

The David and Marion Adams Collection

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—a milestone in the history of the University of Melbourne, as she was the first woman to hold this office. 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 Near East, Africa, India, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas. Following 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.

The artefacts selected for this exhibition may be grouped into several geographical regions: 18 pieces of Roman or Italic origin, 19 from Greece and Magna Graecia, 26 Egyptian objects, and 19 artefacts that span the civilizations 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 and Ptolemaic); Mesopotamian (Syro-Hittite and Sumero-Elamite) 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 with a small group from ancient Greece.

Professor Marion Adams 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 generous support given to the University of Melbourne by David Adams.

Ancient Rome

According to legend, Rome was founded in 753 BCE by twin brothers descended from the Trojan prince Aeneas. Romulus and Remus are the grandsons of the Latin King Numitor of Alba Longa. The king was ejected from his throne by his cruel brother Amulius while Numitor's daughter, Rhea Silvia, gave birth. Rhea Silvia was a vestal virgin who was raped by Mars, making the twins half-divine. The new king feared that Romulus and Remus would take back the throne, so they were to be drowned. A she-wolf (or a shepherd's wife in some accounts) saved and raised them, and when they were old enough, they returned the throne of Alba Longa to Numitor. The twins then founded their own city (on the River Tiber), but Romulus killed Remus in a quarrel over which one of them was to reign as the king of Rome (though some sources state the quarrel was about who was going to give their name to the city). Romulus became the source of the city's name.

Roman civilization shifted from a monarchy to an oligarchic republic to an increasingly autocratic empire. It came to dominate Western Europe and the Mediterranean region through conquest and assimilation.

Key dates in Roman history:

753 BCE	Traditional date for the foundation of Rome
509 BCE	Romans drive out their king and set up a republic
264–238 BCE	First Punic War against Carthage
221–238 BCE	Second Punic War
149–146 BCE	Third Punic War (Carthage is defeated)
146 BCE	Rome makes Greece part of its empire
73–71 BCE	Spartacus leads a revolt of slaves
55 and 54 BCE	Julius Caesar lands in Britain
44 BCE	Julius Caesar is murdered
27 BCE	Augustus (Octavian) becomes the first emperor of Rome
43 CE	Romans begin the conquest of Britain
79 CE	Volcano of Vesuvius buries Pompeii and Herculaneum
80 CE	The Colosseum opens in Rome
98 CE	Trajan, army general, becomes emperor
101–102 CE	Roman Empire is at its peak
122 CE	The building of Hadrian's Wall is begun in northern Britain
166 CE	Emperor Marcus Aurelius sends gifts to Chinese emperor
284 CE	Emperor Diocletian persecutes Christians
306 CE	Constantine the Great is proclaimed emperor
364 CE	Empire is split: west (Rome) and east (Constantinople)
410 CE	Barbarian attacks, Rome captured
476 CE	Western Roman Empire ends; Eastern Empire becomes the Byzantine Empire

Italic culture

Italic ('from Italy') is a term that is most commonly used to refer to the peoples (and languages) of Italy (including the islands of Sicily and Sardinia) from the historic period before the Roman Empire. Not all of these various peoples are linguistically or ethnically closely related. Some of them spoke Italic languages, others spoke Greek because of the arrival of Hellenic colonists, while others belonged to another Indo-European branch or were non-Indo-European.

The main candidate for the first introduction of Proto-Italic speakers to Italy is the Terramare culture (1500 BCE). The Villanovan culture was the earliest Iron Age culture of central and northern Italy, abruptly following the Bronze Age Terramare culture and giving way in the seventh century BCE to an increasingly orientalisising culture influenced by Greek traders, which was followed without a severe break by the Etruscan civilization.

The Villanovans introduced iron-working to the Italian peninsula; they practiced cremation and buried the ashes of their dead in pottery urns of distinctive double-cone shape. The culture is broadly divided into a Proto-Villanovan culture (Villanovan I) from 1100–900 BCE and the Villanovan culture proper (Villanovan II) from 900 to 700 BCE, when the Etruscan cities began to be founded.

