
A LATE ROMAN AMPULLA WITH THE DEPICTION OF SAINT MENAS FROM ANDRIAKE CHURCH B

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ABSTRACT:

This study elaborates on an ampulla found in Church B in Andriake harbor. Church B, one of the six churches in Andriake, was built in the early 5th century AD and was in use until the early 7th century. There is a depiction of Saint Menas in the gesture of *orans* on both sides of the ampulla, which was found in the church during the excavation between 2011-2013. Additionally, on both sides of Menas, there are camels bent over on his feet. The ampulla, thought to have been produced in the Saint Menas sanctuary, is dated to the early 7th century AD.

Saint Menas is one of the military saints born to an Egyptian Christian family. After declaring that he was a Christian, he was executed and killed, and his lifeless body was tried to be burned in the fire. His body, saved from the fire by the believers of Menas, was taken to Egypt and buried in Abu Mina in the Mareotis Region. A large church dedicated to the saint was built in Abu Mina in the 4th century AD. After Abu Mina became a complex city, ampullae with depictions of Saint Menas were crafted there. These ampullae were taken to their destinations by those who came to the saint's church to fulfill their sacred pilgrimage, by putting holy water and oil, which are believed to heal their inner world. The ampulla found in Andriake must have been brought to Andriake by someone from Myra who went to Abu Mina for a holy pilgrimage.

RÉSUMÉ: UNE AMPULLA DE LA FIN DE L'ÉPOQUE ROMAINE AVEC LA REPRÉSENTATION DE SAINT MENAS PROVENANT DE L'ÉGLISE B D'ANDRIAKE

Cette étude se concentre sur une Ampulla découverte dans l'église B d'Andriake. Datée du début du VII^e siècle, cette ampoule présente une représentation de Saint Menas en position d'orant, entouré de chameaux. L'église B, construite au Ve siècle, a été utilisée jusqu'au VII^e siècle. L'ampoule a été mise au jour lors de fouilles menées entre 2011 et 2013 et est présumée avoir été produite dans le sanctuaire de Saint Menas à Abu Mina. Saint Menas était l'un des saints militaires nés dans une famille chrétienne égyptienne. Après avoir déclaré sa foi chrétienne, il fut exécuté et son corps, sauvé du bûcher par ses fidèles, fut enterré à Abu Mina en Égypte. Des ampoules avec des représentations de Saint Menas étaient produites à Abu Mina et utilisées par les pèlerins qui se rendaient dans son église pour accomplir leur pèlerinage sacré. L'ampoule retrouvée à Andriake aurait été rapportée par quelqu'un de Myra qui était parti en pèlerinage à Abu Mina.

KEYWORDS: Andriake Church B, Myra (Lycia), Saint Menas, Pilgrimage, Ampulla/Pilgrim Flask.

MOTS-CLÉS : Église B d'Andriake, Myra (Lycie), Saint Menas, Pèlerinage, Ampulla/Flasque de pèlerin.

Introduction

The harbor settlement of Myra, Andriake¹, was established in what is now called Çayağzı locality, where the Kocarçay (*Andriakos*) river empties into the sea in the southwest of the main city (Fig. 1).

It is noted that Andriake, which is thought to have developed in parallel with the history of Myra², flourished during the Classical Period (4th century BC)³. It is assumed that the port, which worked effectively during the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods, was partially abandoned toward the end of the 7th century AD⁴.

¹ The settlement is also defined as an *emporion* (trade center) apart from *epineion* (harbor & anchorage) in the sources (For detailed information, see Aygün 2018, 5).

² On the historical process of Myra, see Çevik 2010, 53-80; Çevik and Bulut 2010, 25-37; Alkan 2013; Çevik 2016, 224-237.

³ Bulut and Şengül 2014, 84; Aygün 2018, 131-137; Öz 2022a, 221.

