We understand the concept of “transculturality” in a twofold way: the concept can be used to refer to both a concrete object of investigation as well as an analytical method.²²

First, a transcultural approach is a research agenda that aims to overcome disciplinary, national, or “Western” discourses and to do justice to manifold understandings of the world. The term relates explicitly and critically to a notion that defines culture as being ethnically bound and contained within a territorial frame, i.e. the traditional, container-like understanding of culture.²³ Basing our work on the concept of transculturality enables us to emancipate it from such traditional notions of culture. Instead, we argue that cultures are invariably constituted by interaction, entanglement, and reconfiguration.

By using transculturality as an analytical approach, we attempt to shed light on past and present understandings of “copy” and “copying” in different contexts, as well as from a broad range of disciplinary perspectives. So far, related discourses have been almost entirely bound to cultural, scientific, or political distinctions and are both rooted in and constrained by national scholarly discourses. A transcultural approach is by definition interdisciplinary. When organising the workshop on which this volume is based, we aimed to foster our conceptual awareness by bringing together scholars from very different disciplines who could only communicate with each other on a conceptual level, as they all have worked with very different sources and materials. It became clear during the workshop that the very different disciplinary traditions and achievements did not present an obstacle to our goal, but rather forced the contributors to break down their complex discipline-specific discourses into their constituent concepts for the benefit of the interdisciplinary audience.

20 Gatewood 1985; Knoblauch and Heath 2006; Richardson 2009.

21 Frers 2009, 188; Hofmann 2015; Stockhammer 2015, 35.

22 Eibach, Opitz-Belakhal, and Juneja 2012; Juneja and Falser 2013.

23 Eibach, Opitz-Belakhal, and Juneja 2012; Juneja and Falser 2013; Flüchter and Schöttli 2015.

From an analytical perspective, we are also aware that speaking of cultural encounters involves the risk of reintroducing that which we aim to overcome, i.e. the definition of cultural entities and borders. It is an epistemological consequence that every analytical approach to the study of transculturality requires the distinction and definition of cultures first, if only to be dissolved and transgressed in the analytical approach that follows.²⁴ The same holds true for the notion of the copy. How should we speak about the “secondary” without having first defined the “primary?” Every study of the dynamic processes triggered by practices of the secondary means acknowledging—or, more precisely, defining—the primary. Therefore, even if we aim to overcome the mere binary differentiation between the “original” and the “copy” we have to reintroduce this distinction at the beginning of our analysis, even if it is only for the subsequent demonstration of the fact that both classifications and the practice of copying in particular constitute each other and are permanently (re-)negotiated within social practice. We are therefore conscious that we tend to initiate our thoughts with notions that need to be overcome in the discussion that follows.

Second, a transcultural approach aims to analyse the transformative potential of intercultural encounters and the processes of transculturation and entanglement (which again comprise manifold individual actors’ practices of appropriation, copying, translating, and rejection) related to it. Therefore, the focus is on shifting designations and social practices and not on the definition of seemingly stable symbols, functions, or structures.

The dynamics of perception, and the resultant attribution and change of meanings to objects and practices, are the basis for the transformative power of the copy and copying. Ultimately, it is not the copy that has an agency and exerts power to change us. It is our shifting perception and re-evaluation of the copy and, therefore, the copy’s virtual changeability that has the power to transform.²⁵ In other words, it is not the copy itself that changes, but our perception of it. The copy, therefore, has “effectancy” rather than “agency.”²⁶

Moreover, a copy’s transformative potential for re-interpretation and re-evaluation has an inherent dynamic and it can increase in the course of its itinerary, e.g. when an object is transported over large distances. As an itinerant copy, it can provide a link with distant actors, due to its supposed sameness with the original. It can also be understood as an original when its viewers are ignorant of the original or other copies, or if it is the product of conscious re-interpretation—in which case it can become even more valuable in its new context than the presumed original was in the old context.²⁷ Thus the copy has the potential to be a very influential actor in the transcultural field.²⁸