Etruscan is the name given to the culture and way of life of a people of ancient Italy and Corsica whom the ancient Romans called *Etrusci* or *Tusci*. Etruscan sculpture was strongly influenced by the ancient Greeks and particularly strong in this tradition were figurative sculpture in terracotta (often life-size on sarcophagi or temples). Cast bronze, wall-painting and metalworking (especially engraved bronze mirrors) are other hallmarks of Etruscan culture.

Magna Graecia

Magna Graecia (Latin for Greater Greece) is the name of the area in southern Italy and Sicily that in the eighth century BCE was colonized by Greek settlers, who brought with them the lasting imprint of their Hellenic civilization.

In the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, for various reasons that may have included famine, population pressure, climate change, the search for new commercial outlets and ports, and expulsion from their homeland, Greeks began to settle in southern Italy. At this same time, Greek colonies were established in places as widely separated as the eastern coast of the Black Sea and Massalia (Marseille). They included settlements in Sicily and the southern part of the Italian peninsula. The Romans called the area of Sicily and the southern part or 'foot of the boot' of Italy Magna Graecia, since it was so densely inhabited by the Greeks. The ancient geographers differed on whether the term included Sicily or merely Apulia and Calabria, Strabo being the most prominent advocate of the wider definitions.

With this colonization, Greek culture was exported to Italy, in its dialects of the ancient Greek language, its religious rites and its traditions of the independent *polis*. An original Hellenic civilization soon developed, later interacting with the native Italic and Latin civilizations. The most important cultural transplant was the Chalcidean/Cumaeian variety of the Greek alphabet, which was adopted by the Etruscans; the old Italic alphabet subsequently evolved into the Latin alphabet, which became the most widely used alphabet in the world.

Following the Pyrrhic War (280–275 BCE), Magna Graecia was absorbed into the Roman Republic.

Ancient Greece

The term ancient Greece refers to the period of Greek history that lasted from the Greek Dark Ages c. 1100 BCE and the Dorian invasion, to 146 BCE and the Roman conquest of Greece after the Battle of Corinth.

Ancient Greece is generally considered to be the seminal culture that provided the foundation of Western civilization. The civilization of the ancient Greeks has had an immense influence on art, literature, architecture, political systems, philosophy, and the history of science.

Ancient Greek history is divided into periods that may be linked with changes in pottery styles and political events. The Greek Dark Ages (c. 1100 – c. 750 BCE) features the use of geometric designs on pottery. The Archaic period (c. 750 – c. 480 BCE) follows, in which artists made larger free-standing sculptures in stiff, hieratic poses with a distinctive Archaic smile. The Archaic period is often taken to end with the overthrow of the last tyrant of Athens in 510 BCE. The Classical period (c. 480–323 BCE) is characterized by a style that was considered by later observers to be exemplary ('classical'): one architectural example is the Parthenon located on the Acropolis in Athens. The Classical period is also characterized by black- and red-figure pottery. The Hellenistic period (323–146 BCE) is when Greek culture and power expanded into the Near East. This period begins with the death of Alexander and ends with the Roman conquest.

Key periods of ancient Greece:

Bronze Age

Minoan civilization	c. 3100–1500 BCE
Mycenaean civilization	c. 1500–1100 BCE

Iron Age

Dark Age (including Geometric period)	c. 1100–750 BCE
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Classical Age

Archaic period	c. 750–480 BCE
Classical period	c. 480–336 BCE
Hellenistic period	c. 336–30 BCE

Ancient Egypt

There is evidence of human activity in north-eastern Africa since the Middle Pleistocene period. By the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic, between 90 000 and 10 000 years ago, there was a gradual movement of hunter-gatherer populations into the prehistoric Nile Valley. Traces of these early peoples survive in the form of stone tools and rock carvings on the higher terraces along the Nile and in the oases. As the nomadic hunter-gatherers came to settle along the edges of the Nile Valley, a transition to a settled lifestyle dependent on agriculture took place.

By the Predynastic period, cemeteries were located in the low desert near the settlements along the Nile Valley. Finds from settlements and cemeteries suggest that the north (or lower Egypt) and south (or upper Egypt) of the country were culturally distinct. The south was administered from the city of Hierakonpolis, while Buto was the capital of the north.

Around 3000 BCE, Egypt emerged as one country, united under the single rule of a divine king. The first ruler of the united land and founder of the 1st Dynasty was King Narmer from southern Egypt. In the third century BCE the Egyptian priest Manetho organized the chronology of ancient Egypt into a framework of thirty-one dynasties stretching from the beginning of historical times through to the Persian period.

