

French mission excavations at the site of *Klimonas* at Ayios Tychonas, Limassol District, 2011

The Department of Antiquities, Ministry of Communications and Works, announces the completion of the 2011 investigations at the site of *Klimonas* (Ayios Tychonas, Limassol District). The investigations were conducted by the French Archaeological Mission led by Jean Guilaine (College de France), Francois Briois (EHESS) and Jean-Denis Vigne (CNRS-Museum national d'Histoire naturelle).

This year's investigations have revealed the remains of an impressive, partially subterranean circular building, approximately 10 m in diameter. The building is very similar to the large communal buildings that have been excavated in several villages dated to the second half of the earliest phase of the Neolithic in the Northern Levant (Pre-Pottery Neolithic A, PPNA; from 9500 to 8500 BC), which have been interpreted as buildings for meeting and common storage. Stone tools, faunal remains and radiocarbon dating have confirmed that the building at *Klimonas* dates to the first half of the ninth millennium. It is associated with the remains of several other smaller buildings and with archaeological layers with fire places, most of them not yet excavated.

Until now, the earliest known Neolithic villages in Cyprus are dated to 8300-8400 cal. BC, and have been associated with early cereal and pulse agriculture and with early domestic cattle and goats. Archaeologists have recently discovered that people were living in Cyprus before the above date, but they know very little about their way of life. The discoveries of the French team at *Klimonas* indicate that these were sedentary villagers, very similar to those of the late PPNA in the Levant. Future excavations will certainly provide more information concerning the organisation of the village and the way of life (agriculture, animal control) of these earliest Cypriot villagers.



"Neolithization Mission" of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
the CNRS and the National museum of Natural History in Paris.