24 Stockhammer 2012; Stockhammer 2013.

25 Cf. Stockhammer 2015.

26 Stockhammer 2015.

27 E.g. Juneja 2008, 193.

28 Forberg 2014.

In contrast to “copy,” “copying” has a direct transformative power as a practice that shapes our own lifeworld and, at the same time, helps us to link ourselves to other actors in the field. Copying enables the expression of similarity and difference at the same time since, during the act of copying, the actor decides what to meticulously imitate in his/her own work and what to translate and transform according to his/her own lifeworld. Copying therefore involves deciding between three different choices that are possible in a situation of contact: acceptance (trying to get as close to the original/other as possible), appropriation (transforming the original/other according to one’s own lifeworld), and rejection (re-emphasizing otherness and difference). When copying an object, for example, one has to permanently decide between the three choices in the process of perceiving the object in order to be able to copy it. Therefore, copying involves both deciding on and performing practices with the other that subsequently open up the space for very different methods and results. It enables copying to become part of a strategy to react to, to question, to challenge, to manage, and even to overcome what is perceived as the original.

The diversity of human perception can best be understood with the help of a transcultural approach which welcomes, but does not enforce, the inclusion of Asian, African, or other non-European perspectives. A transcultural approach must not be confused with a postcolonial approach, which explicitly aims to involve scholars and perspectives from non-European, postcolonial contexts. As mentioned before, transcultural studies focuses on the transformative potential of intercultural encounters realised in practices of copying, appropriation, and hybridisation—and those practices can take place with differing intensity at all times and in almost all locales.

To sum up, the “copy” and “copying” as its related practice are components of the transformative dynamics of intercultural encounters. Perception and practice are intrinsically linked when defining one thing as an original or a copy or while copying the other. The question “what is a copy?” is permanently re-negotiated between one’s lifeworld and one’s momentary perception of the copy, as well as during the practice of copying. The kinds of transformations connected with—and triggered by—the understanding of something as a “copy” and the process of copying are manifold. These transformations can happen very locally, on an individual level, but can also affect a large group of actors (e.g. a particular society) on a regional or even global level. They may concern human perceptions of the world (e.g. ideas, cosmologies, or knowledge) as well as the shape, functions, and meanings of objects and/or practices.

The individual contributions in this volume exemplify a transcultural approach, but with differing intensities and emphases. Such an understanding guided the discussions during the workshop, but is more implicit in some of the contributions than others. Nevertheless, it has shaped our discussions, the selection process, and the presentation of these studies to such an extent that we chose to use the term “transcultural” along with “interdisciplinary” in order to characterise the approach and aims of this volume.

The copy in a network of notions

The contributions to this book span a wide evaluation period, from the Bronze Age to modern times. Rather than sequencing the contributions temporally, we have grouped the articles by concept into six different parts. From the large number of possible conceptual groupings, we have selected “anthropology,” “reality,” “original,” “materiality,” “power,” and “competition.” There is no doubt that the attributes of these conceptual divisions are sometimes very closely related, and that one contribution can refer to more than one of the aforementioned terms. However, each part identifies a line of thought that runs through its articles. In the last part of this introduction, we bring these lines together, to provide a starting point for further cross-referencing by the reader.

Part I: The copy and anthropology (Ribeiro, Ladwig)

What’s in a copy? Gustavo Lins Ribeiro poses this question in his introductory article while examining the topic “copy” through the eyes of an anthropologist. This contribution is less about the characteristics of a copy than its inherent potential. Within the categories of academia, cultural life, and economics Ribeiro examines the Western concept of the copy, which can be traced back to Plato’s philosophy. The author highlights the copy’s necessity to all three categories and determines the origin of its negative and diminutive evaluation in the West, which cannot be found, for instance, in China or other regions of the world. Moreover, he portrays how the terms “original” and “authenticity” are both instrumental to political and economic purposes and challenged by new technologies.

Also from an anthropologist’s perspective, Patrice Ladwig describes how the centuries-old concept of “copy” or “mimesis/imitation” affected later anthropological research. Ladwig begins by reflecting on the primitivism of non-literate societies, which has been directly connected to mimetic practices by early anthropologists like James Frazer. These practices were considered underdeveloped and were classified as belonging to an early evolutionary stage of human society. This evaluation is based on a fundamental, negative assessment of copying that has its origins in Plato’s reflections on mimesis. Due to religious scepticism and philosophical criticism during the Enlightenment, the distance between object and subject became wider and found expression in a reduced and pejorative understanding of imitation. The understanding of imitation is not, as Kant put it, epistemologically universal, but culturally specific. Walter Benjamin therefore bemoans the loss of the possibility of mimetic practices in modern times, which he considers to be responsible for the disenchantment of the world.