Egyptologists group these dynasties into kingdoms and intermediate periods:

Early Dynastic	1st–2nd Dynasty 2920–2650 BCE
Old Kingdom	3rd–8th Dynasty 2650–2135 BCE
1st Intermediate period	9th–11th Dynasty 2135–2040 BCE
Middle Kingdom	11th–12th Dynasty 2040–1785 BCE
2nd Intermediate period	13th–17th Dynasty 1785–1550 BCE
New Kingdom	18th–20th Dynasty 1550–1070 BCE
3rd Intermediate period	21st–25th Dynasty 1070–665 BCE
Late period	26th–31st Dynasty 665–332 BCE
Ptolemaic period	332–30 BCE
Roman period	30 BCE – CE 395
Coptic period	395–640 CE

Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia comes from the Greek word meaning 'land between the two rivers'. The land through which the Tigris and Euphrates rivers flow is also known as the 'fertile crescent' and the 'cradle of civilization'. Some of the earliest experiments in agriculture and irrigation, the invention of writing, the birth of mathematics and the development of urban life evolved in this area (modern Syria and Iraq).

By 8000 BCE, agricultural communities were already established in northern Mesopotamia. Early in the sixth millennium BCE, farming communities, relying on irrigation rather than rainfall, had settled in the south along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Monumental architecture and more elaborate forms of artistic representation reflect an increasingly differentiated social hierarchy. Forms of administration and recording developed as cities emerged across the region. By 2500 BCE, cuneiform inscriptions describe rivalry between city-states, with rulers building temples and palaces decorated with royal imagery proclaiming their power. Within two centuries, the city-states of Mesopotamia were unified by Sargon of Akkad, who created the first empire. The Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires were conquered by the Achaemenid Empire and they remained under Persian (Sassanid Dynasty) rule until the Islamic conquests of seventh century CE.

Key periods of ancient Mesopotamian history:

Pre-pottery Neolithic	c. 10 000–7000 BCE
Pottery Neolithic	c. 7000–5500 BCE
Chalcolithic	c. 5500–3000 BCE
Uruk period	c. 4000–3100 BCE
Jemdet Nasr period	c. 3100–2900 BCE
Early Dynastic I–III	2900–2350 BCE
Akkadian	2350–2150 BCE
Ur III	2100–2000 BCE
Assyrian (Babylonian)	2000–1000 BCE
Neo-Assyrian Empire	1000–600 BCE
Neo-Babylonian Empire	600–500 BCE
Achaemenid (Persian)	550–330 BCE
Seleucid	312–63 BCE
Parthian	247 BCE – 228 CE
Sasanian	226–650 CE
Islamic conquests	632–732 CE

Indus Valley

The Indus Valley civilization flourished in the Indus river basin. Primarily centred in western India (Gujarat, Haryana and Rajasthan) and Pakistan (Sindh, Punjab, extending west into the Balochistan province), remains have been excavated from Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Iran as well. The Indus is one of the world's three earliest urban civilizations along with Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt.

The Indus Valley civilization was not discovered until the 1920s. Most of its ruins, even its major cities, remain to be excavated and the ancient Indus civilization script has not been deciphered. The mature phase (2600–1900 BCE) of this civilization is technically known as the Harappan civilization, after the first of its cities to be unearthed (in Pakistan).

The site of Harappa is one of the only sites where an entire sequence has been recovered that spans the history of Indus cities. The architecture and city planning of Harappa was similar to that of Mohenjo-daro. These cities were well planned with wide streets, public and private wells, drains, bathing platforms and reservoirs. It is now possible to define at least five major periods of development that represent a continuous process of cultural development.

