The Authority for Research and Development
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

THE POLONSKY PRIZES
FOR CREATIVITY & ORIGINALITY
IN THE HUMANISTIC DISCIPLINES
AT THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

June 2015

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Dr. Leonard Polonsky CBE

Dr. Leonard Polonsky CBE is Founder and President of Hansard Global Plc listed on the main board of the London Stock Exchange. The company has used advanced technology to manage its business and expand internationally and has clients in over 170 countries.

A citizen of the UK, Dr. Polonsky grew up in New York City, where he was a pupil at Townsend Harris High School. He received his BA degree at age eighteen, Phi Beta Kappa, from New York University. Following military service in 1945/46, he pursued graduate studies at Lincoln College, Oxford, and in Paris at the Sorbonne, where he received his doctorate in Lettres, with distinction, in 1952. He taught languages in Heidelberg for several years before embarking on his business career and subsequently attended the Advanced Management Program at Harvard.

Dr. Polonsky is a Fleming Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, a Benefactor of the Guild at Cambridge University, a member of the Circle of Benefactors at Oxford University and a Benefactor of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. He is also a Governor and Honorary Fellow of the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, in Jerusalem, and serves on the Board of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding in New York.

Dr. Polonsky has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate and is an Honorary Fellow and Governor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he serves on the Board of the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace. He has been a member of the Executive of the University’s British Friends for twenty years.

Dr. Polonsky is founding trustee of the Polonsky Foundation in London, which supports charitable activity worldwide, with a focus on higher education and the arts, and a special emphasis on major digitization projects that promote the democratization of knowledge, at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Cambridge University Library, the Vatican Apostolic Library, the Jewish Theological Seminary Library, the New York Public Library, and others. Among the collections already digitized are the papers of Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein, each recording over 100 million ‘hits’ within the first few months of going online. The Polonsky Foundation also underwrites prizes and scholarships in the humanities and awards for postgraduate study in China. It also provides university scholarships for students of Ethiopian background in Jerusalem and Haifa.

The Polonsky Academy for the Advanced Study of the Humanities and Social Sciences opened last year on the campus of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The Academy awards Fellowships to postdoctoral researchers.
A Message from the Dean

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Scholarly activity in the Humanities is expressed in different forms: monographs, the editing of original sources, journal articles and more, all of which are based on extensive research, intellectual analysis and writing. Every year, members of the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University publish their scholarship in prestigious journals and academic publishing houses in Israel and abroad. It is such scholarly endeavors that have made the Faculty of Humanities in Jerusalem one of the leading centers of humanistic study in the world, and have contributed to the overall reputation of the Hebrew University as a foremost academic institution.

The Polonsky Prizes were established over a decade ago through the generosity and vision of Dr. Leonard Polonsky and the Polonsky Foundation. These prizes give clear recognition to both senior and junior members of the Faculty of Humanities and elsewhere at the University who have demonstrated the highest standards of scholarship in the humanistic disciplines. All the recipients of this year’s prize – two senior scholars, one recent Ph.D. graduate who is already a full member of our Faculty, and one current doctoral student – were chosen by a committee consisting of members of the Faculty of Humanities, along with the Vice President for Research and Development, Prof. Isaiah (Shy) Arkin and myself.

This year’s prize winners were chosen from a particularly strong list of contenders in the different categories, making the selection especially challenging. All in all, the high quality of all the submissions left me with a feeling of pride in the distinctive and excellent work being produced in the fields of Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. It gives me great pleasure to thank the members of the prize committee for their hard work, as well as Prof. Arkin for his support, Ms. Rachel Nathan from the Faculty of Humanities who coordinated the work of the prize committee, and Ms. Ayelet Sagiv of the Authority for Research and Development at the Hebrew University, for crucial administrative matters, not the least coordinating this ceremony today.

We are grateful to the Polonsky Foundation for their support and encouragement. We look forward to next year’s competition, and the interesting and original studies that it will bring to our attention.

With best wishes,
Prof. Dror Wahrman
Dean, The Faculty of Humanities
Saints were of fundamental importance for medieval politics, society, art, and even the economy. This fact is often repeated but seldom explained. To modern people, it is unclear how saints achieved such a crucial status and performed such vital functions. The book Medieval Music, Legend, and the Cult of St. Martin: The Local Foundations of a Universal Saint takes readers behind the scenes of one saint’s cult, explaining how the magic worked. It analyzes in depth the rise of one of the most successful saintly cults in medieval Europe, the cult of St. Martin of Tours. Only if we understand the instruments of the cult’s formation and the agents of its propagation—liturgy, music, hagiography—can we comprehend its enormous diffusion and impact.

