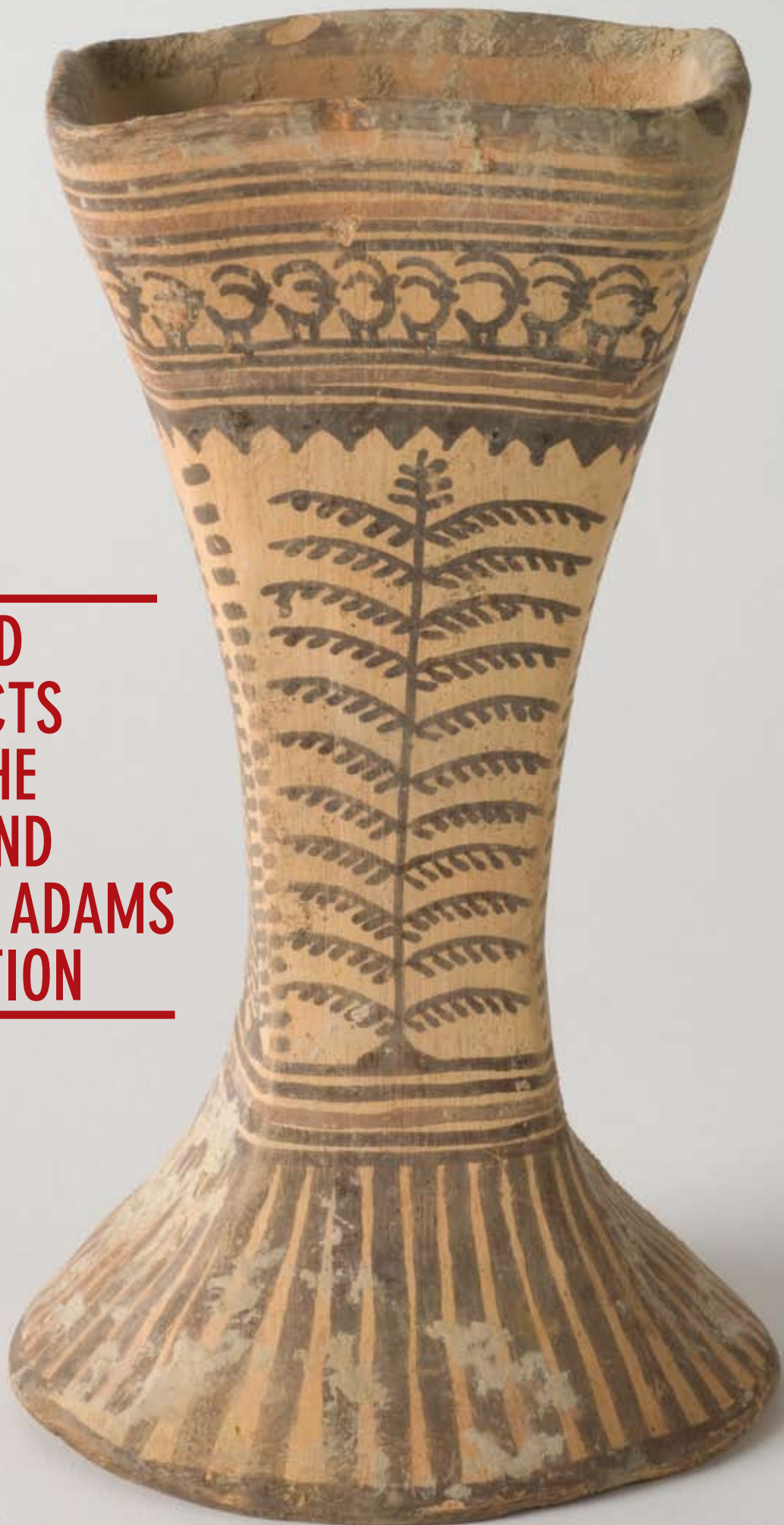


---

**SELECTED  
ARTEFACTS  
FROM THE  
DAVID AND  
MARION ADAMS  
COLLECTION**

---



# FOREWORD

Professor Marion Adams (1932–1995) enjoyed a long and distinguished academic career in the field of German literature at the University of Melbourne. She was dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1988 to 1993 and a deeply respected scholar and colleague. Among her many interests was an enthusiasm for collecting objects from antiquity. During her lifetime Marion acquired an impressive art collection including works from Greece and Rome, Egypt and the ancient Near East, Africa, India, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas. Since her untimely death on 6 January 1995, Marion's husband, David Adams, has continued to add to the collection in memory of his wife and as a legacy of their shared interest in the cultures of the past.

