

## Girton College Humanities Writing Competition

Further Information 2019-2020

Girton's Humanities Writing Competition is for students in Year 12 (or equivalent) who have an interest in the Humanities. Students will submit an essay based on one or more objects selected from the College's small antiquities museum, the Lawrence Room.

This competition is an opportunity for research and writing beyond the curriculum using one or more of the six objects as your focus. Essays or creative responses (such as dramatic monologues or short stories) are equally welcome. We are looking for the ability to connect different areas of knowledge, to think about details and to communicate clearly.

**Closing Date:** 5pm on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### Prizes

The prize fund, consists of £200 cash and £200-worth of books from Cambridge University Press, the latter to be shared between the winning entrant/s and their school/s. The prize fund may be divided between winning entrants.

Funding is provided by the kind sponsorship of Cambridge University Press and Miss C. Anne Wilson, sponsor of the Wilson Bursary fund for Classics students at Girton.

The prizes will be presented by the Mistress at Girton College in late April/early May 2019. Runners up will also be invited. This year's winning entries will be put on display in the Lawrence Room, to enhance visitors' experience of our collection (subject to the entrants' approval).

### About the Lawrence Room

Named after a Girton student, the Lawrence Room contains Anglo-Saxon finds from the College grounds, Egyptian material including the rare portrait mummy 'Hermione', and Mediterranean material from the Classical and pre-Classical worlds.

## Competition Rules

- 1) Submissions **must** relate to one or more of the following Lawrence Room Objects (full information overleaf).
  - a) LR.767: Greek terracotta figurine of woman (Muse?)
  - b) LR.799: Greek brown clay figure of a stag
  - c) LR.1083: horn from Ptolemaic Egypt
  - d) LR.721: late Roman or early Anglo-Saxon bone comb
  - e) LR.309: Egyptian alabaster dish
- 2) The word limit is 1800 words (though creative writing in particular may be shorter). Include a word count, and a list of references if applicable.
- 3) There is a **limit of 3 entries per school**.
- 4) Submissions should be typed in English in a standard font, lines 1.5 spaced, and every page should be marked with the entrant's name.
- 5) Submissions are made on a digital form found here:  
[https://cambridge.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bxXHcqJOltvj8jz](https://cambridge.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxXHcqJOltvj8jz)
- 6) Submissions made by email or post will not be considered.
- 7) Submissions accompanied by incomplete forms will not be considered. Please check your submission form carefully before sending.
- 8) Submissions received after the deadline (5pm, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020) will not be considered.
- 9) Entrants must be resident in the UK.
- 10) It will not be possible to provide feedback on all the essays.
- 11) The judges reserve the right not to award prizes if there is no entry of sufficient merit.

## Competition Items

All entries must related to at least one of the below items. To look up the full entries of these and other items in the Lawrence Room Catalogue online, see <http://www.lrc.girton.cam.ac.uk/>

You can navigate to the catalogue from the Girton College website, [www.girton.cam.ac.uk](http://www.girton.cam.ac.uk) , by clicking on 'Discover Girton' on the menu across the middle of the page, then on 'Places', then, in the final paragraph headed 'Our art and artefacts', on the 'Lawrence Room' link.

For further information about the Lawrence Room, with links to information leaflets, see <http://www.girton.cam.ac.uk/lawrenceroom>

The following themes have been suggested by the competition committee, but entrants are welcome to devise their own:

- Music and musical instruments
- The use of animal products for artefacts; the significance of animals
- Male and female attributes
- Ideas of beauty; grooming
- The identification of ancient objects

LR.767: Greek terracotta figurine of woman (Muse?)



‘Tanagra’ figures, dating from the third century B.C., are named after the town in Greece where they were first found in large quantities, most often in tombs. They are small terracotta human figures made in hollow moulds, brightly painted in watercolour after firing. Although they follow an older tradition of terracotta figures used as cult images or votive objects, they may have been used simply as ornaments. This young female figure holding a kithara (lyre) may represent one of the Muses, goddesses of the arts, or a Siren. The colour has probably been retouched in the nineteenth century.

*Place:* Boeotia, Greece

*Date:* BCE 330-200

*Acquisition Source:* Hon. Evelyn Saumarez, 1902; purchased in Athens, 1873

*Dimensions:* Height 15 cm

LR.799: Greek brown clay figure of a stag



This hollow-moulded brown-clay stag with its oversized antlers is one of a great variety of Hellenistic Greek animal figurines whose purpose may originally, like the tanagras, have been votive and funerary but which can seem purely playful. Much less finely modelled than the human figure no. 767, with a 'wall' of clay joined to the base holding its legs together, the figure is none the less alert and expressive.

*Place:* Boeotia, Greece

*Date:* BCE 400–201

*Acquisition Source:* Hon. Evelyn Saumarez, 1902; purchased in Athens 1873

*Dimensions:* Height 18.7 cm

LR.1083: horn from Ptolemaic Egypt



This is an actual horn, probably a bull's, from Ptolemaic Egypt, carved and with a flat end cut off at the tip, perhaps for a mouthpiece. Its use is unknown: it may have been a musical instrument, or a decoration for a statue.

*Place:* Saqqara, Egypt

*Date:* BCE 400–430

*Acquisition Source:* Gwendolen Crewdson (?), 1918–19

*Dimensions:* Length 35 cm; diameter at widest point 6.1 cm; diameter at narrowest point 2 cm



LR.721: late Roman or early Anglo-Saxon bone comb



This decorated comb was found in the grounds of Girton College in one of the graves of an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery. The site had earlier been on the fringe of a Romano-British settlement; the comb may have passed down several generations before being buried with its last owner. Grooming items like combs, tweezers and ear scoops, as well as jewellery and dress fastenings, are often found in women's graves of the fifth to seventh centuries.

*Place:* East Anglia

*Date:* CE 400–600

*Acquisition Source:* Excavation at Girton College, Cambridge, 1881

*Dimensions:* 13.7 cm long

LR.309: Egyptian alabaster dish



In ancient Egypt, cosmetics were much used by both men and women and were thought to confer spiritual and health benefits as well as purely aesthetic ones. This finely carved and polished cosmetic dish bears traces of black-and-white decoration. It may have been made in the shape of a duck or similar bird and may once have had a lid.

*Place:* Egypt

*Date:* BCE 1550–1295

*Acquisition Source:* Gwendolen Crewdson, 1918–19

*Dimensions:* Length (with handle) 10.3 cm, width 6.4 cm