7 Botanic Crescent

 Glasgow

 05/06/17

Dear Colleague,

Thanks for supporting the Gilbert Murray essay Competition. The number of submissions has remained steady at around the hundred mark, but the number of schools was up significantly this year. That is very good to see. I would encourage you to keep entering the competition. Encourage your pupils to compete and aim for quality in the craft of writing.

The titles set for S1-2 were all well supported with a particularly large number of submissions for aspects of the Perseus myth in cartoon form. They were each interesting and attractive in their own way but the judges found none outstanding. The best and most stylish were often very short. The story of Achilles and Penthesilea gave rise to some moving pieces of storytelling. Genuine poignancy, like genuine humour, is not necessarily an easy thing to convey. The third title, on ancient inventions, gave rise to a whole variety of choices. What did the judges like? I think it was a well-argued case for that amazing stuff - concrete.

There were few entries for the S3-4 titles though one of them was a prize winner - a detailed explanation of how good it would be to be the son of the god Poseidon.

Entries for the S5-6 titles are sadly few but they can be excellent. The judges' favourite this year and the recipient of the Special Prize of £50 (for the second year running) went to one such entry, by Mira Mansfield, an S6 pupil at The High School of Glasgow, for her brilliant dialogue between Socrates and 'D' on the nature of the democracy at Athens. 'D' seemed incredibly knowledgeable which was hardly surprising since 'D' turned out to be Dr Who! The writing was witty and polished and clearly based on a welter of research.

There were quite a number of AH dissertations submitted this year. Though all competently written, they did vary in the quality of ideas and the clarity of expression. Sometimes the writing was so dense that there was a lack of lucidity. Some dissertations would benefit from better paragraphing. Dissertations can be written to a formula dictated by guidelines and marking-schemes. It is refreshing to find those that are not.

I would like to remind all teachers to stick to the guidelines issued each year along with the essay titles. The **name** and **school** of the pupil should appear on the submission. A typed **list of pupils** should also be included from each school. These two things help to ensure that names are spelled correctly on the certificates and that the certificates go to the correct school.

Prizes this year are Amazon gift vouchers to the value of £15. The list of winners is appended.

Yours,

Geoffrey M F Boath