⁴ Çevik and Bulut 2010, 39; Duggan and Aygün 2010, 161; Bulut and Şengül 2014, 88; Çevik et al. 2014, 225.



Fig. 1: Location of Andriake (Thomsen 2020, 13, Abb. 1)

Although a small number of coins and ceramics dated to the 11th-13th centuries AD found during the excavations suggest that the harbor was used during these periods, the quantity of finds is not sufficient to prove this situation⁵. In Andriake, Hadrian's period was the most intense period of reconstruction activities⁶. Due to the increase in Rome's need for grain, the Granarium (*Horrea Hadriani*) was built during this period, where the wheat brought from Egypt was stored⁷. Andriake maintained its eminence in the Late Roman/Early Byzantine period. Theodosius II (408-450 AD) created a new state by separating Lycia from Lykaonia and designated Myra as the religious and administrative center of this state⁸. Thanks to Myra, the metropolis of Lycia, the importance of the port Andriake has also augmented. The dating of the churches in the port to the 5th-6th centuries AD⁹ proves this situation. Of the six churches identified at Andriake, four are located in the southern settlement of the harbor (Fig. 2). One of these is Church B, where the ampulla, which is the subject of the article, was found (Fig. 3). The beginning of the 5th century AD is suggested¹⁰ for the first construction date of the building, which was excavated between 2011-2013¹¹. It is known that the church, which was thought to have been destroyed by the earthquake in 529 AD, was rebuilt by Emperor Justinian I¹². The church must have been used by pilgrims¹³ who came to Myra by sea to fulfill their pilgrimage until the beginning of the 7th century AD¹⁴.

Church B is a large church with a three-nave basilica plan. Its apse is in the east and is relatively well-preserved. One of the two chapels added later to the northeast (south) was used as a baptistery¹⁵. The entrance of the building opens to the port street in the north (Fig. 3).

Saint Menas and Abu Mina

Menas is one of the Christian military saints¹⁶ born into an Egyptian family. While his father, Eudoxius, was a senior administrator (a colonel in the army) in Egypt, he was slandered by his brother Atălôs (Anatolius) and

⁵ Bulut and Şengül 2014, 88.

⁶ Çevik et al. 2014, 225, 228.

⁷ Çevik et al. 2014, 228.

⁸ Çevik et al. 2014, 228; Akyürek 2014, 53.

⁹ Tekinalp 2000, 80-116, 289-291.

¹⁰ Bulut and Şengül 2014, 86; Akyürek 2014, 55.

¹¹ For excavations, see. Çevik et al. 2012, 69-70; Çevik et al. 2013, 95-96.

¹² Foss 1994, 2, 23; Akyürek 2014, 55.

¹³ Akyürek 2014, 55.

¹⁴ The latest dated coin found in the church belongs to the Maurician period (Bulut and Şengül 2014, 86).

¹⁵ Akyürek 2014, 55.

¹⁶ Grotowski 2010, 59-60, 90-91.