Period 1	Emergence of Indus civilization	c. 5500–3300 BCE
Period 2	Early Harappa phase	c. 3300–2600 BCE
Period 3	Mature Harappa phase	c. 2600–1900 BCE
Period 3A	Harappa phase A	c. 2600–2450 BCE
Period 3B	Harappa phase B	c. 2450–2200 BCE
Period 3C	Harappa phase C	c. 2200–1900 BCE
Period 4	Transitional Harappa phase	c. 1900–1800 BCE
Period 5	Late Harappa phase	c. 1800–1300 BCE
	Post-Harappan cultures	c. 1300–200 BCE

Origins of ancient coinage

Coins first appeared in Asia Minor (Anatolia, modern Turkey) during the 7th century (c. 650) BCE, when symbols guaranteeing weight and purity were first impressed onto small pieces of electrum, a naturally occurring alloy of gold and silver. The first coins made commerce so much easier that Greek and Phoenician cities all around the Mediterranean soon began to issue their own coinage.

Coins were cast only when they were too large to be struck. The vast majority of ancient coins were manufactured by striking a blank (flans) between two engraved dies, the upper (reverse) set in a punch, and the lower (obverse) set in an anvil. Striking is much more efficient than casting for mass production.

The use of coins for propaganda purposes was a Greek invention; they were an ideal way of disseminating a political message. The first such coin was a commemorative decadrachm issued by Athens following the Greek victory in the Persian Wars (c. 449–448 BCE). On these coins the owl of Athens is depicted facing the viewer with wings outstretched, holding a spray of olive leaves. The message was that Athens was a powerful and victorious but peace-loving state. After the conquests of Alexander the Great, religious images were replaced by those of Hellenistic kings. As Rome absorbed the Hellenistic kingdoms, portraits of Roman emperors appeared on imperial Roman coins. The Byzantine Empire continued for a thousand years after the fall of the west, during which imperial portraits were replaced by iconic depictions of Christ and the saints. Persia meanwhile evolved a unique numismatic style: the thick silver flan of the classical world was replaced by a thin, spread flan that was later to be used throughout the world.

Ancient Greek coins

The history of ancient Greek coinage can be divided into three periods: the Archaic, the Classical and the Hellenistic.

In the Archaic period the Greek world was divided into at least a hundred self-governing cities and towns (in Greek, *poleis*), and most of these issued their own coins. Some coins circulated widely beyond their *polis*, indicating that they were being used in inter-city trade; the first example appears to have been the silver drachm (a 'handful' or 'grasp') of Aegina. In about 510 BCE Athens began producing a fine silver tetradrachm (four drachm) coin. Over time, Athens's plentiful supply of silver from the mines at Laurion and its increasing dominance in trade made this the pre-eminent standard.

The Classical period saw Greek coinage reach a high level of technical and aesthetic quality. Larger cities now produced a range of fine silver and gold coins, most bearing a portrait of their patron god or goddess or a legendary hero on one side, and a symbol of the city on the other. The use of inscriptions on coins also began, usually naming the issuing city. The wealthy cities of Sicily produced some especially fine coins.

The Hellenistic period was characterized by the spread of Greek culture across a large part of the known world. Greek-speaking kingdoms were established in Egypt and Syria, and for a time also in Iran and as far east as what is now Afghanistan and north-western India. Greek traders spread Greek coins across this vast area, and the new kingdoms soon began to produce their own coins.

Ancient Roman coins

Roman coins appeared in about 280 BCE. The Roman currency during most of the Roman Republic and the western half of the Roman Empire consisted of coins including the aureus (gold), the denarius (silver), the sestertius (bronze), the dupondius (bronze), and the as (copper). These were used from the middle of the third century BCE until the middle of the third century CE.

During the third century, the denarius was replaced by the double denarius, now usually known as the antoninianus or radiate, which was then itself replaced during the monetary reform of Diocletian which created denominations such as the argenteus (silver) and the follis (silvered bronze). After these reforms Roman coinage consisted mainly of the gold solidus and small bronze denominations. This trend continued to the end of the empire in the west.

Roman mints were spread widely across the Empire, and sometimes used for propaganda purposes and the propagation of myths. In 269 BCE an issue of Roman silver coins bore as its reverse type a representation of the twins Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf. A slightly later series had the helmeted head of a female personification of Roma on the obverse, and Victory on the reverse. Such types are signs of Rome's growing self-confidence and awareness of her enormous power. The populace often learned of a new Roman emperor when coins appeared with the new emperor's portrait. Some of the emperors who ruled only for a short time made sure that a coin bore their image; Quietus, for example, ruled only part of the Roman Empire from 260 to 261 CE, and yet he issued several coins bearing his image.