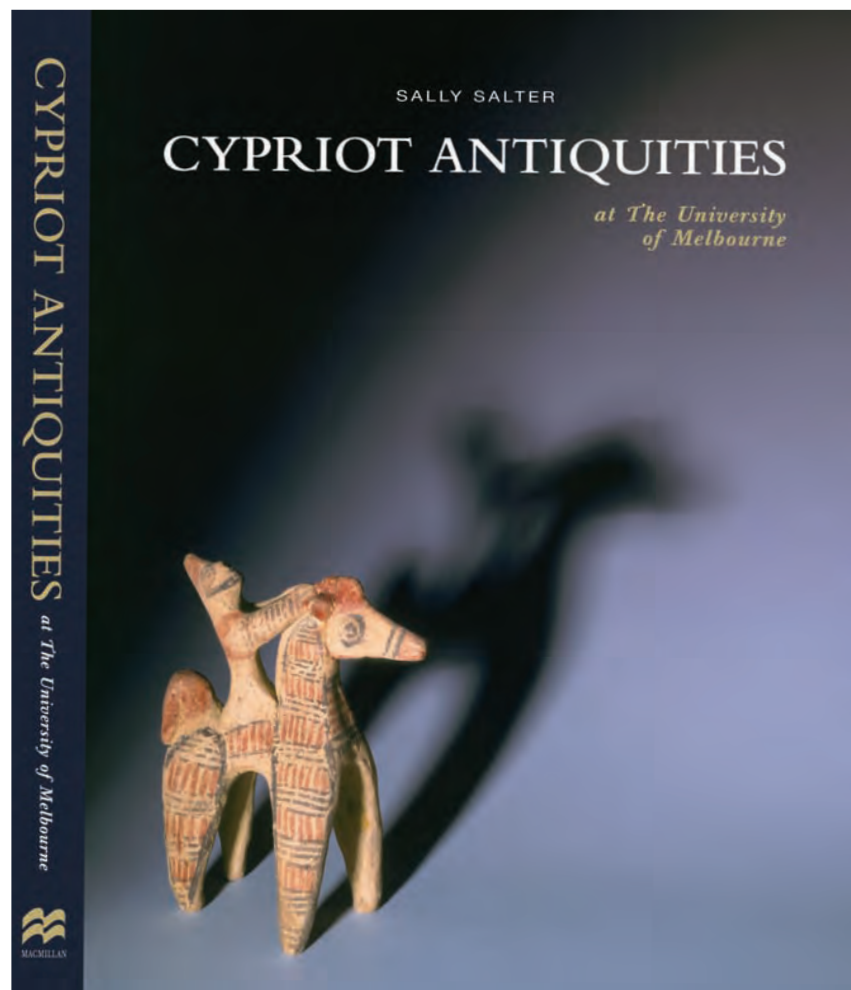


Cypriot antiquities at the University of Melbourne

Sally Salter



This complete catalogue of the Cypriot holdings in the University's Classics and Archaeology Collection was published by Macmillan in late 2008. The author, Sally Salter, reminisced recently about working with the collection and producing the book.

I loved researching and writing up the ancient artefacts from Cyprus for the University's catalogue *Cypriot antiquities at the University of Melbourne*. Prior to starting the book I had been involved for several years in unpacking and shelving and marking the University's accession numbers on the bases of the Cypriot vessels as they were delivered from our warehouse. Some also required mending. Each had to be measured and photographed and recorded by hand on standardised forms in large blue binders. Next I assisted while all the items were re-photographed from many different angles to be put on the internet. Finally the book could be commenced, and, working on a part-time basis, and with three trips to Cyprus, I took about nine years.

For me it had all started with the luck of being in the right place at the

The dust jacket of the book, featuring cat. no. 90, Equestrian figurine, Cypro-Archaic I-II, pottery, bichrome, height: 14.3cm. Reg. no. 1987.0226, Classics and Archaeology Collection, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

right time, for the University had bought the major part of its Cypriot collection from the Australian Institute of Archaeology in 1987, just a few years before I did the final year of my Bachelor of Letters (Hons) in archaeology. Professor Antonio Sagona asked several of us students to start cataloguing this material in our spare time, and at the end of the year I was able to continue working on the project, having recently retired from secondary teaching. Researching whether any other similar vessels had been excavated, and by whom, and in which museums of the world they were now held, and what insights these vessels yielded into the people and history of Cyprus, was the most fascinating part of the writing. The most trying time was the years spent endeavouring to raise money for the publication.

When sufficient grants were thankfully eventually secured, I was able to bring the research up to date, as catalogues from distinguished galleries and universities and archaeological reports from contemporary excavators are constantly being published. More recent

publications include the collections of the Fitzwilliam Museum at the University of Cambridge, the Hunterian Museum at the University of Glasgow, the National Gallery of Victoria, and the public collections in Sweden and Denmark. One fairly recently excavated site in Cyprus that has yielded comparable material for my book is the village of Marki Alonia, dug by Victorian archaeologists David Frankel and Jenny Webb. Another fascinating experience was locating and photographing for my book several long-since abandoned sites excavated by the late Professor James R. Stewart from the University of Sydney. The University of Melbourne had partly financed Professor Stewart's expeditions in the 1950s and 1960s, and was subsequently allocated many of the esteemed pieces that he brought back to Australia. Nowadays such finds are retained in their countries of origin.

The Cypriot objects in the University of Melbourne's collection date from the early Bronze Age (c.2500 BCE), through the middle and late Bronze Age, and all phases of the Iron Age and Hellenistic times to

the Roman era (c.200 CE). They are principally pottery items, including some very handsome painted jugs, amphorae and bowls from the much-admired Cypriot Geometric and Archaic periods. Also included are a range of terracottas, oil lamps, coins and bronze and copper pieces. In *Cypriot antiquities at the University of Melbourne* the fine photographs by the University's own photography and media department and the artistic reproduction by Macmillan reveal this collection to be a worthy inclusion among the best in the world. It is housed in the Ian Potter Museum of Art on the Parkville campus and is frequently on free public exhibition.

Sally Salter, *A catalogue of Cypriot antiquities at the University of Melbourne and in the Ian Potter Museum of Art* (South Yarra: Macmillan Art, 2008), designed and edited by Jenny Zimmer, was produced with the generous support of the Spencer-Pappas Trust, and assistance from the University of Melbourne Publication Subcommittee, the Research and Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Arts, and the Centre for Classics and Archaeology in the School of Historical Studies. It is the second book in Macmillan's series on the University's collections, the first being Peter Connor and Heather Jackson, *A catalogue of Greek vases in the collection of the University of Melbourne at the Ian Potter Museum of Art* (South Melbourne: Macmillan, 2000).