

Report on the Gilbert Murray Trust essay competition 2024-5

This has been a very successful year for the Gilbert Murray Trust essay competition. We had more schools competing than last year, and more entries. There were entries in all year groups apart from the S5-S6 group, and the entries in the S1-S2 group were especially numerous. The judges enjoyed seeing the many creative approaches to the ancient world, both in writing and visual art, and the overall award this year went to an exceptionally beautiful painting of what could have been a Pompeian mural.

In the P6-P7 age group, all participants had decided to complete the assignment of drawing a comic strip of their favourite myth. There was quite a lot of variety in how much effort had been put into the drawings and also between the amount of text included. The judges rewarded a combination of knowledge of the myth, artistic flair, and drama or humour; in general we preferred comic strips where the text and images worked together. Two certificates were awarded, both to retellings of the Perseus and Medusa myth, and one prize for a striking and humorous retelling of the Trojan Horse story.

The S1-S2 age group had 56 entries, the largest number of any age group. The assignments for this group were inspired by last year's Olympic Games. Many students had chosen to write an account of an imagined chariot-racing victory at the Roman circus, and many had drawn a logo for an imagined ancient sports team. Only a few had written an interview with Jason after his successful expedition for the Golden Fleece. Fourteen certificates were awarded in this age category, four for particularly dramatic, well-written, and well-informed accounts of a charioteering victory, six for imaginative, well thought-out, and well-executed sports team logos, and four for well-written, funny, and well-informed Jason interviews. In addition, two prizes were awarded: one for a particularly well-crafted account of a talk-show interview with Jason and Medea, and one for an extraordinarily gripping account of a victory at the races. Again, it was the combination of knowledge of the ancient context with creative skill that was rewarded.

In the S3-S4 age group, the students were offered a choice of three tasks: designing and drawing a mosaic or wall-painting for a building in Pompeii, writing a letter from Ariadne to Theseus, or writing a blog post by Hades. There were many inventive entries, and a number of certificates were awarded, particularly in the drawing/painting category as well as two prizes, one for a blog post by Hades on Orpheus in the Underworld and one for a mosaic of fish for a fishmonger's shop. This was also where the prize for the overall winner of the competition was awarded, to a stunning painting of a red ibis which would have graced a Pompeian temple of Isis.

For a full list of certificates and prizes, see overleaf.

P6-P7

Prize: Isla T, Clifton Hall School, for a comic strip about the Trojan Horse

Certificates: Thomas A, Clifton Hall School
Ko M, Clifton Hall School

S1-S2

Prizes: Ariana M, St Ambrose High School, for a lively and convincing interview with Jason (and Medea)
Anneka M, George Heriot's School, for a gripping, yet factual, account of a charioteering victory

Certificates: Ava G, St Ambrose High School
Lexi M, Clifton Hall School
Thea G, Clifton Hall School
Anika C, George Heriot's School
Alexander N, Stewart's Melville College
Ewan G, High School of Dundee
Alastair F, High School of Dundee
James F, St Columba's School
Alice W, High School of Glasgow
Rose D, St Mary's Music School
Judy T, The Glasgow Academy
Manogna B, The Glasgow Academy
Tariq A, The Glasgow Academy
Sophie Y, The Glasgow Academy

S3-S4

Grand Gilbert Murray Prize winner: Lucy G, Beath High School, for a stunning painting of a red ibis for the Temple of Isis

Prizes: Mya Y, George Heriot's School, for a lively, yet moving, blog post by Hades about the arrival of Orpheus in the Underworld
Chloe D, St Columba's School, for a beautiful mosaic of fish for a fish-monger's shop

Certificates: Niamh M, Beath High School
Amy M, Beath High School
Emily H, Beath High School
Poppy S, George Watson's College
Sandy R, St Mary's Music School
Paul O, St Mary's Music School

Very many congratulations to all the winners, and a big thank you to everyone who participated!

Yours sincerely,
Prof Lisa Irene Hau

