

A GREEN-GLAZED "MODIOLUS" FROM KENCHREAI

(PLATES 74-75)

THE remarkable vessel in the Corinth Museum illustrated on Plates 74-75¹ has been published previously.² The opportunity of presenting reproductions in color makes it appropriate to offer here a summary account of the vase, extracted in large measure from the earlier publication.

Discovered in 1962 by a bulldozer levelling ground near the seashore, some 675 meters south of the southern mole of the ancient harbor of Kenchreai, the modiolus represents part of the burial offerings of an interment, possibly in a limestone sarcophagus which was also disturbed. The other objects which seem to have completed the burial group ("Pergamene" saucers, a piriform jug, unguentaria, a mug, and a lamp) may all be dated with confidence in the first half of the first century of our era.³ The green-glazed vessel was found intact, was shattered casually as a result of the unconcern of the bulldozer operators, but has been reconstructed and restored. The state of the vessel before restoration is illustrated in Plate 75, a.

The modiolus is wheel-turned, of fine, hard, reddish clay. It is covered with a dark green, vitreous glaze inside and out (except for the base inside the foot, which

¹ C-62-127. Ht. 0.147 m.; diam. of lip 0.168 m.; diam. of foot 0.102 m. The color transparencies for the figures on Plate 74 were taken by Misses Ioannidou and Bartzioti of Athens; the color printing was executed in Athens by I. Makris S.A. The presentation of the color plate here is made possible by the great generosity of Mr. Frederick C. Crawford, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

² H. S. Robinson, "A Green-glazed 'Modiolus' from Kenchreai," *Χαριστήριον εις 'Α. Κ. 'Ορλάνδον*, III, Athens, 1966, pp. 179-185. To the bibliography in that article should be added the following titles dealing with vitreous-glazed wares of early Roman times and with modiola in a variety of materials:

F. F. Jones, "Rhosica Vasa," *A.J.A.*, XLIX, 1945, pp. 45-51.

J. H. C. Kern, "Zwei buntgeflechte Glaskelche des 1. Jhts. n. Chr. in Leiden," *Archaeol. Classica*, VIII, 1956, pp. 56-63.

J. H. C. Kern, "Römische Modioli des 1. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.," *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., XVI, 1963, pp. 400-405.

A silver modiolus in the Chicago Natural History Museum, inv. 24313 (cf. A. Oliver, Jr., *Bull. of the Metropol. Mus. of Art*, XXIII, 5, Jan., 1965, p. 181, fig. 5).

A marble modiolus decorated in relief with a Bacchic scene, in the Capitoline Museum, Rome (H. S. Jones, ed., *The Sculptures of the Museo Capitolino*, Oxford, 1912, p. 94, no. 14, pl. 27).

A straight-sided modiolus of clay with applied relief decoration from Schitul (25 km. south of Costanza) in Rumania (H. Slobozianu, *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Veche*, X, 1959, pp. 285-286). I owe this reference to Mr. John Hayes.

³ For details of this and other matters connected with the modiolus, see the article cited at the head of note 2, above.

is reserved, Pl. 75, b); traces of a dull red glaze-paint on the base suggest that there was an under-glaze of alkaline type. The shape is that of a tall drinking vessel with flaring rim and a single vertical handle (profile, Pl. 75, c).⁴ The relief decoration (Pl. 75, d) combines the techniques of *barbotine* and *appliqué* ornament. The *barbotine* ornament is executed in a thick white clay slip over which the vitreous glaze assumes a light green color contrasting strongly with the darker green tones where the glaze covers the basic red clay of the vessel. The applied ornament is executed in a very fine, dark buff clay; but some portions of this were further covered with white slip before the vitreous glaze was applied. Of the *appliqué* decoration large portions stand out in the round, detached from the body of the vase (some of the tendrils, the vine leaves and bunches of grapes, the fillets, and the rosette); the vine leaves may have been prepared in a mould, but most of the *appliqué* ornament seems to have been executed by hand.