Promoting a saint was an arduous task that required sustained efforts. The first step was to gain ownership of the saint, both corporeally (relics) and ritually (through music and liturgy). The book asks several questions about ownership of this sort. For instance, how does a community become identified with a saint? Who decides how to worship the saint, and what will be his most salient features? Moreover, saints’ names and cults were not unlike modern brands. In order to make the most of them, it was necessary not only to “own” them, but also to market them. What day-to-day efforts went into the making of the cult locally, and what made this particular cult so successful all over Europe? What role did music play in marketing a saint?

There are many tensions implicit in the local and universal portrayals of St. Martin, yet they are by no means contradictory. The book elucidates the counterpoint between local, often petty manipulations of the cult on the one hand, and national and international cultural developments on the other. Martin’s devotees at every period believed that his complex destiny and their parts in it were divinely ordained. Their accounts, whether verbal or musical, are often profoundly moving and beautiful. The story is rather more dependent on human motives, power politics, and propaganda, but it is no less compelling for all that.
Although she died some 45 years ago, Leah Goldberg is still an icon of Israeli culture. Apart from the broad and varied audiences that remain loyal to her, it appears that her writing has of late aroused greater interest among scholars. As part of this recent wave of interest, yet independently of it, Prof. Weiss’s book reveals a different and unfamiliar Leah Goldberg looking for the tracks left by her in Germany and in German, as well as the traces of Germany to be found in her early writing. The book follows the progress of a Jewish girl who came to Berlin because she yearned to escape the confined world of Kovno. Briefly experiencing freedom and liberation in Berlin and in Bonn, she found herself a witness to the disintegration of the Weimar Republic and to the rise of Nazism. The displacement of the familiar Leah Goldberg from the world of Hebrew letters to that of declining Weimar is the book’s major innovation. Alongside Goldberg’s refusal to tread on “the soil of Germany,” she later nurtured and cultivated her intimate connection with German language and culture. Particularly in an age in which it appears that past boycotts have vanished, it is intriguing to discover Leah Goldberg’s complex approach to this issue half a century ago. The book’s innovations, therefore, relate both to the study of Leah Goldberg and to the overall relations between Jews and Germans, and between Israelis and Germany. In each of these areas, the book reveals unfamiliar episodes and interprets them, while maintaining a balance between the narrative and elucidatory elements and weaving the analysis into the texture of the plot. It thereby remains faithful to its protagonist, who was indeed a professor of comparative literature and founder of this discipline at the Hebrew University, but also, and above all, a creative writer.

Journey and Imaginary Journey: Leah Goldberg in Germany, 1930-1933

Prof. Yfaat Weiss
Department of the History of the Jewish People and Contemporary Jewry
Faculty of Humanities

Yfaat Weiss is the director of the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History at the Hebrew University, and the vice dean of research at the Faculty of Humanities. She was a Senior Fellow at the European Institutes for Advanced Study (EURIAS), and was a visiting scholar at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture in Leipzig, the Europe Center at Stanford University, the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, the Remarque Institute of European Modern History of New York University, and at the International Institute for Holocaust Research – Yad Vashem. Her research concentrates on memory, spatial history and the transfer of culture and knowledge in European Jewish and Israeli history.
This doctoral dissertation seeks to contribute to our understanding of the Quran and ultimately to the situating of pre-Islamic Arabia in its Late Antique context. The core argument is that Quranic retellings of biblical narratives are often much more indebted to the Christian Syriac tradition than most scholars have hitherto believed. Within the Syriac tradition the sources which tend to present the most parallels are verse homilies which often recast biblical narratives in intriguing ways, combining exegetical elements and dramatic embellishments. These homilies were performed in public and served to instruct a wide population. They could therefore have served as ideal channels of transmission for biblical traditions to the Quranic milieu. In spite of the importance and wide dissemination of these homilies at the time, scholars have not carried out a systematic comparison between them and the Quran.

Following Abraham Geiger’s seminal study of 1833, scholars frequently presume that stories from the Hebrew Bible were transmitted to the Quranic milieu primarily by Jews. The evidence examined in this study strongly suggests that this is often not the case. The body of this dissertation consists of four case-studies: the fall of Adam, Cain’s murder of Abel, Abraham’s construction of a sanctuary together with his son, and the entire story of Joseph and his travails. A comparison of these narratives as presented in the Quran with both Jewish and Christian Syriac texts shows that in many respects the Quran is markedly closer to the Syriac tradition. The similarities fall under four headings: shared motifs, diction, literary form, and typological function.