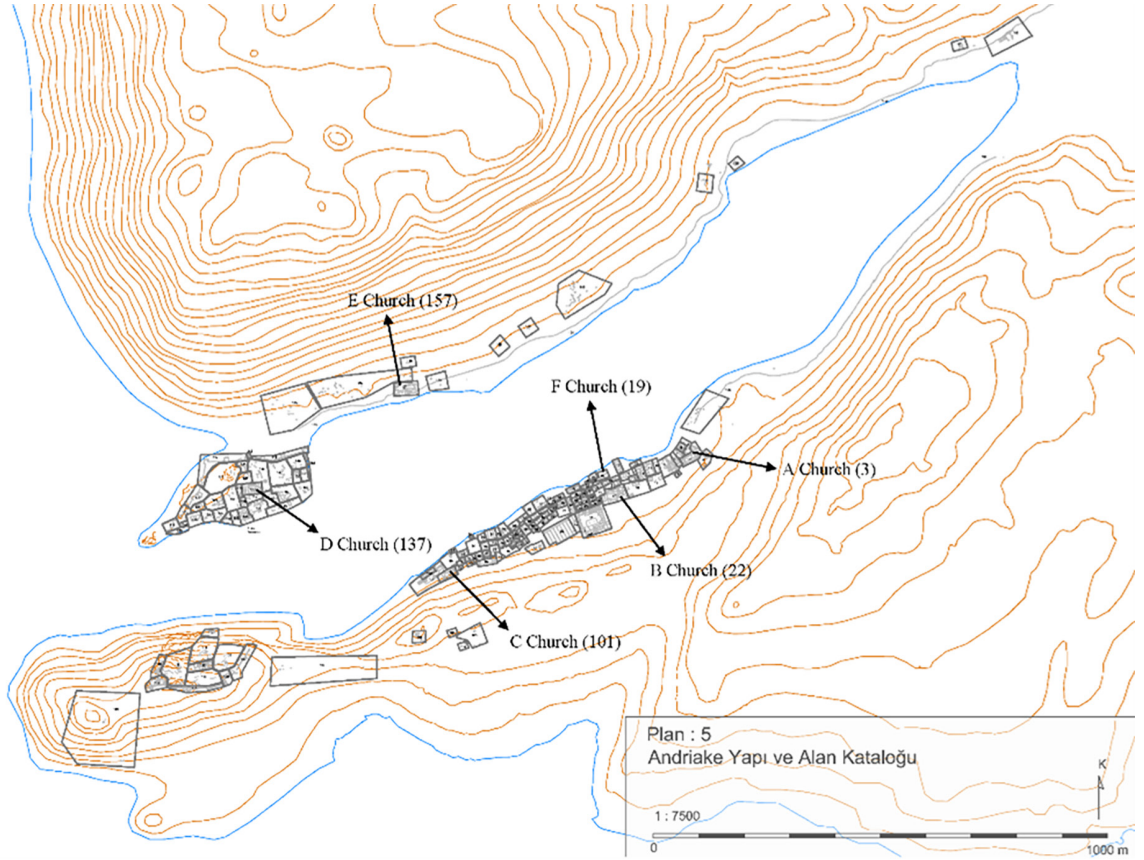


Fig. 2: Distribution of Churches in Andriake Harbor (Aygün 2018, plan 5)

