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Cypriotic Crush (Nice Places Book 3)



Synopsis

This is a tribute to Cyprus, a wonderful island with a turbulent history. The earliest confirmed site of human activity on Cyprus is Aetokremnos, situated on the south coast, indicating that hunter-gatherers were active on the island from around 10,000 BC, with settled village communities dating from 8200 BC. The arrival of the first humans correlates with the extinction of the dwarf hippos and dwarf elephants. Water wells discovered by archaeologists in western Cyprus are believed to be among the oldest in the world, dated at 9,000 to 10,500 years old. Remains of an 8-month-old cat were discovered buried with a human body at a separate Neolithic site in Cyprus. The grave is estimated to be 9,500 years old (7500 BC), predating ancient Egyptian civilization and pushing back the earliest known feline-human association significantly. The remarkably well-preserved Neolithic village of Khirokitia is a UNESCO World Heritage Site dating to approximately 6800 BC. During the late Bronze Age the island experienced two waves of Greek settlement. Cyprus occupies an important role in Greek mythology being the birthplace of Aphrodite and Adonis, and home to King Cinyras, Teucer and Pygmalion. Beginning in the 8th century BC Phoenician colonies were founded on the south coast of Cyprus, near present day Larnaca and Salamis. Cyprus was ruled by Assyria for a century starting in 708 BC, before a brief spell under Egyptian rule and eventually Persian rule in 545 BC. The Cypriots, led by Onesilus, king of Salamis, joined their fellow Greeks in the Ionian cities during the unsuccessful Ionian Revolt in 499 BC against the Achaemenid Empire. The island was conquered by Alexander the Great in 333 BC. Following his death and the subsequent division of his empire among his successors, Cyprus became part of the Hellenistic empire of Ptolemaic Egypt. It was during this period that the island was fully Hellenized. In 58 BC Cyprus was acquired by the Roman Republic. When the Roman Empire was divided into Eastern and Western parts in 395, Cyprus became part of the East Roman, or Byzantine Empire, and would remain so until the Crusades some 800 years later. Under Byzantine rule, the Greek orientation that had been prominent since antiquity developed the strong Hellenistic-Christian character that continues to be a hallmark of the Greek Cypriot community. Beginning in 649, Cyprus suffered from devastating raids launched by Arab armies from the Levant, which continued for the next 300 years.^[46] Many were quick piratical raids, but others were large-scale attacks in which many Cypriots were slaughtered and great wealth carried off or destroyed. There are no Byzantine churches which survive from this period; thousands of people were killed, and many cities – such as Salamis – were destroyed and never rebuilt. Byzantine rule was restored in 965, when Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas scored decisive victories on land and sea. In 1191, during the Third Crusade, Richard I of England captured the

island from Isaac Komnenos of Cyprus. He used it as a major supply base that was relatively safe from the Saracens. A year later Richard sold the island to the Knights Templar, who, following a bloody revolt, in turn sold it to Guy of Lusignan. His brother and successor Amalric was recognized as King of Cyprus by Henry VI, Holy Roman Emperor. Following the death in 1473 of James II, the last Lusignan king, the Republic of Venice assumed control of the island, while the late king's Venetian widow, Queen Catherine Cornaro, reigned as figurehead. Venice formally annexed Cyprus in 1489, following the abdication of Catherine. The Venetians fortified Nicosia by building the Venetian Walls, and used it as an important commercial hub. Throughout Venetian rule, the Ottoman Empire frequently raided Cyprus. In 1539 the Ottomans destroyed Limassol and so fearing the worst, the Venetians also fortified Famagusta and Kyrenia.

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