Thinking About the Archive & Provenance Research

The Boasblogs Paper No. 4 is Now Available Online



papers

4

Thinking About the Archive & Provenance Research

Edited by
Carl Deußen and Yagmur Karakis

In the debate about the colonial past of ethnographic museums in Western Europe, provenance research has emerged as a central method for researching colonial legacies and addressing museums' need for decolonisation. Researchers have started to investigate colonial era collections systematically to create a sound basis for dealing with these collections in the future. As a consequence, they are increasingly seen as archives in themselves. What has been lacking, however, is a debate about the theoretical implications of this approach – what are the implications of such an archival perspective and what kinds of knowledge can provenance research create? To find answers to this question, the authors of this volume engage with a range of materials – from the famous Benin Royal Collections to a seemingly insignificant Egyptian doll. They approach these materials sometimes on a theoretical, sometimes on a very practical level to offer their different visions of what a theoretically grounded provenance research may look like