



Dale Trendall

Arthur Dale Trendall 1909–1995

I CAME TO KNOW OF DALE TRENDALL during my days in Manchester in the late 1940s, when as a MA student I was asked by my supervisor, the late Professor T B L Webster, to study the collection of Italiote vases in the Manchester Museum, and started corresponding with him soon after, since he was already considered to be the authority on the pottery and vase-painting of the Greek colonies of South Italy. His first two books, *Pæstan Pottery* and *Frühitaliotische Vasen*, had already appeared before the war and these two books together with Noël Moon's pioneer article 'Some Early South Italian Vase-Painters' (BSR 1929) and Beazley's 'Groups of Campanian Red-Figure' (JAS 1943) formed the major bibliography on the subject.

I first met Trendall in person in 1951 in London, where I was working on Apulian red-figure vase-painting for a London University Doctoral thesis. Trendall had just embarked on his annual trips to Europe and America and our first meeting took place in the storerooms of the British Museum. This meeting led to regular correspondence between us, which lasted until recently, when he became too sick to write. We also met annually at Oxford where I had gone from London to do a DPhil course under Beazley, and later in the United States, first at the University of Mississippi and then at Bryn Mawr College, where I had moved to take my first teaching jobs, and where Trendall came for short stays as a visiting professor. The result of this collaboration was the publication of our first co-authored book, *Apulian Red-Figure Vase-Painters of the Plain Style*, which was substantially based on my London PhD thesis and which appeared in 1961. The publication of this book proved to be very difficult. Those were pre-fax and pre-email days and communication between Trendall, who had already gone from Sydney to Canberra in 1954, myself at Bryn Mawr College, the editor in Baltimore and the printers in Tokyo was, to say the least, difficult. By that time it had become clear to us both that our collaboration on Apulian red-figure vase-painting would last long years and at the end of 1961 I came to Australia to take up a position in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Sydney.

Since that time until the completion of the second supplement to *Apulian Red-Figure Vase-Painters* I visited Trendall for long weekends' work about every month, first in Canberra and later in Menzies College at La Trobe University, to where he retired in 1969 as a Fellow of that

university. The result of this collaboration was the publication of *RVAp I* (1978) and *RVAp II* (1982) as well as two supplements, the first of which appeared in 1983 and the second in 1991–92.

This collaborative work, however, was only part of Trendall's productivity. After his move to La Trobe, where he spent the last twenty six years of his life, he devoted himself almost exclusively to research with astonishing results in scholarly output. *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily* appeared in 1967 and was followed by three supplements, the last of which was published in 1983. A second large edition of his *Pastan Pottery* under the title *The Red-Figured Vases of Pastum* appeared in 1987 and his handbook *Red Figure Vases of South Italy and Sicily* was published in 1989. Concurrently he wrote many booklets, articles, reports on archaeological work in South Italy, which he visited on an annual basis, and catalogues of collections which he himself had helped to form. The Logie Collection in the University of Canterbury in Christchurch and the collection of Greek vases in the National Gallery of Victoria were formed on his advice and subsequently published by him. His book on fish-plates with the collaboration of Ian McPhee appeared in 1987.

Trendall, however, was not only a great scholar, he was also a distinguished academic administrator. During his time in Sydney he enriched the collection of the Nicholson Museum, of which he was the honorary curator, with judicious purchases of objects, and he is still remembered for his brilliant chairing of the Professorial Board of the University and the ability he displayed as Acting Vice-Chancellor during the year when Professor Stephen Roberts was overseas on sabbatical leave.

In 1954 he moved to Canberra where he became Master of University House and between 1958–64 Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University. Those were pioneer days in the new capital and Trendall played an important part in its development (he was a member of the National Capital Planning Committee [1958–67]) and in the development of tertiary education in Australia mainly through his appointment as a member of the Australian Universities Commission, a position he held for long years (1959–70). He was on friendly terms with the then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, who appointed him to advise on the design of Australia's decimal currency and to serve as the inaugural chairman of the Council of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. Trendall was a Foundation Fellow both of the Australian Humanities Research Council and of the Academy, in which he was

influential in arranging the Royal Charter, the Coat of Arms and the Crest.

As Master of University House, he displayed great ability in running it at all levels, keeping a vigilant eye not only on students, but also on the grounds, the cleaners and, above all, the kitchen of the house. I remember vividly his saying to me one day that he would find it much more difficult to replace a chef than many academics. The high standards he kept in University House earned him the joking title of 'the best educated hotel manager in the country'.

At the height of his career in Canberra his public persona was that of a distinguished scholar, a brilliant academic administrator, and a highly desirable, witty dinner guest, who moved comfortably not only among academics but also in the quickly developing social circle of the newly built embassies in the national capital. He loved presiding over the high table in University House, which he tried to run on the model of Oxbridge colleges. He was a man with boundless ambition and energy and determined in the pursuit of his plans. I remember his telling me at one of our after-dinner chats that people could not give him a heart attack, he gave them to others.

Behind this façade, however, there was another Trendall whom I came to know gradually over the very long period of my association with him. This Trendall was not the man who had become a Companion of the Order of Australia and the Fellow of a number of Academies, but a lonely person thirsting for human relationships, which were not easy for him to establish, since he was emotionally eccentric and at the same time almost obsessively conventional. This was a conflict in him, which he never resolved.

I remember saying to him at our last meeting, when, being sick, he predicted his imminent death: "Dale, you had a good long life, what else can a human being hope for?" He corrected me: "I had a full life, not a good life, Alexander". Dale Trendall, like all other human beings, had his weaknesses, but he was a great scholar and his impressive library and archives which he formed over long years and bequeathed to La Trobe for the establishment of a centre of classical studies will make that university a very important centre of research. Trendall died on 13 November 1995. He well deserves the place he secured for himself in the Pantheon of great twentieth-century classical archaeologists and art historians.

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