

# Dana Island

## The Greatest Shipyard of the Ancient Mediterranean

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## Acknowledgements

Studies on Dana Island, which has more in-situ slipways than any other ancient shipyard in the Mediterranean hitherto documented and published, began in 2015. Approximately 300 slipways carved out of the rocks and the facilities behind them must have played a role in many marine battles in the Mediterranean. This book, titled *Dana Island: the Greatest Shipyard of the Ancient Mediterranean*, which has been completed by 18 distinguished scientists, has emerged as the result of four years of documentation efforts on the island and underwater. It is beyond doubt that more information and documentation will be forthcoming with the start of excavation work.

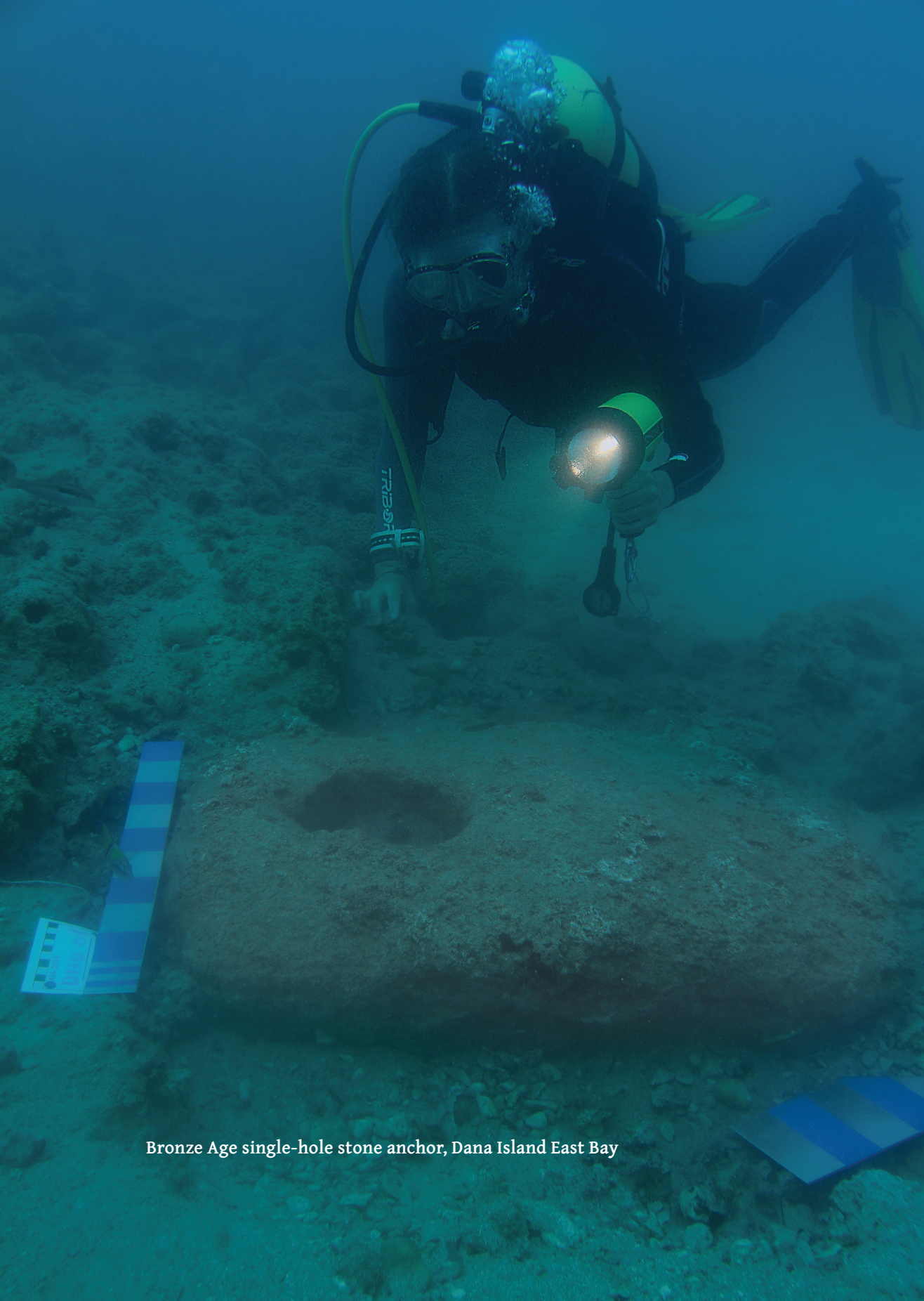
The most important support during the documentation phase of the study was given by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the General Directorate for Cultural Heritage and Museums. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to former and current general directors Mr. Yaçın Kurt and Mr. Murat Güröl in particular; deputy general manager Mr. Ali Rıza Altunel; heads of departments Mr. Melik Ayaz and Mr. Mustafa Yaşar Güneş; branch chiefs Mr. Umut Görgülü, Mr. Köksal Özköklü and Mrs. İlknur Subaşı, Mersin Provincial Directorate of Culture, and Silifke Museum Directorate for their valuable contributions. Without these contributions, we would not be able to present this valuable piece of cultural heritage -Dana Island Shipyard- to the world of science.