Part II: The copy and reality (Knaller, Schröter)

From the Early Modern Age to the nineteenth century, the idea that art was the imitation of nature prevailed. According to Susanne Knaller, a crucial question in aesthetics until now has been to what extent reality reveals itself in art objects, on the one hand, and in empirical objects/objects of nature, on the other. In order to answer this question, the concept of the copy and the original is helpful. However, this concept is stretched to its limits when it is confronted with avant-garde art—especially from the post-1950 era—which consciously mixes aesthetic categories. Knaller therefore introduces the term “authenticity” to the discourse—a term closely related to the concepts of original and copy, as well as art and reality, but offering a more comprehensive and more flexible approach to a definition of the relationship between art and reality.

The seemingly endless reproducibility of things which, without an obvious original, occasionally leads to the opinion that the difference between original and copy is obsolete. There seems to be only a world of copied copies (c.f. Ribeiro, Knaller and Mersmann). If this were true, our political, economic, and social worlds would collapse, as Jens Schröter argues in his article. The danger of anarchy inevitably evokes the necessity of something unreplicable—banknotes and ID cards are prominent examples. Extending Schröter’s idea, this means that we need the uncopyable original in order to maintain social order.

Part III: The copy and the original (Graulund, Sanchez-Stockhammer, Schwan)

From a point of view of literary studies, Rune Graulund does not discuss the concepts of the original and/or copy as being a matter of debate. For him, there is little doubt that one can exist without the other. His criticism is directed at the perception of an original—more precisely an original text—as an independently existing entity. Graulund does not see the copy as a work referring to an isolable entity (original), but rather as the many conditions of a creative process that does not have any natural, authentic origin. In this way, the copy is not only perceived as a creative process, but as an original as well. According to Graulund, the original in literature is not an entity, but a variety of concepts, such that several versions of a text can possess status comparable to the original.

From a linguistic point of view, Christina Sanchez-Stockhammer disagrees with Graulund. Linguistics shows that the original and the copy follow a chronological process that schedules the original’s existence before the copy. According to Sanchez-Stockhammer, it is not clear how much similarity to the original something has to display to be called a copy. To conceptualise this, the author uses Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic, dichotomous language model, which states that language is composed

of *langue* (the meaning of a word and its grammatical characteristics) and *parole* (language use in specific utterances). In both oral and textual language, an exact copy, labelled an “absolutely faithful copy” by the author, would not be possible; only what she calls a “functionally faithful copy”—even in the case of academic quotations—is achievable.

Alexander Schwan's proposition is located between those of Graulund and Sanchez-Stockhammer. In order to explain the complicated structure of the original and the copy in the field of the performing arts, especially dance, he postulates a paradox caused by the combination of choreographic performances and the body's anatomy. On the one hand, the alleged original—the performance of a choreographic idea—turns out to be an ephemeral phenomenon vanishing in the very moment of its production and therefore preventing the copying process. On the other hand, the possibilities of human movement are clearly limited due to the body's anatomy. Similar to linguistics (e.g. Sanchez-Stockhammer), where individual words or phrases can only rarely be traced to their origin, it is impossible to detect a master pattern in a seemingly perpetual repetition of moves. By implication, this means that a dance cannot exist without the copy, and dancing without copying. The paradox of dancing arises from the double-premise that copying, strictly speaking, is not possible due to the original's ephemeral character, but motion is solely based on the process of copying.

Part IV: The copy and materiality (Stockhammer, Schreiter, Ortland)

While the previous contributions concentrated first and foremost on immaterial and abstract phenomena such as ideas, language, and motion, the essays by Stockhammer, Schreiter, and Ortland focus on the relationship between copy and materiality. An object's materiality and substance hold a special position in the copying process because they shape human practices through the dynamics of their perception.

Philipp Stockhammer's article focuses on the Bronze Age in Central Europe. He shows how innovations in bronze casting enabled a completely new form of copying. The characteristics of bronze, especially its ease of casting, along with the use of casting moulds, allowed for the serial production of quasi-identical objects, particularly weapons and tools, for the first time in human history. It seems that this new technology had initially been considered a threat. Copying as a transformative practice enabled the appropriation as well as the management of the new technology at the same time. Moreover, the new technology of reproduction fundamentally changed the human perception of objects.