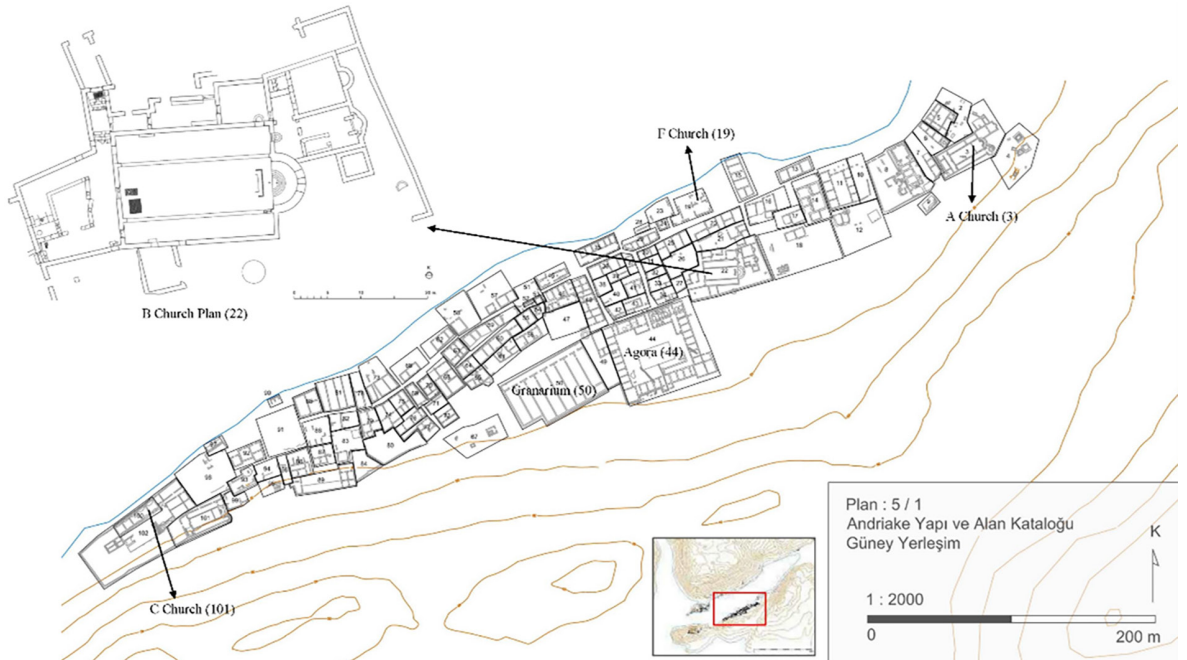


Fig. 3: Churches in the Southern Settlement (Aygün 2018, plan 5/1) and Layout of Church B (Çömezoğlu 2013, 318, pic. 2)

exiled to Phrygia¹⁷. Menas, who was a soldier in the Roman army in Phrygia during the reign of Diocletian, was executed after declaring that he was a Christian¹⁸. His lifeless body was thrown into the fire; however, he was

¹⁷ Kaufmann 1910, 19, 31.

¹⁸ Menas was flogged before he was executed. Paton 1907, 76; Budge 1909, 19; Kaufmann 1910, 34-35, 39; Anderson 2007,

taken out of the fire by those who believed in him and wrapped in a fragrant white shroud¹⁹. His body was taken to Egypt by ship by the military unit who were going to the battle from Phrygia to Mareotis²⁰. His dead body was loaded on camels to carry him to his birthplace, and the camels that crumpled on the ground in Abu Mina during the journey did not stand up again²¹. Because of this incident, the body of the saint was buried in Abu Mina, where the camels tumbled.

Abu Mina is located 50 km southwest of Alexandria in the region called Mareotis in ancient times²². A large church and various public buildings (bath, wine shop, etc.) were built here in the 4th century AD, and later the region became an essential hub of pilgrimage²³. Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria built the church of Menas with the help of Constantine I, and the consecration ceremony of the church was performed by the patriarch Theophilus during the reign of Theodosius I²⁴. Emperor Arcadius had a basilica (Arcadius Basilica) built for the crowd in the city, and Zeno ordered the construction of houses. Abu Mina, which had the appearance of a large city, was protected by approximately 12 thousand soldiers in the 5th century AD²⁵. After the middle of the 6th century AD, the Sanctuary of Saint Menas lost its former glory²⁶. Excavations at Abu Mina were carried out between 1905 and 1908 by a team headed by K. M. Kaufmann²⁷. During the excavations, the workshop and warehouse where hundreds of terracotta ampulla/pilgrim flasks were fashioned with the inscription “*Eulogia tou Agiou Mena (Memorial of Saint Menas)*” were unearthed²⁸. While Kaufmann does not provide much information on the chronology of these flasks, their counterparts were discovered in the 1980s at Kom-el-Dikka, near Abu Mina, and it was determined that these were ampullae produced in Abu Mina between the end of the 5th century AD and the middle of the 7th century AD²⁹. The decoration patterns are varied on the ampullae of AD 560-610; reliefs of other local saints³⁰, pilgrimage motifs³¹, ships figures³² and inscriptions in Greek “Menas’s memory/blessings” are generally observed³³. On the ampullae produced between AD 610-650, a uniform relief scheme is noticed. We can also see Saint Menas standing in a military-dress, in *orans* position surrounded by dots in a double relief ring circle, and two stylized kneeling camels on both sides³⁴.