The interest of Mersin Governorship and Silifke District Governorship in these studies is both encouraging and promising for the future in bringing Dana Island to the country's tourism. The Rectorates of Selçuk University and Akdeniz University contributed to the allocation of the Selçuk1/Arkeo Scientific Research Ship and other equipment used in the realization of the studies. The Mersin Chamber of Shipping has provided continuous support for the maintenance and renewal of ships and other marine equipment since the planning stage of the studies. The Turkish Underwater Archaeology Foundation has supported us at every stage, especially with underwater research equipment and all infrastructure. The Mersin Tourism Infrastructure Development Association and the Mersin Municipality have lent considerable support to the works carried out both on the island and underwater.

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Editor: Assoc. Prof. Dr Hakan Öñiz



Bronze Age single-hole stone anchor, Dana Island East Bay

## Foreword

The recent archeological discoveries made on Dana Island are of great importance for Rough Cilicia, the relationship the ancient local community had with the sea, their seamanship and trading and the political history of the region. These discoveries are sure to be built on in future and revolutionize maritime archaeology research. Dr Hakan Öñiz and his team, who made these recent discoveries, were able to find what so many travelers who visited the island before them could not. For example, Francis Beaufort, who came to the island in the early 19th century, saw nothing more than a few chameleons, seals and a species of duck, which was of extraordinary height and beauty (and which is declining in number and even on the verge of becoming extinct today) among the remains he called the 'old walls'. The short note of this brilliant traveller is as follows: 'The old walls on the Provencal Island merge with various types of lizards, among which a few chameleons can be seen. The rocks are swarming with seals, and the cliffs are swarming with ducks. The feathers of these ducks are white and their males are extremely eye-catching.'

All unwritten archaeological monuments have a common defect: providing no explicit information regarding date, function and many other topics. The newly discovered shipyard remains found on Dana Island unfortunately bear the same defect and for now they lack the criteria that would reveal to us who they were made by and when. Within the scope of my contribution to this book, I mainly searched for pinpoint records concerning the island itself by scanning historical records. However, I must say in advance that this may not produce certain results or success, because 90% of the sources are based around the kings that ruled in the surrounding regions, the actions of these kings, or events that happened in the major centers of civilization. This meant that expecting documentary records to shed light on this tiny island was futile. Therefore, it was necessary to examine the macro-history of the area that the island is located in and its wider surroundings, which corresponds to the region known as Kizzuwatna, Hilakku, Rough Cilicia (Cilicia Trachaea) or later Isauria and Karamania in the ancient sources. To increase the variety of sources and widen the scope of the research, the histories of Plain Cilicia, Pamphilia, Lycia, Central Anatolia, Levant, Egypt and Cyprus were also investigated. In any case, it would be seen that this very small region was never able to expand its influence, and that it stayed on the periphery of large centres of civilization.

I tried to capture the events that led to the creation of the slipways, hoping to explain the location of Dana Island and the dates and functions of the shipyards by looking at the naval history of pre-classical peoples, notably the Hittites. This was a task that resembled that of a detective, in other words like looking for a needle in a haystack. I tried to find out what events, military actions, wars or possible trading activities occurred after economic developments that could have caused this much shipbuilding on this tiny island and made estimations accordingly. While this was being carried out, the relationships of the powerful political institutions with the sea in the region formed a further line of enquiry. Undoubtedly, when it comes to shipbuilding, firstly fleets and warships come to mind and the possibility that trade armadas or even boats themselves could be used as transportation vessels is easy to ignore. In this respect, when trying to determine the dates that the slipways were built, not only wars but also economic developments, new natural resources, agriculture, forestry and

animal products and sudden booms in trade should not be overlooked. Another point that should not be ignored is whether all of the shipyards were used at full capacity concurrently, and if so for how long, or whether the number of the shipyards was the final capacity reached. Ship and boat building can be spread over a very long period of time and, in accordance with requirements and demands, all production on the island may have been carried out at the same time, or piecemeal. If production did indeed occur simultaneously, this must have happened as a result of the economic, commercial or military dynamics that governed the history of the region. There is no doubt that this left deep marks on the history of the island and its surroundings and the people that lived there. The issue, however, is whether these developments were recorded directly or indirectly and whether we can pick up on the relevant clues if they were indeed recorded.

