

In Memoriam Carole McCartney

Vasiliki Kassianidou, Laurence Astruc and François Briois

We found it extremely hard to believe that our colleague and friend Carole McCartney has left us. Our thoughts are with her family.

Carole McCartney (Fig. 1) studied archaeology at the University of Edinburgh and came to Cyprus for the first time in 1987 as a member of Eddie Peltenburg's team excavating a number of Chalcolithic sites in the Paphos district. This initial visit was decisive in many respects, as Carole became attached to Cyprus both in her professional and her personal life – she met and married Pambos Michael and moved to Kissonerga where they lived together with their two children Katerina and Emilios. She went on to receive her Master in 1989 and then her PhD in 1996 from the same University. The topic of her doctoral thesis was *The analysis of variability in simple core technologies: case studies of chipped stone technology in Post-PPN assemblages from the Levant*. On completion of her thesis Carole continued to do research at a post-doctoral level on a variety of ancient materials but of course her main focus has always been the chipped stone. Her approach was not solely technical but also theoretical as she explained “A focus on stone technology enables

me to explore a variety of research issues including cultural identity, raw material utilization, trade, and technological practice across time and space”.

The fact that over the last thirty years she worked as a lithic specialist for a number of excavations and surveys in Jordan, Syria, Israel, and of course Cyprus, means she was one of the best known and sought-after lithic experts in the Eastern Mediterranean region. She presented the results of her research in scientific journals, conference proceedings, and monographs (*cf.* bibliography).

Having studied the chipped stone industries of the region for so long, it is not surprising that she was one of the first archaeologists to identify the early date and importance of the material coming out of the Mylouthkia wells in Kissonerga, the lower strata of Kalavassos-Tenta and the sites recorded during the *Sydney Cyprus Survey Project*. These finds pushed the limits of the Neolithic in Cyprus to the period known as the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B or PPNB of the Levant, thus opening a whole new chapter in the island's prehistory. Her involvement with other projects showed that initial, pre-Neolithic inhabitants visits to the island were even earlier, and that Akrotiri-Aetokremnos is not a unicum.



Fig. 1 Carole McCartney smiling happily during one of the field seasons at Ayia Varvara-Asprokremmos. (Photo: S. Manning)



Fig. 2 Carole McCartney in the Cyprus Museum and its new Early Neolithic Period section which she helped to put up. (Photo: T. Moutsiou)



Fig. 3 Carole McCartney analysing lithics from Ayia Varvara-Asprokremmos. (Photo: S. Manning)

More recently she was working on the material from the ancient site excavated by Nikos Efstratiou in the Paphos Forest, Ayios Ioannis-Roudias.

It was her wish to understand better and unravel the origins of the Neolithic in Cyprus, however, which led her to finally initiate a project entitled *Elaborating Early Neolithic Cyprus Project* (EENC) in 2005. This international cooperation between the University of Cyprus, Cornell University and Trent University undertook intensive survey in the margins of the pillow lavas, in order to record lithic scatters, as well as, chert sources. Eventually the main focus of the project turned to the excavation of what looked like the most promising site within the survey area, and that is Ayia Varvara-Asprokremmos. The initial intuition was proven correct, and the excavations have unraveled one of the most important prehistoric sites of the island. Through the study of this rather unique and very specialized site Carole McCartney was able to reconsider the earliest phase of the Neolithic. It is there that she discovered the oldest known sculpture in Cyprus now on display in the Cyprus Museum of Nicosia dating to 10,600 years ago. <http://www.sci-news.com/archaeology/science-ayia-varvara-asprokremmos-01608.html>

In 2016 she co-organized at the University of Cyprus together with Vasiliki Kassianidou, Laurence

Astruc and François Briois, the 8th PPN Chipped and Ground Stone Industries of the Near East Conference: *Near Eastern Lithic Technologies on the Move Interactions and Contexts in the Neolithic Traditions*, which was attended by a great number of archaeologists from all over the world (Fig. 5). The proceedings have been published in the Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology Series of Astrom Editions, edited by Jennifer Webb.

Since 2019 she held a post-doctoral position at the University of Cyprus working with Vasiliki Kassianidou, Stella Demesticha, and Dora Moutsiou, with Daniella Bar Yosef and other colleagues from Israel and colleagues from the Cyprus University of Technology on a project coordinated by Phaedon Kyriakides and entitled *Delineating probable sea routes between Cyprus and its surrounding coastal areas at the start of the Holocene: a simulation approach*.

We were fortunate that for personal reasons Carole McCartney chose Cyprus to be her home since 1995, and even more fortunate that since 2005 she was officially affiliated with the University of Cyprus as an honorary research fellow. McCartney was one of the leading experts on Cypriot lithics (Fig. 3) and knew the early prehistory of Cyprus better than anyone. Her work was greatly respected. With her passing she leaves a huge gap which will be hard to fill. She was a wonderful colleague. She was patient with the youngest researchers and was eager to train the new generation of archaeologists studying in our Department (Fig. 4).

We will miss her *joie de vivre* and her fantastic sense of humor. Thanks to her human qualities and scientific abilities, she left great memories wherever she worked and among all field teams she joined. We remember these long-lasting discussions in front of lithic assemblages coming from all parts of Cyprus among which were Asprokremmos, Roudias, Kalavassos-Tenta, Klimonas, Shilourokambos and Khirokitia. Sharing was part of her personality. She organized in Caari in 2016, for the PPN conference on the lithic assemblages of the Near-East, a workshop exhibiting a full collection of Cypriot lithic assemblages to share with other scholars and students her knowledge.

We had a lot of fun with her while studying Neolithic or Chalcolithic material, visiting sites, having excursions, and working on manuscripts. We keep memory



Fig. 4 Carole McCartney talking about lithics to a group of students from the University of Cyprus. (Photo: O. Kouka)



Fig. 5 Carole McCartney organising the PPN8 Conference with Laurence Astruc and François Briois. (Photo: J.D. Vigne).

of our latest happy and lively discussions in the village of Khirokitia on a paper on Kalavassos-Tenta lithic industries she was preparing for the forthcoming book in memory of Eddie Peltenburg. The visit of the fabulous site of Asprokremmos that she brilliantly excavated together with Paul Croft and the visit of the ochre quarries in the neighbourhood will stay forever in our minds in reason of the tremendous interest of the site for the Cypro-PPNA and of her warm and friendly welcome. She was so happy to participate to the organisation of the 8th PPN lithic conference in Nicosia (Fig. 5). The aim was to bring the focus on the island research of the two last decades demonstrating that a large reappraisal of the Neolithisation of the Near East was urgent. She was proud to have accomplished with the team of the archaeological museum of Nicosia the latest room on the Early Neolithic and took this as one of her greater accomplishments in her last years (Fig. 2).

Above all she was a wonderful person, a good and dear friend. She was fully part and a key fellow of the “family” of the PPN specialists of the Near East, attending most of the conferences and taking part with relevance to our lively debates.

Born in 1965, Carole passed away on Saturday, 13th of March 2021. Carole, you leave a tremendous void in our community and we will miss your precious scientific input and warm and friendly presence.

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