Ampulla with the Depiction of Saint Menas (description and dating)

The ampulla with the depiction of Saint Menas was found in the B-67 trench located in the western part (*atrium*) of Church B. It has a partially broken, everted mouth, a cylindrical neck, and a flat, circular body. After the body was molded and assembled in two parts, the neck was added. There are vertical strip handles on both sides of the neck. The same depiction pattern is located on both sides of the body of the ampulla. Saint Menas, wearing a short tunic, is depicted as a young man standing in an *orans* posture with his hands outstretched (Fig. 4). He carries a chlamys with his sleeves knotted over one shoulder, reaching down to the feet of the saint. The short tunic and chlamys that Saint Menas wore refer to his military personality. The belt at the waist is made with two thick embossed lines. The hind soles of his pointed-toe boots are facing each other, with his legs spread out to both sides. On both sides of the saint, camels are depicted bent toward their feet. There are cross reliefs on both sides of the head of Menas, whose details are not fully discernible. This scene is surrounded by dots in a double-relief ring circle (Fig. 4).

The depiction of Saint Menas in the standing *orans* posture and the camels sitting down on either side of him are generally seen on the ampullae of the first half of the 7th century AD³⁵. The ampulla found in the Andriake B

224; Köroğlu 2011, 81-83. In the chronicles in Alexandria, the date of Menas’ death is recorded as 295 AD (Kaufmann 1910, 18).

¹⁹ Kaufmann 1910, 39-40.

²⁰ Kaufmann 1910, 40-41.

²¹ Kaufmann 1910, 20; Anderson 2007, 224; Köroğlu 2011, 81-83.

²² Kaufmann 1910, 6.

²³ Kaufmann 1910, 41, 45; Grossmann 1998, 281-300; Anderson 2007, 224.

²⁴ Kaufmann 1910, 47.

²⁵ Kaufmann 1910, 45, 47-48. There are other opinions that this place was protected by 123 thousand soldiers.

²⁶ Kaufmann 1910, 49.

²⁷ For detailed information about the excavation, see. Kaufmann 1910.

²⁸ Anderson 2007, 224; Köroğlu 2011, 81.

²⁹ Kiss 1989, 196.

³⁰ Davis 1998, 303-339; Aydın 2015, 301, pic. 2-3.

³¹ Kaufmann 1910, taf. 97: 2-14.

³² Kaufmann 1910, taf. 96: 11-12; Buckton 1994, 112, pic. 124.

³³ Kaufmann 1910, taf. 92: 3, 94: 5-8; Metzger 1981, 14-15; Anderson 2007, 225.

³⁴ Kiss 1989, 196; Opriş 2003, pl. LVIII: 390a-c; Opriş 2004, 274, fig. 13-14; Anderson 2007, 225; Tănase 2018, 76-77, fig. 1-4. Additionally, see. Barnea 1995, 509-514.

³⁵ Kiss 1989, 196; Anderson 2007, 225.



Fig. 4: Ampulla with Saint Menas Depiction from Andriake Church B (© C. Öz)

Church is dated to the beginning of the 7th century AD by means of its counterparts³⁶. The ampulla examined must have been produced in the sanctuary of Saint Menas in Abu Mina. Because it has similar characteristics with the ampullae³⁷ found in the sanctuary.

Conclusions

Andriake became an important port in the Classical period and continued its port activities effectively in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods³⁸. There are six churches in the harbor, which are thought to have been inhabited continuously from the 4th century BC until the end of the 7th century AD (Fig. 2). One of these is Church B where the ampulla with the depiction of Saint Menas was found (Fig. 3). The church, which was excavated between 2011 and 2013, is dated to the beginning of the 5th century AD³⁹. After it was destroyed in the earthquake in 529 AD, it was rebuilt by Emperor Justinian I⁴⁰ and was used until the beginning of the 7th century AD⁴¹.

