

might be better understood, to despatch to Venice Messer Niccolo Donato, who had been sent on a mission to the island, and was still with his two galleys in the harbour of Famagosta; with whom there reached Venice Monsignor Girolamo Ragazzoni, Bishop of the city, a man fully acquainted with the position, and admirably adapted for this duty.

The city of Famagosta is situated at the East end of the Island of Cyprus on a low shore close to the sea, whence it had its Greek name Amathus which means *hidden in the sand*. It stands almost in the centre of a semicircle formed by two promontories, Carpassio and Pedaglio, called by men of our day the one Cape Sant' Andrea, the other Cape della Grecia. The former runs out for a distance of over ninety miles, and breaking the circle, makes an end to the island towards the north in a very sharp point. This tract was of old called Salamina from the ancient city of Salamina, built by Tencer after the fall of Troy, and afterwards Costanza. Some traces of this remain, and, perhaps to mark the former glory of their city, they are still called by the natives "Old Famagosta." The city has a harbour, lying between east and north, formed by certain shoals and rocks, broken here and there by narrow channels, which catch the first force of the waves, and guard from storms the little bay which lies between them and the shore; but the depth of this is but small, so that few vessels of any size can anchor in it. The entrance faces north, and is closed with a chain attached to a spur of rock which juts out some forty paces from the fortress; while a small castle, with four towers of antique style, commands the harbour. The lines of the fortifications form an imperfect square, for they run from the seashore from west to north in zigzags, and enclose a gradually widening space, so that the sides are to some extent unequal: two of them face the sea, and two the land: in one of the latter was a small hexagonal tower called Diamantino, in which was the so-called Limisso gate. In the other is a bastion of great size built a few years before the siege, with double flanks, a broad front and orillons, arranged for a modern battery. The circuit of the fortress was rather more than two Italian miles, the whole enclosed by an excellent wall of squared stone (*tufo or msa*). On the land side it was twenty feet thick, with a platform of twelve paces, above which rose a parapet over four feet in height: the ditch on every side was fifteen or at least twelve paces broad, chiefly cut out of the rock, but where this broke off, a counterscarp was built of stone. Set about the walls were many towers, but most of them so small that they allowed room for small pieces of artillery only: a few of larger capacity between the Limisso gate and the Arsenal, called from their shape demi-lunes, were in many respects equally defective, but were considered stronger and more useful because they were vaulted, and allowed means of exit on either side. The country round the fortress is all perfectly flat, only on the northwest and north a few villages are built on ground which rises into something like low hills, little more than a mile from the city. There was an impression that the enemy would encamp in this direction, both because the fort was weaker on that side, and also because there were caves, whence the people of Famagosta used to dig stone for their buildings, within which a large number of men might be safely and conveniently lodged. But the Turks were aware that, according to their fashion of camping, the ground would not suit them, because of the rocks which lay all about, and spread out their whole force along the shore on the other side, where it stretches for three miles from the city to the sea. This part had been full of beautiful gardens of oranges, lemons and many other kinds of fruitbearing trees, but most of them had been already cut down by the inhabitants themselves, to leave nothing which might be of profit to the enemy: the Turks however had the use of the many wells which stored for the gardens abundance of exquisitely clear and cold water, most refreshing to troops relaxed and overcome by the intense heat of the country.