A careful reading of Islam’s scripture in light of Syriac sources contributes to a better understanding of the Quran, which can often be a most difficult and complex text. Moreover, light can be shed on many details in the Quran which previously were considered errors or innovations, but may now be shown to reflect developments found in the Syriac tradition. The study of the Syriac background also allows us to appreciate more fully the ways in which the Quran adapted earlier traditions.
Where Did You Come From? The History of the Jewish People in Early Palestinian Historiography (1920-1948)

Eli Osheroff’s thesis, titled “Where Did You Come From? The History of the Jewish People in Early Palestinian Historiography (1920-1948),” written under the supervision of Abigail Jacobson and Liat Kozma, examines the changing perceptions of Jewish history in the eyes of the first Palestinian intellectuals during British Mandatory rule.

Palestinian intellectuals produced a large body of historical works during the Mandate period. During the war of 1948, many of the books were abandoned, scattered and later preserved in the National Library of Israel. Therefore, this thesis is one of the few attempts to reconstruct this world of thought. The dissertation examines, for example, how Palestinian historians perceived events such as the historic Israelite conquest of the Promised Land, the rebellion on Masada, and the rise of the modern day Zionist movement.

Eli argues that the older generation of Palestinian intellectuals perceived Jewish history as an integral part of the history of Palestine, and at times even treated it as a source for identification and inspiration. This inclusive attitude towards the Jewish history of the land challenges the popular idea that hostility between Palestinian-Arabs and Jews has existed since time immemorial. Furthermore, this attitude can serve as a good starting point for rethinking Jewish and Arab historical perceptions today.
The Polonsky Prizes for Creativity and Originality in the Humanistic Disciplines

Polonsky Prizes 2014

First Prize: Prof. **Dror Wahrman**
Department of History, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: *Mr. Collier’s Letter Racks: A Tale of Art and Illusion at the Threshold of the Modern Information Age*

Second Prize: Dr. **Uzi Leibner**
Institute of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities
For his article: *The Origins of Jewish Settlement in the Galilee in the Second Temple Period: Historical Sources and Archaeological Data*

Young Researcher: Dr. **Tawfiq Da‘adli**
The Martin Buber Society of Fellows, Faculty of Humanities
The Pictorial Language of the Herat School of Painting: Two Nizāmī Manuscripts as a Case Study

Young Researcher: Ms. **Noa Nahmias**
Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Humanities
Displaying Patriotism: Narratives of the May 4th Movement in Chinese Museums

10th Anniversary Prize

Prof. **Ronit Ricci**
Departments of Comparative Religion and Asian Studies
Faculty of Humanities
The Sri Lankan Malays: Islam, Literature, and Diaspora across the Indian Ocean
Polonsky Prizes 2013

First Prize: Dr. OFRA TIROSH-BICKER
Department of Hebrew and Jewish Languages, Faculty of Humanities
For her book: Rubbinc Excerpts in Medieval Karaite Literature

Second Prize: Dr. SHimon Gesundheit (Bar-On)
Department of Bible, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: Three Times a Year: Studies on Festival Legislation in the Pentateuch

Young Researcher: Dr. Yitzhak FREEMAN
Department of Comparative Religion, Faculty of Humanities
Death, Performance and Text in the Early Upanisads

Young Researcher: Mr. ARIEL ZINDER
Department of Hebrew Literature, Faculty of Humanities
“Is This Thy Voice?” Rhetoric and Dialogue in Shlomo Ibnt-Gabirol’s Poems of Redemption (“Piyquei Ge’ula”)

Young Researcher: Ms. LIAT NAEEH
Institute of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities
Miniature Vessels and Seven-Capped Bowls in the Middle Bronze Age Temple of Naharaya: Their Role and Meaning in Light of Cultic Miniature and Complex Vessels of the Middle Bronze Age

Polonsky Prizes 2012

First Prize: Prof. RUTH HACOHEN
Department of Musicology
The Music Libel against the Jews

Second Prize: Dr. YUVAL NOAH HARARI
Department of History
A Brief History of Mankind

Young Researcher: Dr. Aleksandr KRAKSMALNIKOV
Department of German, Russian and Eastern European Studies
The Literature of the Belokrynitsa Old-Believers (1846-1862)

Young Researcher: Dr. JENNIFER OSER
Federmann School of Public Policy and Government
Expanded Citizen Participation and Participatory Inequality: A Vicious or Virtuous Circle?