The son of an Egyptian Christian family, Menas is a saint who served as a soldier in the Roman army. After declaring that he was a Christian, he was tortured and killed by the Pagans⁴². His body, which was intended to be burned in the fire, was saved and taken to Egypt and was buried in Abu Mina, where the camels crouched down and refused to advance while being transported to the place where he was born. Abu Mina is located in the Mareotis District, 50 km southwest of Alexandria⁴³. Abu Mina became a complex pilgrimage center, consisting of a church built at the end of the 4th century AD, and structures such as a hammam, wine workshop, and water wells were built later. Ampullae with a distinctive ornament pattern were produced here between the end of the 5th century and the middle of the 7th century AD⁴⁴.

³⁶ Kaufmann 1910, taf. 93: 2-3; Salin 1942, Pl. 11: 1-2; Bangert 2007, 31, fig. 4; Anderson 2004, 80, fig. 1; Anderson 2007, 222, fig. 1; Gertsman and Rosenwein 2018, 11; Katsioti and Mastrochristos 2018, 84, fig. 1.

³⁷ Kaufmann 1910, taf. 93: 2-3.

³⁸ Çevik and Bulut 2010, 39; Duggan and Aygün 2010, 161; Çevik et al. 2014, 225; Bulut and Şengül 2014, 84, 88; Aygün 2018, 131-137; Öz 2022a, 221.

³⁹ Bulut and Şengül 2014, 86; Akyürek 2014, 55.

⁴⁰ Foss 1994, 2, 23; Akyürek 2014, 55.

⁴¹ Bulut and Şengül 2014, 86.

⁴² Paton 1907, 76; Budge 1909, 19; Kaufmann 1910, 34-35, 39; Grotowski 2010, 59-60, 90-91.

⁴³ Kaufmann 1910, 6.

⁴⁴ Anderson 2007, 224.

The flat, circular body of the ampulla unearthed in Andriake B Church has a depiction of Saint Menas on both sides. Two camels bent at his feet are seen on either side of Saint Menas. These must have symbolized the camels in which the dead body was carried. Menas in *orans* posture reveals that he was a soldier with the short tunic he wore and the chlamys on his shoulders (Fig. 4). There are cross motifs on both sides of his head, the details of which are not fully seen. Embossed dots in a circle surround the scene where the saint is. This pattern of depiction appears frequently on ampullae produced at Abu Mina in the first half of the 7th century AD⁴⁵. When the descriptive pattern on the ampulla and their counterparts⁴⁶ are analyzed together, it is thought that the Andriake ampulla belongs to the early 7th century AD. The ampullae of Saint Menas, apart from Egypt (Abu Mina, Alexandria, Kom-el-Dikka), spread over a wide geographical area as far as North Africa, Palestine, Anatolia, Syria, Greece, Cyprus, the Balkans (Moesia, Dacia), France, England, the Netherlands, Italy, and Gaul⁴⁷. Along with the artifact found in Andriake, it has been observed that ampullae originating from Abu Mina also exist in the Lycian Region.

The number of churches found in Andriake is surprising. Although it is thought that they were built for the crews of the ships visiting the port for commercial purposes, it is not sufficient to explain the existence of such large and numerous churches. The fact that Myra was the religious and administrative center (metropolis) of the Lycian province in the 5th century AD and the presence of the Church of Saint Nicholas in the city explains the existence of many churches in the harbor. Countless companies of pilgrims must have arrived in the city to fulfill their pilgrimage. Historical sources indicate that pilgrimages to holy places, especially in the 5th-7th AD have increased over the centuries⁴⁸. The Late Roman unguentaria and pilgrim flasks found in the excavations of the port and Church B prove this density⁴⁹.

The ampulla with the depiction of Saint Menas found in Church B suggests that there were people who came to Myra from Egypt for pilgrimage in the 7th century AD. Another possibility is that a citizen from Myra may have gone to the Abu Mina sanctuary for a pilgrimage, and on his way back, he filled the holy water and oil⁵⁰ with healing properties in an ampulla with the depiction of Saint Menas and brought it to Andriake.

