

CYPRUS SCENES

The Tombs of the Kings



Pictures: Tony and Mary Benson

A notable feature of the history of Cyprus is that it has been under the sway of most of the great powers that we read about in Bible history and prophecy, beginning with Assyria, which subdued the island in 709 B.C. in the reign of Sargon. On the collapse of the Assyrian Empire it came under the sway of Egypt, and this lasted till the Persians conquered Egypt in 525 B.C. As foretold in Daniel 11:2-4, there was conflict between Persia and the city states of Greece over control of the eastern Mediterranean, and this conflict affected Cyprus, with some cities allying with the Greeks and others with the Persians. When Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire, as foretold in Daniel 8:5-7, Cyprus came under Greek rule, and when the Greek Empire split into four on Alexander's death the king of the south of Daniel 11:5, the Ptolemies based in Egypt, took over Cyprus.

Close to the shore in northern Paphos, and set amongst large modern hotels, is the site known as the Tombs of the Kings. It is an area of grassy humps and hollows, covered in wild flowers (we found four species of orchid on a sunny February day). This was the cemetery of ancient Paphos, established outside the walls. Here can be seen the extensive remains of ancient tombs, excavated in recent years and now open to the public. The tombs are so magnificent that it was originally thought that kings must have been buried there, but it is now concluded that they were the tombs of local nobles and high officials. They resemble tombs of the Ptolemaic period found in Alexandria, the capital of the Ptolemies, and so have been dated to the third century B.C, the time when the king of the south vied for supremacy with the king of the north, as prophesied in such detail in Daniel 11.—*Tony Benson*