Professor Adams's election as dean of Arts in 1988 was a milestone in the history of the University of Melbourne, as she was the first woman to hold this office. Marion played an important and far-reaching role within the university community. This role continues today, through the Marion Adams Fund, the Marion Adams Memorial Lecture and through the support given to the university by her husband David Adams.

Our sincere thanks are due to David Adams for deciding to generously donate the David and Marion Adams Collection to the University of Melbourne. David has kindly assisted Spencer-Pappas Trust Curator and Lecturer Dr Andrew Jamieson with the selection of artefacts for inclusion in this exhibition, and provided much valuable information on the objects in the Adams Collection and the history of their acquisition.

The collective expertise of several divisions of the Ian Potter Museum of Art has ensured the successful realisation of the project. Staff in the Exhibitions, Collections Management, and Development, Communications and Public Programs divisions have supported the preparation and display of this exhibition and associated events.

We warmly thank those donors who have continued to support activities in the Potter's Classics and Archaeology Gallery.

**DR CHRIS MCAULIFFE**  
DIRECTOR, THE IAN POTTER  
MUSEUM OF ART,  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE



---

# SELECTED ARTEFACTS FROM THE DAVID AND MARION ADAMS COLLECTION

---

DR ANDREW JAMIESON  
SPENCER-PAPPAS TRUST CURATOR AND LECTURER

The origins and development of this unique collection are intimately linked with two individuals: Marion Louise Heatley and David Andrew Adams.

Marion Heatley was born in 1932 in Sydney and educated at Fort Street Girls' High School. She began an arts degree at the University of Sydney but transferred to the University of Melbourne where she valued the intellectual challenge provided by both Professor Richard Samuel in German and Professor AA Chisholm in French.<sup>1</sup> In 1954 she won the examination exhibition in both French and German. During her three undergraduate years at the university, she lived at Women's College (now University College) and never severed this connection—later serving as president of the College Council (1983). It was during these early years that a friendship quickly developed with her cousin in Melbourne, David Adams.

Born in 1930, David Adams grew up on Parkville's Royal Parade where he lived with his mother, Catherine Heatley, and his maternal grandfather, Robert Heatley. David attended Melbourne Grammar School where, although not religious, he was awarded the Bishop Perry Scripture Prize in 1944 before he matriculated in 1948.<sup>2</sup> After completing a bachelor of mechanical engineering degree at the University of Melbourne in 1954, David travelled to Toronto to obtain engineering experience.

A Fulbright Scholarship took Marion to Harvard where she completed her master of arts in Germanic studies in the unusually short period of two semesters. While establishing their respective careers David and Marion maintained close contact. By 1956 the couple were engaged and two years later they were married in Munich, Germany. Their lasting interest in Classical civilisations began during honeymoon travel in Sicily where they were impressed by the Doric temple at Segesta.<sup>3</sup>



They subsequently lived in Toronto for four years where David was prompted to complete a bachelor of arts degree. David recalls: 'Marion didn't mind being married to an engineer but wanted me to get a proper education'.<sup>4</sup>

An Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship enabled Marion to study at the University of Munich, collecting material for her PhD on the German poet Gottfried Benn (1886–1956). From Germany Marion and David travelled frequently—particularly memorable were the trips to western Turkey, Greece and Spain. On returning to Australia at the end of 1963, Melbourne seemed a 'culturally desolate place after the cosmopolitan cities of Europe'.<sup>5</sup>

Marion devoted the next four years to writing her PhD.<sup>6</sup> Commencing as a junior tutor in the Department of Germanic studies at the University of Melbourne (1964) she advanced through the academic ranks of senior tutor (1965), principal tutor (1971), lecturer (1974) and senior lecturer (1975–84).<sup>7</sup> David, meanwhile, established a successful engineering firm in Melbourne.<sup>8</sup>

From 1980 to 1983 Marion served as the Faculty of Arts associate dean for budgets. Under Marion the Arts budget balanced—an onerous job she lightly dismissed as 'just housekeeping'.<sup>9</sup> In this role she facilitated the acquisition of 239 rare Cypriot, mainly ceramic, objects (purchased from the Australian Institute of Archaeology) to boost the university's antiquities collection.<sup>10</sup>

