

it seems hidden in the waters: also Carastis, on account of the headlands jutting out like horns, and lastly Cyprus, from the abundance of Cypress trees. The ancients dedicated it to Lust, and poets feigned that Venus the goddess of Lust was born there from the sea-foam, but we moderns hold that Venus was Queen there, who, to cover her own incontinence, made it lawful to all, and caused her statue to be worshipped in a temple which she built at Baphos, where its ruins are still to be seen.

Cyprus lies in the fourth parallel, its length extends from Long. 34½ to 36 E. From its position follows the excessive heat, especially in summer, when the sun is in the tropic of Cancer. Its shape is extremely fantastic, on account of the headlands which on both sides stretch out into the sea. Its length is quite four times its breadth: its circuit reckoned from cape to cape, is about 180 leagues, but following the coast of its bays at least 220. The Syrian sea washes it on the East, that of Egypt on the S., of Rhodes W., and Caramania N. The part which looks towards the Caramanian mainland is mountainous, the rest of the land is low and level—a great defect, because the water finding no outlet makes it in many parts marshy, and hence the air is corrupt and unwholesome. There are no rivers, only some torrents which are dry in summer: springs are few, but what there are are wholesome and good.

The island has suffered greatly from drought, and has often on this account been abandoned by its inhabitants. Its annals record that in the year 800 it remained deserted for thirty-six years, during which time no rain fell. But it has become thickly peopled since, and could show fifteen fine towns and quite eight hundred villages and hamlets. The Emperors of Constantinople held it seven hundred years, then it came under the rule of the kings of the house of Lusignan who reigned until the year 1473, when Marie de Cornare after the death of her husband gave it to the Republic of Venice, which kept it until 1571, when Sultan Soliman wrested it from them, to the great detriment of Christendom at large.

We stayed a day at Gerines which was once one of the finest and most important towns in the island, it is now chiefly ruinous. The larger part of the inhabitants are Greeks. A square castle commands the port, to which the Turks retire at night. The harbour is small, and suitable for boats and small craft only. In all the island there is only one good harbour, capable of sheltering vessels of all sizes, it is called the port of Salines, from the quantity of salt pans in the neighbourhood. All trading vessels coming from Christian countries bring up here, and on this account the Consuls of France, England and Venice reside here.

On account of the heat we left Gerines at night for Nicosia the capital of the island, which we reached before day, just as the gate was opened, and went straight to the lodging of the French Consul, who was then residing there. The city of Nicosia, formerly the seat of the King of Cyprus, is a most delightful place, situated in the middle of the island on a fair and pleasant plain anciently called Massare. The air is good and temperate, better indeed than that of any other place in Cyprus. It is surrounded by a fine fortification of regular form with twelve wide royal bastions. It was thus strengthened by the Venetians, who reduced its size by a third to make it more defensible; but the Turks, who are careless enough in keeping up the works, allow the walls to fall and fill up the ditches; but for this it would be the finest fortress in all Turkey. It has three gates only, those of Paphos, Gerines and Famagousta: on all you may still see the arms of the Republic of Venice, and of many private persons who were governors of the city. The walls may have a circuit of a league. There are many grand houses built of cut stone, the streets are fine and wide, there is nothing Turkish about them, nor in the buildings, which are for the most part of Venetian work.