

Girton College Humanities Writing Competition

Further Information 2024-2025

This annual competition is an opportunity for students to research and write beyond the curriculum, using one or more of the Lawrence Room museum objects, as their focus. Essays or creative responses (such as dramatic monologues, short stories or poems) are equally welcome.

Focusing on Girton's museum collection in the Lawrence Room, the Humanities Writing Competition aims to use ancient objects as a starting point for thinking across curricular divides – about the varieties of human experience that these survivals from the past can embody and reflect and the trains of thought they can set off.

In factual essays, we are looking to encourage the ability to connect different areas of knowledge, to think about details and to communicate clearly. A winning entry will typically draw on some in-depth research on the artefact being discussed, provide references to it, and also introduce some ideas of the entrant's own: it is always fascinating for us to discover unexpected perspectives on the museum's contents.

In creative entries, we are looking for an imaginative response to the object(s) based on an understanding of relevant historical facts and contexts, and a precise and controlled use of language.

In both factual and creative entries, clear and correct English and good presentation are expected. You may find it useful to work with a recognised style handbook like the MHRA Style Guide, available online: <https://www.mhra.org.uk/style/>

Closing Date: 5pm on Thursday, 20 March 2025

Prizes

The prize fund consists of £500 cash and books to the value of £400 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 on Thursday 8 May 2025.

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 1109: Tudigong figurine
 - b) LR 550: Bes amulet
 - c) LR.674: Cinerary urn
 - d) LR 788: Tanagra figurine: woman with fan
 - e) LR. 148: Cat amulet
- 2) The word limit is 1800 words (although 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_6DPoDyoqCc1PALc
- 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, 20 March 2025) 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 be 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, by clicking on 'About Girton', then on 'Art & Artefacts'. Scroll down to find the link to the 'Lawrence Room' webpage.

For further information about the Lawrence Room, with links to information leaflets, see <https://www.girton.cam.ac.uk/lawrence-room>.

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

- Divine protection
- Individuality and anonymity
- Gender roles
- Contrasting artistic styles and levels of technology
- The tension between museum displays and religious/cultural beliefs