



Museums: A History

John E. Simmons

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This comprehensive history of museums begins with the origins of collecting in prehistory and traces the evolution of museums from grave goods to treasure troves, from the Alexandrian Temple of the Muses to the Renaissance cabinets of curiosities, and onto the diverse array of modern institutions worldwide. The development of museums as public institutions is explored in the context of world history with a special emphasis on the significance of objects and collecting. The book examines how the successful exportation of the European museum model and its international adaptations have created public institutions that are critical tools in diverse societies for understanding the world. Rather than focusing on a specialized aspect of museum history, this volume provides a comprehensive synthesis of museums worldwide from their earliest origins to the present. *Museums: A History* tells the fascinating story of how museums respond to the needs of the cultures that create them.

Readers will come away with an understanding of:

1. the comprehensive history of museums from prehistoric collections to the present
2. the evolution of museums presented in the context of world history
3. the development of museums considered in diverse cultural contexts
4. global perspective on museums
5. the object-centered history of museums
6. museums as memory institutions

A constant theme throughout the book is that museums have evolved to become institutions in which objects and learning are associated to help human beings understand the world around them. Illustrations amplify the discussions.

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