



Dr Joanne Elizabeth Cutler

1962-2018

It is with deepest sorrow that I have to share the sad news that our friend and colleague Dr Joanne Cutler died on 24 January 2018. Jo lost the fight to aggressive cancer again at the age of 55.

Jo started her studies in archaeology as a mature student but, in a short time, she had an extremely successful career. She entered the field with typical enthusiasm, by undertaking two undergraduate degrees concurrently, one in archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, which she completed in 2005, and another in humanities with classical studies at the Open University, which she completed in 2006, whilst also completing her masters. She was awarded first class honours for both BAs and in 2006 she received the John Stephen Kassman national prize from the Open University for the best essay on a classical subject. In 2006, she also finished her masters in archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East with her dissertation *Production Systems and Social Dynamics: Towards a Cross-Media Approach to the Minoanisation of the Southern Aegean in the Mid-Second Millennium BC*, and was awarded her MA with distinction. In 2011, she defended her PhD thesis in archaeology, entitled *Crafting Minoanisation: Textiles, Crafts Production and Social Dynamics in the Bronze Age Southern Aegean*. After being awarded her doctorate, she received several research fellowships: in 2013, an INSTAP Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, and in 2013 to July 2015, she held a Marie Curie Intra-European Postdoctoral Fellowship through the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, during which she was based at the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Her project during this period was entitled *Weaving the fabric of society: Bronze Age Aegean economies of cloth*.

From 2015, Jo held a position as a European Research Council research associate in the project *Production and Consumption: Textile Economy and Urbanization in*

Mediterranean Europe 1000-500 BCE (PROCON), at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge. This research expanded her research geographically into the central and western Mediterranean, and chronologically into the Iron Age. The principal focus of her research was textile production, weaving technology and she explored how technological skills and techniques are learned and transmitted, and the processes of technological innovation, material culture change, the construction of identity, and gendered networks of knowledge.

Jo's recent publications included: 'Something old, something new: non-local brides as catalysts for cultural exchange at Ayia Irini, Kea?', in N. Stampolidis, Ç. Maner and K. Kopanias (eds), *Nostoi: Indigenous Culture, Migration and Integration in the Aegean Islands and Western Anatolia during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages* (Istanbul 2014) (with E. Gorogianni and R. Fitzsimons), *Tools, Textiles and Contexts, Investigating Textile Production in Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age*. Ancient Textiles Series, 31. (Oxford 2015) (with E. Andersson Strand & M.-L. Nosch),

'Fashioning identity: weaving technology, dress and cultural change in the Middle and Late Bronze Age southern Aegean', in E. Gorogianni, P. Pavúk, and L. Girella (eds), *Beyond Thalassocracies. Understanding Processes of Minoanisation and Mycenaeanisation in the Aegean* (Oxford, 2016), 'Producing textiles: the evidence from the textile tools', in M. Tsipopoulou (ed.) *Petras, Siteia I. A Minoan Palatial Settlement in Eastern Crete. Excavation of Houses I.1 and I.2* (Philadelphia 2016), 'Textile production', in J. Soles (ed.) *Mochlos Period III: The House of the Metal Merchant and other Houses in the Neopalatial Settlement* (Philadelphia 2018), and 'Neopalatial and Mycenaean Knossos: urban expansion and collapse', in *12th International Congress of Cretan Studies*, (Herakleion 2018) (with T. Whitelaw). As a scholar, Jo was meticulous, and unique in the





way she brought together theory and practice. She spent years travelling around different sites in the Aegean, recording and analysing archaeological materials, particularly textile tools, spindle whorls and loom weights, as well as pottery. One of her favourite places was Knossos, where she worked each summer between 2005 and 2016. This was a place to which she always returned, both for her own research on weaving tools from many Knossos excavations, and also to contribute to all aspects of the Knossos Urban Landscape Project, where she led field teams and developed her expertise in Neopalatial pottery. Her theoretical framework included both gender studies as well as theories of practice, approaches that she employed in her interpretation of the past. This work is well known. What is less familiar, and yet clearly demonstrates Jo's engagement in her work, is that, in order to understand the production of textiles and textile tools, Jo took classes in weaving as well as pottery. It was Jo's ability to combine these different aspects of textile production that made her research so successful and which led to its recognition through a number of awards: for example, she received the Michael Ventris Award and Samuel H. Kress Travel Awards and her aforementioned research scholarships. Jo also travelled and participated in conferences and workshops, latterly often as an invited speaker. For example, in 2014 she was invited to the Pennsylvania Museum and gave a lecture on *Weaving connections: textiles, networks of knowledge and the Minoanisation of the southern Aegean*. This lecture was sponsored by the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete, the History of Art Department of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Museum. In September 2016, a session was organised for the European Association of Archaeologists in Vilnius, Lithuania, under the title *Ties that bind. Relationships between the movement of raw materials and the movement of artisanal knowledge across Europe 2000-1500 BC*.

Besides her research, Jo was frequently engaged in teaching at all university levels, giving courses such

as *Women in the Ancient World and Textile Archaeology* at both University College London and the University of Cambridge. This was also something Jo enjoyed and, as ever, she spent a lot of time preparing in order to give the students the best possible experience and to share all her love for Aegean archaeology.

From 2009 to 2010, Jo took a break in her doctoral research to become a visiting scholar at the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research, University of Copenhagen. Her main task was to complete work on the project *Tools and Textiles – Texts and Contexts*, interpreting textile production in the Bronze Age Aegean and Ancient Near East. Jo's contribution was essential for the quality of the publication arising from the project. During this time, we worked very closely together; she was always happy to share her knowledge and I learned a lot from her.

However, it was Jo's personality which made her truly unique. She was considerate, always kind and very helpful with everything from proof reading to listening to the concerns of friends and colleagues. Jo was open to new ideas but not always easy to convince if you did not have the right arguments. After the sad news of her death, I received emails and condolences expressing a collective loss. One colleague wrote: "I feel that I lost somebody from my family today. Jo will always be in our hearts, our minds and she will always show us the way for splendid research". Another said "We have lost a lovely person and an outstanding scholar. I fully share your grief". These words fully express my feelings and those all Jo's colleagues and friends.

In order to honour her memory, we at CTR will continue her work and encourage young students to follow in her footsteps. Our thoughts and love go to her family, her sister, Lucy, and mother, Esther.

*Eva Andersson Strand and
the Centre for Textile Research team, Copenhagen*