



# **A Royal Menagerie: Meissen Porcelain Animals (Getty Trust Publications: J. Paul Getty Museum)**

*Samuel Wittwer*

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"Heroic" is perhaps the only word to describe the Meissen porcelain animals made for the Elector of Saxony, Frederick-Augustus. They were commissioned in 1728 and modeled and executed by 1735. The great size of the figures presented many technical difficulties in creation and firing. Their mere completion in so many cases was itself a tour de force, making it arguably the most significant commission for porcelain executed in Europe.

Presented here are the large figures of animals from the collection of Frederick-Augustus, currently on exhibition at the Getty Museum until January 2002. Frederick-Augustus had long been a collector of Japanese and Chinese porcelain. He created the most ambitious interior for porcelain planned anywhere in Europe, the famous Japanese Palace in Dresden. On the upper floor was a gallery devoted to Meissen porcelain, filled with vases, great dishes, and the animal figures displayed in this beautifully illustrated book.

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