At the bottom of the wall on the exterior appears an egg-and-dart pattern, executed *en barbotine*. The body is decorated with two large complexes of leaves, tendrils and fruit of the grape, ivy and olive. The two complexes meet at the front (opposite the handle), where they are joined by an eight-petalled rosette at the base of the wall. The leaves, tendrils and fruit of the ivy and the leaves of the olive are executed *en barbotine*; the tendrils, leaves and fruit of the grape and the tendrils and fruit of the olive are applied. Below the rim, on the front of the vase, appear two birds, facing, *en barbotine*; to right and left of the birds are floral patterns resembling a *fleur de lys*, attached by tendrils to the ivy. An *appliqué* fillet hangs from the upper extremity of the handle on either side. Below the handle appears a palmette, upside down, *en barbotine*.

The shape of this *modiolus* is paralleled in many vessels in glass, metal, clay and even marble. Two very striking green-glazed *modioli* with relief decoration, from Komotini⁵ and Olbia,⁶ must have been produced in the same workshop as our vessel from Kenchreai. That workshop was probably located in northwestern Asia Minor.

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⁴ The handle consists of two rolls of clay united in the lower half but separated above and curving out to join the body on either side of the axis of the handle; just below the point of separation, the two rolls are bound by an encircling band of clay, from beneath which rises a projecting lug which served as a thumb-rest.

⁵ Berlin, Antiquarium, inv. 30141. R. Zahn, *81. Winckelmannsprogramm*, Berlin, 1923. The so-called "skeleton beaker."

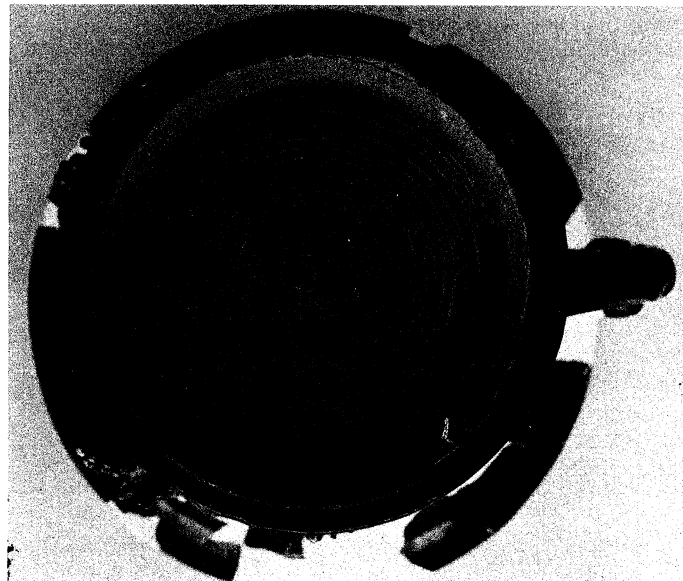
⁶ Moscow, Pushkin Museum, inv. II 16 627. *Antichnoe Iskusstvo, Katalog* (Pushkin Museum), Moscow, 1963, p. 37, pl. (30).



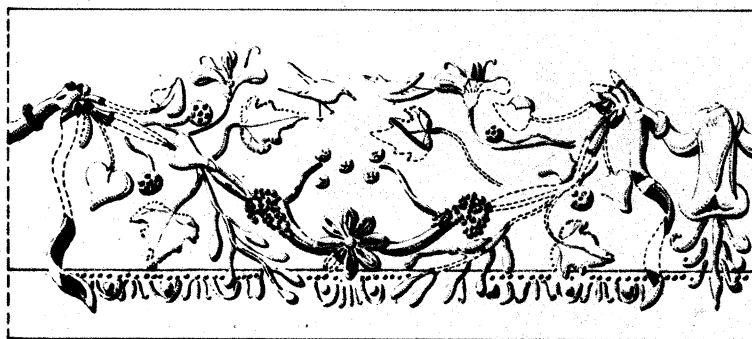
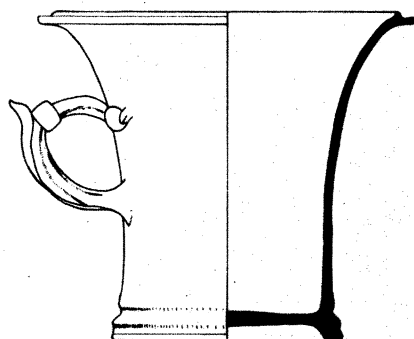
HENRY S. ROBINSON: A GREEN-GLAZED "MODIOLUS" FROM KENCHREAI



a. Before Restoration



b. The Base



c. and d. Profile and Development of the Relief Ornament (Mrs. Iro Athanassiades-Trahanatzi)