From 1986 to 1987 Marion was the chair of Germanic studies and became dean of Arts in 1988. Her deanship coincided with dramatic structural changes in tertiary education in Australia. Despite these turbulent times students and colleagues remember her dignity and great sense of humour. 'Peals of laughter would ring from her office when she came up against an edict that, to her, seemed simply absurd.'<sup>11</sup>

Tragically, in mid-1993 Marion was diagnosed with a brain tumour and was granted leave of absence. She continued to suffer health problems and Homer Le Grand assisted her as dean of Arts. In 1994 Marion returned to what she loved most: teaching in the Department of Germanic Studies. When she took early retirement in 1994, her teaching career in German literature at the University of Melbourne had spanned thirty years. Professor Adams produced a number of articles and reviews and books, including *Gottfried Benn's critique of substance* (1969), *The German tradition* (1971) and *Zeitgeschehen* (1975). After a period of heart-rending debilitation, Marion passed away on 6 January 1995.



05

### The David and Marion Adams Collection

Inspired by their visits to the great museums of Europe, David and Marion Adams began their own collection. Unable to afford expensive paintings, they purchased oriental rugs and kilims. From 1963 to 1973 a significant corpus of prints and drawings—from the Renaissance onward—was acquired, mostly from art dealers in Europe, reflecting Marion's research interests in German expressionism and literature.

Toward the end of this period the Adams started to add antiquities to their art collection. One of the first pieces was a Cypriot red ware jug with trefoil lip acquired from Mary Martin's (Antique Society) in Melbourne. In 1978 Marion acquired from Ohlendorffs—a well-known antiquities dealer in Munich—a fourteenth-century Byzantine ware bowl recovered from a shipwreck in the Mediterranean, and a Roman sandstone theatre mask.

By 1982 Marion and David's collecting had reached another level with major purchases of Classical antiquities from Melbourne dealer Graham Geddes. Following Marion's death David devoted much of his energy and attention to expanding the collection in his wife's memory, and antiquities became his focus.<sup>12</sup> In building up the collection David had in mind the visual enjoyment he and Marion had experienced when visiting public museums with encyclopaedic collections abroad. Inspired by this tradition David made further ethnographic purchases of African, Oceanic and American art to supplement the Classical antiquities.

Immediately apparent is the enormous variety—both chronologically and geographically—represented by the 200 artefacts that make up the Adams Collection. Equally diverse are the materials: within the collection are artefacts made of stone, terracotta, metal, glass, wood, textile and ivory. The earliest work, a primitive steatite human female idol produced by the Vinca culture (Danube) dating from the sixth millennium BCE stands in stark contrast to the latest datable piece in the collection, an elegant Persian (from Ghazni) pottery water strainer with loop handle and sophisticated grey painted decoration, from the fourteenth century CE.

The objects in the Adams Collection are a testament to the wide-ranging interests of Marion and David. The collection is deliberately broad in its scope but established with a purpose, for each object was acquired with a particular culture or period in mind. Some pieces were selected specifically for the cultural syncretism they display between 'classical' Western and 'oriental' Eastern traditions. The most visible example of this artistic manifestation is to be found in the Greco-Buddhist artworks of the collection. The grey schist bas relief panel with Bodhisattvas and Buddha figures from the third century CE and the delicately carved limestone female head from 100 CE, both from Pakistan, are products of the Gandhara style which developed out of Greek, Syrian, Persian, and Indian artistic influences.

These examples of Greco-Buddhist art are characterized by the strong idealistic realism of Hellenistic art that helped define the artistic (and, particularly, sculptural) canon for Buddhist art throughout the Asian continent up to the present. This cultural tradition developed over a period of close to 1000 years in Central Asia, between the conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE, and the Islamic conquests of the seventh century CE, and can be traced in other pieces found in the collection.

The artefacts selected for this exhibition may be grouped into several geographical regions: they include 18 pieces of Roman or Italic origin, 19 from Greece and Magna Graecia, 26 Egyptian objects, and 19 artefacts that span the civilisations of the ancient Near East, Iran (or Persia), Central Asia and the Indus Valley.

