

## **The Story of Aphrodite's Rock**

*“I will sing of stately Aphrodite, gold-crowned and beautiful, whose dominion is the walled cities of all sea-set Cyprus. There the moist breath of the western wind wafted her over the waves of the loud-moaning sea in soft foam.” ~Homer*

In ancient times, Cyprus was known as the birthplace of Aphrodite and the center of her worship, though worship of Aphrodite was widely spread throughout the Mediterranean region. Even today, Cyprus is called the island of Aphrodite, goddess of love, beauty, and fertility. Legend associates the name “Aphrodite” with her birth of the sea-foam as the Greek word (aphros) means “foam.” Hesiod’s description of Aphrodite’s birth begins as follows: Aphrodite was born out of the sea foam when Uranus was cut by a sickle and fell into the sea, attacked by his son Cronus. The water began bubbling and foaming in the spot where Uranus had plunged into the sea. Suddenly, the most beautiful maiden came up from the foam and appeared on the surface. At first the waves gently carried her toward Cythera but Zephyrus, the western wind, ultimately guided the waves to the shores of Paphos, Cyprus.

Story Location Clue: Local tradition claims that the birthplace of Aphrodite is an area near Paphos called *Petra tou Romiou*, which is Greek for *Rock of Romios* (the Greek). This area is one of the most beautiful landscapes in all of Cyprus. A large, imposing rock accompanied by several smaller rocks, emerge from the Mediterranean Sea. It is located west of St. Nicholas of the Cats on the other side of the bay area and southeast of Paphos in the southern part of Cyprus. This location of unique beauty came to be designated as the birthplace of Aphrodite.