

## The 'Museion' and 'Museum' towards a 'New' or 'Real' Museum

**Chulani Rambukwella**

### *Abstract*

*This paper will identify and evaluate the evolution of the primary purposes of museums in the context of cultural, social and educational aspects those are interlinked throughout the process of museum development since the inception of the concept of the museum the "Museion" in 283 BC. Furthermore, the paper will analyse, evaluate and attempt to show how different aspects being fulfilled by majority of contemporary museums within their themes and concepts. Finally, weaknesses that could be identified will be discussed in order to give suggestions, how museums could serve their purpose in a better way to support the new museological concepts to become a well-established or successful "real" or a "new" museum.*

*Key words: Museion, Traditional Museums, New Museology*

### **Introduction**

To collect has always been an essential human trait. The desire to surround oneself with works of art, with objects and traces of culture, distinguishes the individual from the mass and becomes the organizing center of a new spiritual space (Goushchin 1994: 76).

The term "museum" has derived from the Greek "Museion" which means temple of the "Museion", the goddesses protecting arts and sciences (Bhatnagar 1999: i). History of museum goes back to the period of Ptolemaios I (283 BC) where they were connected with the royalty and education but not much with the objects of material culture, and at the beginning, religious activities were the primary function of museums (Bhatnagar 1999). Meanwhile, Duncan and Wallach express, 'no other institution claims greater importance as a treasure house of material and spiritual wealth' (Duncan and Wallach 2004: 51) than museum. Supporting the idea of religious activities at the museums Hodges claims, 'it is no wonder then, that the museum as custodian of the relics that may be pivotal to the spiritual pride of a nation of peoples...' (Hodges 1978: 149). I argue, the remnant of religious activities still can be seen in some museums. Worshipping of Buddha at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (Wingfield 2010: 53-70) could be taken into consideration as an example.

Standard definitions of museums indicate that those are the organized institutions established for collection, preservation, interpretation, and display of objects on a regular basis especially for educational or aesthetic purpose. In general, museums are constructed through a mix of objects, labels, images, dummies, and recreated scenes that