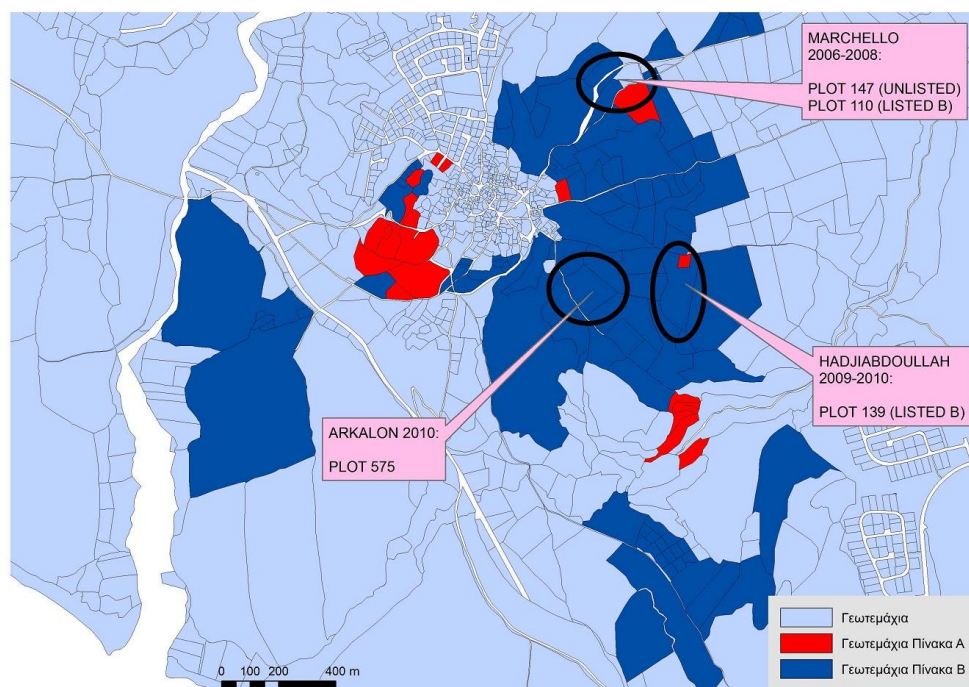


## KOUKLIA- PALAEPAPHOS: THE PALAEPAPHOS URBAN LANDSCAPE PROJECT: UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities, announces the completion of this year's excavations at Kouklia-Palaepaphos, which were carried out in June 2010 by the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus, under the direction of Professor Maria Iacovou.

The purpose of this long-term research and cultural management project, which was launched in 2006, is to identify the structure of the urban landscape that extended around the sanctuary of the Paphian Aphrodite in the 2nd and 1st millennia BC. Because of the wide dispersal of the archaeological evidence over an area of two square kilometres, and the urgent need to develop an effective protection scheme, the "Palaepaphos Urban Landscape Project" was designed from the start with Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Use of this modern digital platform allows the project to be continuously updated and upgraded with new and different kinds of data.

From around the middle of the 2nd millennium BC to the end of the 4th century BC, the region of Paphos was an independent politico-economic unit of Cyprus. Ancient Paphos (today known as Kouklia-Palaepaphos) was established in the Late Bronze Age as a port of export. By the 13th century BC it had assumed the role of the region's economic capital and, at the beginning of the 12th century BC, it evidently possessed a central administrative authority that undertook the demanding project of the construction of a monumental sacred temenos. The role of the sanctuary extended well beyond the sacred environment: as guardian of the copper resources and controller of the port of export, it was the centrepiece of the economic and political life of the kingdom of Paphos for a thousand years prior to the abolition of the Cypriot kingdoms by Ptolemy I (300 BC).



Between 2006 and 2010, extensive geophysical surveys, followed by targeted excavations have increased the visibility of monuments on the plateaus of Marchello and Hadjiabdoulla to the north-east and east of the sanctuary. Impressive and complex defence works, which seem to belong to two distinct citadels, occupy the highest terraces of these two plateaus. They were erected in the Archaic and Classical period, when the ancient city was the capital of the kingdom of Paphos. Marchello, the older of the two, suffered destruction around the beginning of the 5th century (possibly in the time of the Ionian revolt) and it may have been replaced by Hadjiabdoulla, where the rampart - exposed so far to the north and east of the terrace - protects a palatial building, apparently the administrative centre of Ancient Paphos in the Classical period.

During the 2010 season the University of Cyprus team continued to work on Hadjiabdoulla but it also expanded the investigations of the urban fabric to a new locality: the western side of Arkalon, where a geophysical survey had been conducted in 2007 with promising results. Arkalon lies in the centre of prominent archaeological loci (south of Evreti, north of Teratsoudhia and west of Hadjiabdoulla). Moreover, the east side of Arkalon includes the hillside that hosts the multi-chambered tomb with a built dromos known as 'Spilaion tis Regainas'. Surprisingly, however, the trial tests, some of which reached bedrock and produced appreciable quantities of pottery, suggest that this flat land, so close to the sanctuary, had not been incorporated into the urban topography of the Late Bronze or the Early Iron Age. As a matter of fact, the only built remains located during the 2010 campaign were poorly constructed walls - mostly with reused blocks but with reddish ochre on the collapsed wall-plaster - associated with ceramic assemblages that do not predate the late Classical period. It is likely that Arkalon (West) was not occupied before the 4th century BC. At this time, the royal administration headed by Nicocles, the last king of Paphos, must have begun the move close to the new port facilities established at Nea Paphos. In the Hellenistic and Roman period, the seat of the kings of Paphos became a site of pilgrimage, its urban fabric changed drastically and it began to be referred to as Palaepaphos.

On Hadjiabdoulla the dig continued on the north-west and east section of the rampart. The most significant result of two seasons of work on this well-defended terrace, from where one has a commanding view of the coastline and the sanctuary, is that it had also been occupied in the Late Bronze Age. This is the first time that a settlement site of the Late Cypriot era is identified on Hadjiabdoulla. Among considerable numbers of diagnostic pottery fragments are: a vertical handle that preserves a sealing impression from a finely carved cylinder seal; sherds that belong to pictorial vases of the 13th-12th centuries BC; fragments of Canaanite storage jars, clay bath tubs and White Slip and Base Ring wares.

The new set of evidence produced so far by the Palaepaphos project suggests that the different components of the ancient city (i.e. domestic, administrative, industrial, etc.) could not have developed within a unified *intra muros* (walled) area. It is more likely that special function sectors, including the sacred area of the sanctuary, occupied distinct terraces of the plateaus (Marchello, Mantissa, Evreti, Hadjiabdoulla and Alonia) that are sharply separated from each other by narrow valleys and ravines.

During the 2010 season, 28 volunteer Cypriot students took part in the excavations, most of them for a third time running. 7 of these are PhD candidates at universities in France, USA, Edinburg, Cyprus and Oxford whilst the rest are first degree students at the University of Cyprus (Department of History and Archaeology).