



# Jana Jones deceased 2023

I (Aaron de Souza) first met Jana Jones in 2008, when, as a bright-eyed Masters student at Macquarie University, I consulted her on potential research topics that I might pursue for my PhD. Like Jana, I'd come to Egyptology from a background in design and fashion, and so we talked about the possibility of my studying ancient textiles and garments. My research ended up taking a very different path, but my copy of Vogelsang-Eastwood's "Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing", which I bought on Jana's recommendation, has always reminded me of that conversation with Jana whenever I spy its bright turquoise spine on my bookshelf.

Jana Jones always took a keen interest in what I was doing, exchanging updates in the hallway, or at conferences, or by email. And of course, she was only too keen to offer advice on all things textile! That is how I will always remember Jana - open, kind, and always willing to share her deep knowledge of the topic that she loved in her characteristically measured and authoritative manner, but always with a warmth, style, and elegance that was so uniquely 'Jana'. And always - always - impeccably dressed! The word 'icon' is perhaps a bit overused these days, but for her colleagues at Macquarie University, as for so many others in the field, Jana Jones was, indeed, iconic, and she will be sorely missed by so many.

Although I (Alistair Dickey) never got to meet Jana Jones in person, it didn't ever feel like that. Having taken up a doctoral study program at the University of Liverpool in 2016, focusing on early Egyptian textiles, I soon got acquainted with her academic profile and work. Her many papers and fieldwork reports were eagerly devoured over the coming months and years as I sought to bring new information and ideas to the early Egyptian textiles arena that Jana Jones had taken up so vigorously since the turn of the new millennium.

As part of this, I contacted her on a number of occasions via email and always received enthusiastic and encouraging replies. Considering that she was the first person since the first half of the 20th century to seriously delve into these early textiles, she was delighted to

hear of someone with a similar interest. Indeed, on at least two occasions (that I know of) Jana Jones was the catalyst in bringing about my involvement in other textile projects, providing complimentary references without me even asking. Needless to say, it says a lot about her character and personality, by vouching for someone she had never physically met, but her trust in me by demonstrating such support and encouragement for a new researcher will never be forgotten.



Jana Jones giving a presentation about Identification of Textile Fibres at the CTR opening ceremony in 2005 at the University of Copenhagen (Image: Ulla Mannering)

Her contribution to the field of Neolithic to Early Dynastic textile research has been immense. She took up where the father and son duo of William and Thomas Midgley had left off in the early 20th century, by conducting fresh research of the rather small, dirty, and extremely fragile examples that tend to form the majority of textile material from early contexts in Egypt. This was an area of research that needed attention.

Her contribution in the 2001 issue of *Nekhen News* (the newsletter of the Oxford Uni expedition to Hierakonpolis in Egypt) entitled: "Bound for Eternity: Examination of the Textiles from HK43" was a start of many reports, papers,

and a thesis by publication (2011) that has resulted in almost 20 years of research. Jana Jones visited many museums and made many research trips to Egypt to examine textile material from wonderful sites such as Hierakonpolis, Abydos, Helwan, Mostagedda, and Adaima. Indeed, one of her lasting contributions is the multi-authored interdisciplinary 2014 paper in *PLoS 1*, which proposed evidence for the prehistoric origins of Egyptian mummification practices.

No doubt, I would have enjoyed meeting her in person and have to opportunity to discuss the fine intricacies of thread constructions, which unfortunately will not happen, but I am thankful that in some small part I experienced the warmth, encouragement, and kindness that Aaron expressed earlier. Her contribution to textile research, and particularly to Egyptian textile research, will continue to inspire and open new avenues of investigation as our discipline moves forward in new directions and weaving new relationships.

*By Alistair Dickey and Aaron de Souza*