The role Greek antiquities played in Athanasios Rousopoulos’ life can be reconstructed from a variety of references in published texts and unpublished biographical material. As the analysis tracks his different living environments (Vogosiko, Constantinople, Blätlingen, Patras, Athens, as well as travels to many European countries), it reconstructs Rousopoulos’ relationship with antiquities in these settings.

METHOD & SOURCES

The thesis is conceptualized with object biographies: these employ the idea that things embody cultural practices and are, therefore, material witnesses of sociohistorical processes. This idea serves as the base on which to elaborate a study focusing in detail on the life of Rousopoulos. The biographies of small archaeological artifacts serve to comprehend their wider significance in the collector’s biography as a specialized academic as well as an individual with personal ties to affluent people in Greece and abroad.

Research for this project was begun in archives in Athens that specialize in the administration history of archaeological material in Greece since the early nineteenth century, such as the Historical Archives of the Archaeological Service (Fig. 1, a list numbering the antiquities with Rousopoulos’ heirs in 1902) and the Historical Archives of the University of Athens (DeAW and DeAI Athens fellowship, 2019). Pieces from Rousopoulos’ collection that remained in Greece were discovered in the National Archaeological Museum at Athens (Fig. 4, highlighted). Further material comes from personal archives where documents related to Rousopoulos’ wife Louisa Murray and her family provide interesting biographical information (Murray Family Archives in the Swedish National Archives & private archives of Ulrich Müller-Gaude, Cologne).

The sources obtained through archival visits and bibliographical work allow for a discussion of archaeological artifacts as a biographical attribute not only for Rousopoulos, but also for his family and household (see the quote next to Fig. 3).

...archaeological artifacts from Greece as sources for the microhistory of collecting practices, which are discussed in their broader sociocultural and historical contexts.

Herein, the symbolic use of Greek monuments, especially in nation building, has attracted the most attention so far. Next to that, archaeology’s pluralization into archaeologies in post-colonial approaches focuses on archaeological scholarship and practice as phenomena of nationalist, colonial, and imperial agendas. These find their essential counterweight in the category of indigenous archaeologies. However, this structural binarism of colonizing and being colonized in the name of archaeology has long identified the central role private collectors had in the cultural reception of antiquities. All the same, individual discussions are still rare.

With the theoretical background of object biographies, this dissertation works out aspects of the microhistory of antiquities collecting. It proposes to dig into the topic microhistorically in order to complement the debate of private approaches focuses on archaeological scholarship and practice as phenomena of nationalist, colonial, and imperial agendas. These find their essential counterweight in the category of indigenous archaeologies. However, this structural binarism of colonizing and being colonized in the name of archaeology has long identified the central role private collectors had in the cultural reception of antiquities. All the same, individual discussions are still rare.

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