The commercial relationship between Rome and Egypt was quite strong. This interaction manifests itself in the assemblages⁵¹ unearthed in the city and the port, where Myra, which was under Roman rule, was also affected by this relationship. Serapis reliefs⁵² seen on the façade of the seventh room of the Granarium and the wall of the shop overlooking Germanicus Square are important in terms of illustrating how strong the relationship between Myra and Egypt was. Apart from this, Egyptian Group A = Coptic/Aswan ceramics⁵³, dated to the 8th-13th centuries AD, found in the excavations of the Church of Saint Nicholas in Myra, shows that the relationship between Myra and Egypt lasted until the middle of the Middle Ages.

The ampulla of Andriake B Church indicates that there was a pilgrimage from Myra to the holy site of Saint Menas, Abu Mina in Egypt, especially in the 5th-7th centuries AD. In the opposite direction, a pilgrimage may have taken place from Egypt to the Church of Saint Nicholas in Myra.

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⁴⁵ Kiss 1989, 196; Anderson 2007, 225.

⁴⁶ Kaufmann 1910, taf. 93: 2-3; Salin 1942, pl. 11: 1-2; Bangert 2007, 31, fig. 4; Anderson 2004, 80, fig. 1; Anderson 2007, 222, fig. 1; Gertsman and Rosenwein 2018, 11; Katsioti and Mastrochristos 2018, 84, fig. 1.

⁴⁷ Kaufmann 1910, 51; Anderson 2007.

⁴⁸ Köroğlu 2015, 152.

⁴⁹ Çömezoglu 2015, 64, fig. 3: i-m; Öz 2022b, 59-89.

⁵⁰ Kaufmann 1910, 42, 52.

⁵¹ For the Serapis reliefs seen in the buildings in Andriake, see. Şengül 2011, 124, pic. 31; Aygün 2018, 169, pic. 8; For the Egyptian influence on jewelry, see. Talu 2020; For the Egyptian Red Slip Ceramics found in the Church of Saint Nicholas, see. Uysal 2000, 29-30, Kaya 2007, 311-312.

⁵² Şengül 2011, 124, pic. 31; Aygün 2018, 169, pic. 8.

⁵³ Kaya 2007, 327.

Catalog

Abbreviations used in the catalog: **Cat. No.:** Catalog Number, **Fig.:** Figure, **Excav. Inv. No.:** Excavation Inventory Number, **Mus. Inv. No.:** Museum Inventory Number, **M.D.:** Mouth Diameter, **L.:** Length, **W:** Width, **W.T.:** Wall Thickness. Munsell Soil Color Chart (2015) color catalog was used to determine the clay and slip colors.

Cat. No.: 1 (Fig. 4)

Form: Ampulla

Excav. Inv. No.: 2013-70

Mus. Inv. No.: 2015-467

Location of the Find and Level: Church B B-67 West, -270/-290 cm

Dimensions: **M.D.:** 2 cm, **L:** 9.5 cm, **W:** 6.9 cm, **C.C.:** 0.4 cm.

Clay: 10 YR 8/4 (very pale brown), dense, non-porous, densely composed of small amount of silver mica, very small amount of medium and small size fireclay, black fine sand and quartz tempered clay.

Slip: -

Description: Broken and missing mouth-stem-handle piece of an ampulla.

Comparison: Kaufmann 1910, taf. 93: 2-3; Salin 1942, pl. 11: 1-2; Bangert 2007, 31, fig. 4; Anderson 2004, 80, fig. 1; Anderson 2007, 222, fig. 1; Gertsman and Rosenwein 2018, 11; Katsioti and Mastrochristos 2018, 84, fig. 1.

Date: early 7th century AD

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Fig. 4: Ampulla avec représentation de Saint Ménas de l'église B d'Andriake (© C. Öz).

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