First, I would like to say a couple of words regarding the name of the island, which is unusual and is as puzzling to us as the history of the island. While such unlikely names as Donkey Island, Rabbit Island, Chicken Island, Dog Island, Goat Island, Mice Island, and Sheep Island might be seen as the result of a lack of familiarity with the sea, seamanship or island culture among the Turks, nevertheless the name 'Dana' draws attention. I am not in a position to explain why and how this name was given to the island, which was formerly known as Manavat and Kargıncık. There is a suspicion that this name derives from a foreign language from a period before the Turks, which in time changed as a result of folk etymology. I think emphasis should be placed on the similarity this name has with various present in the same region such as Danuna, Denyen, Adaniya, DNN and Danu, which are all well-known from Homeric and Egyptian sources and still live in the name of modern Adana, a city in Turkey. In the light of relevant documents, it seems to me that a tribe that was good at seamanship, related to the Hyksos and the Hurrians, and sharing the name Danuna or a similar name with the Hyksos, migrated north to Çukurova and from there spread to the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Region and up to the Troad. The fact that this name is so widespread in this vast geography, notably in Çukurova, can only be explained in this way. According to the myth that dates back to Homer, the reason why we unexpectedly encounter the Danunians in the Trojan wars lies here. Contrary to other claims it seems implausible that migration occurred in the opposite direction, ie from Troy, because migration on this scale did not occur even in the Greek Colonization period that followed those Trojan wars. The name of the island is of neither Semitic nor Indo-European descent contrary to what one might expect. I clearly proved, based on an accurate etymology, that the name is of Hurrian descent – on page 67 of my book *Cilicia-Cukurova: the Early Ages until the Ottoman Period in Cilicia Historical Geography, History and Archaeology* (Homer Publishing, İstanbul 2007). The name shows a great phonetic resemblance to a sacred cult item called *adan*, *atani/adani* or *adania* mentioned in Hurrian texts, and those who named the island should be seen as identical with the Hurrians who lived on the island for the majority of this period. The Hurrians were a dynamic people that spread in waves across all of the Near East through Caucasia, Eastern Anatolia, the Iranian High Plateau and the Zagros Mountains from the last quarter of the 3rd millennium BC. Another very important supporting detail is that Cilicia, which was mentioned in later Hittite texts as Kizzuwatna, was completely under the influence of the Hurrian culture. The Danunians were long established and extremely widespread in the region, and although they appeared to be among the sea peoples, there is no doubt that they arrived to the region at a much earlier period. The fact that even Cyprus was called the Island of the Danunians shows that the Danunians migrated there along with the Cilicians and Egyptians. According to a general



opinion, the name of Cyprus, which was known as Alašya in the Bronze Age and Yادنuna in the Iron Age, is again related to the Danunans. In various researches that pushed the limits of probability, it was proposed that Aššuwa was written as A-64-ja in Miken Linear B writing. However, I think that the real explanation was made by a rational researcher who stated that Asiy(a) was actually (Al)asia, the abbreviated form of Cyprus. The Egyptian clerk Accadian misunderstood al(u) 'city' and confused it with mat al(u) 'city of the country'.

It is unknown whether all these names refer to the whole island or parts of it. I have previously explained the elision of the letter A while creating the name Dana from Adana or Yادنuna through the phonetic principle known as aphaeresis in linguistics and supported with many other examples. As a philologist, I can never accredit made-up etymologies that do not conform with linguistic rules. However, when I offered Hakan Öniz this possibility regarding the origin of the name Dana Island last summer, I was not serious at all. Now I think it is necessary to lay emphasis on this as a hypothesis.

It is a well-known fact that the ancient name of the island was Pityussa. The island, which was called Pitussa during the Neo-Babylonian Age, continued its existence as Pityusa, as it appears in the 3rd century AD Roman guidebook on Mediterranean ports titled 'Stadiasmos Maris Magni as well as the Acta S. Barnabae. However, no information was recorded about the island having a large port or especially a large number of shipyards. The name Pityussa is very popular and quite common in the Mediterranean region, for example Lampsakos (Lâpseki) was formerly called Pityussa and Miletos was once called Pitoussa. The islands Chios and Salamis were also given the name Pityussa at one point in history and the islands of Ibiza and Formentare in the eastern coasts of Spain were also formerly called Pityussai. Phoenician merchants were responsible for the spread this name to such a wide geography. During the Middle Ages, the island began to be called Provençal. Regardless of the name's origin, the researches to be conducted by considering the relationship of Dana Island with its surroundings such as Kelenderis, Aphrodisias, Seleukeia, Güvercin Island, Tokmar Castle, Palaeia, Holmi and Mylai/Manastır are sure to bring new discoveries. I wish Hakan Öniz and his team success.

Prof. Dr Ahmet Ünal



Slipway numbers 54, 55, 56, 57 and 58 and the structures behind them