



## UP FROM THE SEA: MARINERS' LIVES ONSHORE IN THE LATE BRONZE AGE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

**Linda Hulin**

Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology

**Senta German**

Department of Classics, Montclair University

This project explores a neglected aspect of Late Bronze Age Aegean maritime life: time spent on land. Layovers between or during voyages were an ever-present feature of the life of ancient sailors and traders, time spent waiting for a fair wind, for cargo to be loaded, and for political authorization to be granted. Sailors could use this time to effect repairs, exchange items on their own account or for sale later, or to rest, eat, exchange stories, and even look for new jobs. Sailors' quarters have always been a feature of ports: not only are they readily identifiable from the sailors' point of view, they are also places of containment by the host population: sailors represent a potentially destabilizing force by virtue of their transient social alliances.

*Up From the Sea* seeks to establish a model by which Late Bronze Age mariner terrestrial loci can be identified.<sup>1</sup> The model for identifying mariner habitats on land is centered around a range of criteria. They should be located in modest dwellings in non-elite areas near the sea; we expect pottery assemblages within these loci to contain larger than usual proportions of cooking, serving, eating, and small storage wares and cooking implements to support large-scale food production. A variety of low-value table wares from across the eastern Mediterranean should be present in small quantities, on the assumption, derived from shipwrecks, that mariners travelled with their own cups and dishes. Some contexts have evidence of exotic food items, such as Nile perch. We would expect, then that sailors' areas would be marked by the presence of a range of small, portable objects from across the Mediterranean: items collected by sailors for trade; fishhooks, needles, or metal scraps and crucibles for making small these items, recalling the material found at Marsa Matruh. There may

also be a range of portable religious objects or evidence of worship in the vicinity. These items may be found at a variety of buildings in a port but the defining feature is their occurrence in non-elite settings, in small quantities and in unusual variety.

Our method is one of empirical contextual analysis. Initially, sites are identified through library-based research of published excavation monographs. Then, with access to excavated materials in museum and excavation storerooms, the proportions of different pottery types, decorations, shapes and imports are resolved. This is compared to control deposits at the same site of similar economic status where we do not expect mariners to be present. The local profile is different at each site.

The first phase of *Up from the Sea* ground-proofed the model at Kommos in Crete and Hala Sultan Tekke in Cyprus and identified areas at both sites that conformed to the predicted model. Phase 2 will see a return to these two sites and others on the two islands. A final phase will examine sites in Greece and along the Levantine coast, supplemented by published reports from the study areas and from Egypt.

We anticipate that *Up From the Sea* will bring to light the Late Bronze Age maritime cultural world. The differences already discernible at Hala Sultan Tekke and Kommos hint at different networks within the greater whole. This might, perhaps, be expected, since our current understanding of the eastern Mediterranean trading network is, shipwreck evidence notwithstanding, based upon the articulation of patterns of distribution and consumption of imports and exports; at best these reflect patterns of merchant interaction, but not necessarily the cultural network of the sailors who made that trade possible. In short, we hope to

present a more nuanced understanding of Late Bronze Age economic and social intercourse in the eastern Mediterranean.

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<sup>1</sup>

For a more detailed discussion of the model and the reasoning behind it, see Hulin, L. and German, S. (in press). 'Up from the sea: mariner networks in ports across the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean', in proceedings of 10th ICAANE conference.