

## **Edith Hall**

### **Doctor of Letters**

**Durham Cathedral, 27 June 2022**

Professor Edith Hall is that rare thing, a genuine public intellectual, with international reach and influence. Social justice is key to Edith's life and work, and her strong principles and passion to bring Classics to a wide audience, inform everything she does.

Edith has, just this month, taken up a post as Professor in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at Durham; she joins us from King's College, London. Her distinguished career has also seen her hold posts at Cambridge, Reading, Oxford, and Royal Holloway. Edith previously served as Professor of Greek Cultural History at Durham from 2001 to 2006, and we are delighted to welcome her back.

The author of over 30 academic books since 1989, Edith has won too many prizes and research awards to list fully here; these include an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Athens, and the Erasmus Medal of the European Academy.

Edith continues to do important work to bring her expertise in her first area of specialism, Greek drama, to a wider public audience, acting as a consultant to professional productions of ancient drama at the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, and Northern Broadsides, among others. For many years, Edith has appeared regularly as a contributor on BBC Radio, and lectures all around the world.

Her academic interests are far from narrow: in addition to her ongoing work on Greek drama, Edith has also published key works on - to list just a few areas - Greek slavery; the modern reception of Classics; how Aristotle's ethics can inform modern life; and women classical scholars, as part of an important project to uncover the underexplored role that women have played in shaping a discipline that has historically been very male-dominated. Her recent work on Classics and Class has brought to light the untold story of the classical engagements of non-elite, working class classicists and their

contribution to the Classics, and to art, knowledge, and public life, and Edith has teased out many previously unknown stories of local significance to the Northeast and its mining communities.

Edith also plays important roles in fostering the research of others, as Co-Founder and Consultant Director of the AHRC funded Archive of Performances of Greek & Roman Drama at Oxford, and Chair of the Gilbert Murray Trust. An inspiration to many in the field, she acts as mentor to numerous younger scholars.

One of Edith's latest initiatives, Advocating Classics Education or ACE, aims at introducing or supporting the teaching of Classical subjects in schools and sixth-form colleges. ACE has seen Edith visiting numerous state schools and putting on public events. These include a July 2018 event in this Cathedral with the poet and playwright Tony Harrison, on whose work Edith has written extensively, to support the expansion and sustaining of the teaching of Classical Civilisation in schools and sixth-form colleges throughout the Northeast.

Every Classicist in the country owes her a great debt for her tireless work in promoting our subject, its relevance, and demonstrating its social value in an age where that is not always apparent.

*Chancellor I present Edith Hall to receive the degree of Doctor of Letters honoris causa.*