Across this vast terrain is represented an equally wide spectrum of cultural horizons: including the Villanovan, Etruscan, Daunian, and Italo-Corinthian; Athenian and Corinthian; Egyptian Pharaonic, Ptolemaic and Coptic; Mesopotamian (Syro-Hittites and Sumero-Elamites) and Parthian; Proto-Bactrian and Bactrian-Margiana; and Gandhara and Mehrgahr artistic traditions. Also included in the exhibition are a collection of 32 coins, mostly from the Roman Empire along with a small group from ancient Greece.

From the beginning, Marion and David Adams shared a common belief in one day bequeathing their collection to a public museum. From time spent abroad the Adams were aware that many of the objects in European and American collections existed because of benefaction. David Adams's decision to gift his collection to the University of Melbourne, where it will form part of the Classics and Archaeology Collection at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, is a gesture of outstanding generosity. It is David's wish that the collection be held in memory of his grandfather Robert Murray Heatley and his mother Catherine Milmore Heatley.<sup>13</sup>

The addition of the objects in the David and Marion Adams Collection will make an important contribution to the antiquities collection at the University of Melbourne, benefiting generations of students to come. Through the exhibitions and public programs offered by the Ian Potter Museum of Art the wider community will also be able to enjoy these items, fulfilling David and Marion's original ambition for the best works from their collection to be made available in a public museum.



06

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> A Lofthouse, *Who's who of Australian women*, Methuen Australia, North Ryde, NSW, 1982, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> AE Badger et al. (eds), *Liber Melburniensis 1915–1995*, Michael Thornton Publishing on behalf of Melbourne Grammar School, Canterbury, Vic., 1995, p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> D Adams, interview with the author, January 2009.

<sup>4</sup> D Adams.

<sup>5</sup> D Adams.

<sup>6</sup> Marion completed her PhD in 1967. M Adams, *Gottfried Benn (1886–1956) as an author of ontological nihilism*, PhD thesis, the University of Melbourne, 1967.

<sup>7</sup> *Who's who in Australia*, XXXIst Edition, Melbourne, 1995, p. 112

<sup>8</sup> AE Badger et al., p. 299.

<sup>9</sup> J Armstrong, 'Arts dean an ardent scholar of German', obituary, *The Australian*, 14 March 1995, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> C McAuliffe & P Yule (eds), *Treasures: highlights of the cultural collections of the University of Melbourne*, Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton, Vic., 2003, p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> J Armstrong.

<sup>12</sup> D Adams.

<sup>13</sup> D Adams.

**Cover Buff tapered pottery vessel with flared base and painted trees and goat decoration**

Kulli phase, c. 2000 BCE  
Collection of David and Marion Adams  
Promised gift to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

**01 Marble torso of Roman god Sylvanus**

Roman, 2nd century CE  
Collection of David and Marion Adams  
Promised gift to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

**02 Silver tetradrachm with head of Alexander and seated Zeus on the reverse**

Hellenistic (Babylon mint), c. 325 BCE  
Collection of David and Marion Adams  
Promised gift to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

**03 Red-figure krater (bowl used for mixing wine) by the Amykos Painter with pursuit scene with four figures**

Lucania, South Italy, 420 BCE  
Collection of David and Marion Adams  
Promised gift to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

**04 Grey schist bas relief panel with Bodhisattvas and Buddha figures and vine borders**

Gandhara, Pakistan, 3rd century CE  
Collection of David and Marion Adams  
Promised gift to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

**05 Sandstone head of Devi (goddess) with elaborate coiffure and earring**

Kushan, Mathura (north India), 3rd century CE  
Collection of David and Marion Adams  
Promised gift to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

**06 Pottery water strainer with loop handle and grey painted decoration**

Ghazni (Iran), 14th century CE  
Collection of David and Marion Adams  
Promised gift to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne



02

**Selected artefacts from the David and Marion Adams Collection**

Published by the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne, on the occasion of the exhibition *Selected artefacts from the David and Marion Adams Collection*, 16 April to 11 October 2009

© The Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

This catalogue is copyright. Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of research, criticism or review as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted by any means without the prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN 978-0-734040-78-7

Photography by Lee McRae  
Design by Streamer design and communication  
Printed in Australia by Braemar

The Ian Potter Museum of Art  
The University of Melbourne  
Victoria 3010 Australia  
Email [potter-info@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:potter-info@unimelb.edu.au)  
<http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au>

**Patron**

Lady Potter AC, AO



03