Charlotte Schreiter's contribution reflects the more recent past and focuses on the various copies of ancient statuary from the late eighteenth century. She shows that plaster casts of different materials were highly

appreciated among contemporary customers. These sculptures were not exact copies, as art historians later determined, but creative imitations which were upgraded by material and technological innovations as well as sophisticated contextualisations. However, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were preceded by continuous examinations of ancient times, in which this “foreign” culture—contrary to non-European cultures—was widely reinterpreted and instrumentalised again and again.

Another form of copying ancient artworks is at the centre of Eberhard Ortland’s article. He analyses the copies of famous European and East Asian paintings on porcelain panels in Kyoto. From a philosophical point of view, he questions the hegemony of European art and illustrates what is perceived as famous and original and therefore worth copying. Moreover, the medium’s transfer from canvas or fresco onto ceramics guarantees a special durability—possibly longer than that of the original. According to Ortland, the copy’s material, surroundings, and *mise-en-scène* are key to accessing a copy’s transformative power.

Part V: The copy and power (Mersmann, Brumann, Falser)

The phenomena of endless reproducibility in the digital world and of the disappearance of the original, which Ribeiro, Knaller, and Schröter focus on, are also Birgit Mersmann’s topics of study. Global networking, thanks to the Internet and the possibilities posed by digital technology, has led to the notion of a global copying culture. Mersmann discusses the patterns underlying these phenomena with the help of two case studies: an individual sculpture and an institution that were both placed on UNESCO’s World Heritage lists. These cases generate a complex network of global and local power, political interests and strategies—from local tourism industries to international committees such as UNESCO.

Christoph Brumann investigates UNESCO’s concept of authenticity and its political interwovenness from an anthropological point of view. He outlines the development of the term “World Heritage” and the understanding of “original” and “authenticity” that is related to it from a European, restricted definition to a very broad term that adequately addresses the concerns and perspectives of all countries involved. Nevertheless, Brumann points out the fact that this development was more likely to have been based on rather inconsistent decisions and the negotiation of political interests than on a consistent conceptual progression.

According to Micheal Falser’s historical remarks, this concept of World Heritage is based on the colonial practice of transferring sculptures and, especially, monumental buildings such as Angkor Wat, into the museum context of European colonialists with the help of plaster casts. This copying practice does not only indicate a change of the meaning of a non-European object, but also the evaluation standard of a building in its cultural context. Like Mersmann, Falser emphasises that the notions of

the copy and copying have to be discussed in the light of global and local strategies.

Part VI: The copy and competition (Prien, Weber, Forberg)

Archaeological-protolithic and art historical analyses reveal the importance of copying within the scope of social competition. Roland Prien's example of the so-called Carolingian Renaissance, or *Renovatio*, shows to what extent the contemporary idea of "original" and "copy" even hinders our understanding of historical phenomena. He concludes that the long-dominating idea that Charlemagne took the Roman Empire and Rome as examples of the creation of his own empire and the construction of his capital, Aachen, has no factual basis.

Julia Weber's analysis focuses on Meissen porcelain. With the ability to produce porcelain, Augustus the Strong's main motivation was to acquire treasured "white gold" at a reduced rate. This is primarily why new technology was employed to copy vases and other vessels from China and Japan. These copies—being deprived of their mark by a French dealer—were transformed into forgeries. By the discovery of their production site in Saxony they were later re-identified by contemporary connoisseurs as originals of European fabrication. At Augustus's court, therefore, the idea of competing with the Emperor of China arose.

Corinna Forberg's contribution stays at the court of Augustus the Strong and concentrates on copies of Indian models which were employed as a means of absolutist self-representation in Dresden. The Saxon court jeweller Johann Melchior Dinglinger presented his famous *Thron des Großmoguls* (Throne of the Great Moghul) to Augustus the Strong and creatively transformed Indian models into semiotic vehicles that delivered political messages to European rulers. The singularity and inimitability of absolute power was in the centre of these representations.

