

Dr Cora Beth Fraser - CA Prize Winner 2022



The Classical Association Prize is awarded annually to the person whose work is felt to have most raised the profile of Classics in the public eye. The winner of this year's CA prize is someone who works tirelessly to widen access to the study of the ancient world for learners of all ages.

[Dr Cora Beth Fraser](#) is an Open University Associate Lecturer and co-founder of [Asterion](#), an organisation dedicated to representing and celebrating neurodiversity in Classics. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a member of the [ACCLAIM Network](#) and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy as well as a member of the [Lego Classicists Family](#), and holder of a Recognition of Excellence in Teaching Award from the OU. She is also on the [EDI Committee of the Council of University Classics Departments](#), and is passionate about widening participation in Classics.

Cora Beth first encountered Latin at secondary school, and used it to access works of literature that she describes as 'beautiful and cruel and funny'. She has encountered students over the years who've told her that after a long day of working or caring for others, reading Latin is their treat, and for her that sums it up perfectly. She describes her OU students as 'extraordinary': many are carers; most have jobs, with many working full time while studying; some left school with no qualifications; some are in prison; some are in the armed forces. Wherever they are, whatever their situation, they push through it. Their commitment, their organisation and their enthusiasm inspire her every single day.

Cora Beth took action during the pandemic when others felt helpless. She approached colleagues and asked if they would answer some questions about a single object or text from the ancient world that brought them comfort in difficult times. The aim was to brighten people's day by running these interviews on their website. Lockdown went on longer than people expected; and more and more people started to read the interviews, all around the world. Indeed, requests started flooding in from people who wanted to be interviewed. [Comfort Classics](#) was a hit.

Asked what one thing she would change about the Classics Community, Cora Beth said that she'd ask for more kindness. As she said, 'all Classicists are trained to be critical; but a kind word can change lives. Some in our community, because of gender, race, disability or social class, are less likely to encounter encouragement than others. They're less likely to run into that life-changing moment. So, I would make the Classics community just a bit more inclined to give praise where it's due, to give the benefit of the doubt, and to reach over barriers to offer someone a hand.' She inspires us every single day and it is a great pleasure to present her with the 2022 CA Prize 2022.

Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson, CA Outreach Officer