

# CYPRUS SCENES

## The Saranda Kolones Castle



Pictures: Tony and Mary Benson

Daniel 7 depicts the papacy as a little horn with “a mouth that spake very great things” (v. 20) and a career of persecuting the saints that lasts for 1,260 years. The power of the papacy rose to its zenith in the years after A.D. 1000, and at the end of the eleventh century Pope Urban II, in response to a call from the Eastern Roman Emperor for help against the Seljuk Turks (who were beginning the fulfillment of the sixth trumpet judgements of Revelation 9), launched the movement known as the Crusades. His real concern was to expand papal power into the Middle East, especially the Holy Land, and the First Crusade established a Crusader kingdom based in the Holy Land that lasted for nearly 200 years. Towards the end of the Crusader period, Richard III (the Lionheart) seized Cyprus as a useful base on his way to the Holy Land, and Cyprus remained under the control of descendants of the Crusaders for 300 years.

The Crusaders left their mark in the Middle East in the castles that they built. Down by the harbour in Paphos, in the archaeological park where Roman remains are displayed, as considered earlier in this series, is the castle of Saranda Kolones, Greek for Forty Columns and referring to the many granite columns now scattered around the ruins. It did not last long. Constructed at the end of the twelfth century, it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1222. While wandering around its ruins we came across several mandrake plants with their purple flowers (inset). The roots of this plant were regarded as being an aid to fertility, hence the desire of Rachel to get hold of the mandrakes found by Reuben, as recorded in Genesis 30:14-16. The smell referred to in Song of Solomon 7:13 seems to refer to the fruit; I recall finding them in Israel during May and noting that they had a pleasant sweet smell reminiscent of strawberries.—*Tony Benson*