Entangling the strings

Copying stands at the beginning of human life. Speaking, singing, and dancing, all require the perpetual repetition of what has been spoken or performed before (Sanchez-Stockhammer, Schwan). It is only the copy of a particular pattern of words or movements that can be defined as something original, not because of its particular components, but because someone defines the particular combination of the components (be it a certain literary phrase or sequence of body movements) as something extraordinary, something original. But what happens when the realisation of such an idea—understood as something original—is perpetuated? Over and over, a certain theatre play or ballet can create an aura of uniqueness and authenticity, although it has been performed many times before (Schwan).

The same movement, sentence, or body pose can be understood as a copy and an original at the same time, depending on the individual knowledge and expectations of the listener or spectator (Sanchez-Stockhammer, Forberg). The copy becomes original and the original's right to exist as such is cast into doubt. Our globalised digital age forces us to radically re-think and re-conceptualise the original and the copy on an even larger scale. As several of the contributions in this volume show, the possibilities of digital reproduction have severe consequences (Ribeiro, Mersmann). Current copying techniques allow for the creation of copies of such quality that they are indistinguishable from the original and can even evoke the same aura as the original (Knaller). Even live digital copies of drama and music performances are now possible and are accessible to more people than ever before. The original seems to get lost or become obsolete, as it is nothing more than a dataset that is later printed out in countless copies. While the original cannot exist without the copy (Graulund), it almost seems that the copy can exist without the original. The disappearance of the original has been possible for a long time—since the beginning of refined casting technologies in the Early Bronze Age at the latest (Stockhammer)—but has become increasingly pervasive and challenging due to the digital revolution. It has become clear that the original is always defined by actors who have the power to force their normative world views onto other actors. Obtaining the power to define the original has often been a power strategy in human history (Prien, Forberg). The copy has always had the power to challenge individual world views as well as political systems and existing power structures. As a result, copying was long understood as the backward practice of primitive people (Ladwig). Maintaining power positions requires the management of copying (Schröter) and the transformation of powerful copies into originals by reinterpretation or recontextualization (Weber, Schreiter). The original can be defined, classified, and thereby tamed. The copy is more difficult to tame: the copy is wild. In every society, past and present, the transformative power of the copy leads to ever new reinterpretations of the world and the destabilisation of normative ideas of the world. Freedom to copy thus runs the risk of provoking anarchy (Schröter). Today, more than ever before, copying is becoming easier and easier due to the relevance and dominance of virtual data without any materialisation. In order to obtain norms and order, those in power—in politics as well as in the fields of law, economics, art, and science—try to define the authentic and original like a canon of what is still “worthy” to be kept, seen, and preserved in a globalised world that is both changing and challenging (Brumann, Ortland). The power to turn a copy into an original means the ability to create additional value in a very monetary sense of the word (Weber). The current topic of defining and debating UNESCO World Heritage, for example, gives a vivid impression of these efforts (Brumann). At the same time, it unveils the utmost colonial character of the practice of attributing authenticity (Falser) and the political power play whereby the most powerful actors finally define what is authentic and

what is not—irrespective of the advice of all (so-called) specialists. Coming to terms with our world also means accepting different notions of the copy and the original, in the past as in the present. We must not take our individual, scholarly, and analytical understanding of the relevant terms as the basis from which to explain what we determine as practices of copying in the past or in the present around the globe. However, we also do not argue for the acceptance of every possible understanding of these terms as a basis for further reflection. Taking a transcultural approach seriously does not mean embracing relativism, but reflectivity and openness toward different approaches to examining the world without devaluing one's own or the other's view. It means taking the other seriously, and seeing it as a crucial factor for defining oneself.

What is a copy, then? It seems as if this question cannot easily be answered by taming the copy and presenting a clear-cut taxonomy with global applicability that functions across all scientific disciplines, or by re-defining copies as originals in order to increase their particular value. This is also not the aim of this volume. Instead of presenting a comprehensive discussion of the history and present state of our understanding of the copy in different disciplines, we wish to inspire an ongoing discourse by bringing together disciplines and discourses that have not been connected so far, and by promoting the transcultural approach as a new way of thinking and analysing a relevant phenomenon like the copy. We do not question or devalue (political) efforts to define originality or authenticity, as we acknowledge these concepts as necessary for creating stability in a changing world. We wish to shed light on the potential of the copy and copying, re-evaluating and defining the copy and the original, and the dynamic processes which result from these practices in a world where absolute distinctions between the two are narrowing.

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