MA/Doctoral Student: Mr. Yaron GISH
School of Education and Department of Sociology and Anthropology
“The Cultural Boundaries of Thinking”: Cultural Narratives in the Philosophy of Education of Friedrich Nietzsche and John Dewey

Polonsky Prizes 2011

First Prize: Prof. MAREN R. NEHOROFF
Department of Jewish Thought
For her book: Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria (Cambridge, 2011)

Second Prize: Prof. ESTHER COHEN
Department of History
For her book: The Mediated Scram: Pain in Late Medieval Culture. 1755-1816 (Chicago, 2010)

Young Researcher: Dr. MAoZ KAHANA
Department of the History of the Jewish People
From Prague to Pressburg: Halakhic Writing in a Changing World, from the “Noda B’Yehudah” to the “Hatam Sofer,” 1730-1839

MA/Doctoral Student: Ms. Michal ALTBAUER RUDNIK
Department of History
For her article: The Wounds of Love Are Cured Only by Those Who Made Them: Prescribing Marriage for Loveliness in Early Modern European Medical Writing

Polonsky Prizes 2010

First Prize: Prof. YURI PINES
Department of East Asian Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: Envisioning Eternal Empire

Second Prize: Dr. PAWEĻ MACIEJKO
Department of Jewish Thought, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement 1755-1816

Young Researcher: Dr. SIMCHA KOJMAN-ROZEN
History, Philosophy and Sociology of Science Program, Faculty of Humanities
For her thesis: Time and Emergence in Scientific Theories in England in the 19th Century

Young Researcher: Ms. NOGA AYALI-DARSHAN
Department of Jewish History, Faculty of Humanities
For her article: The Bride of the Sea: The Tradition about Astarte and Yamm in the Ancient Near East

Polonsky Prizes 2009

First Prize: Dr. Yuval Noah Harari
Department of History, Faculty of Humanities

Second Prize: Prof. SIMCHA EMANUEL
Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: Fragments of the Tablets - Lost Books of the Tosephists

Young Researcher: Dr. Eviatar Shulman
Department of Jewish Thought, Faculty of Humanities
For his dissertation: The Fullness of Emptiness: Nāgārjuna’s Thought in Light of the Yukti-ṣaṣṭi-kārikā and the Śūnyatā-saptati

Young Researcher: Dr. Nira Alperson-Afil
Institute of Archeology, Faculty of Humanities
For his dissertation: Ancient Flames: Controlled Use of Fire at the Acheron Site of Grisher Benot Ya’akov, Israel

Student Prize: Ms. Noa Shashar
Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For her MA thesis: The Role of Niddah Laws in Daily Lives of Men and Women in the Ashkenazi World of the 17th-19th Centuries

Student Prize: Mr. Kobi Ben-Meir
Forum Europa, Faculty of Social Sciences
For her MA thesis: Images of Pain, Disease and Death in 1970’s Israeli Art
Polonsky Prizes 2008

First Prize: Dr. MICHAEL SEGAL
Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities

Second Prize: Prof. RONNIE ELLENBLUM
Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences and School of History, Faculty of Humanities

Second Prize: Dr. MICHAEL ROUBACH
Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: Being and Number in Heidegger’s Thought (2008)

Student Prize: Mr. MAOZ KAHANA
Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For his MA thesis: Stability and Change in the Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Sofer

Student Prize: Dr. ODED PORAT
Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For his MA thesis: Studying the Treatise “Brit Hamnuha” (“Covenant of Serenity”): Its Ideas, Literature Relationships and an Introduction to the Critical Edition

Polonsky Prizes 2007

First Prize: Dr. DIEGO OLSTEIN
Department of History, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: La Era Mozárabes: Los Mozárabes de Toledo (Siglos XII y XIII) en la Historiografía: Las Fuentes y la Historia

Second Prize: Prof. GANNIT ANKORI
Department of Art History, Faculty of Humanities
For her book: Palestinian Art

Second Prize: Dr. JONATHAN DEKEL-CHEN
Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: Farming the Red Land: Jewish Agricultural Colonization and Local Soviet Power, 1924-1941

Young Researcher Prize: Dr. TSIPPI KAUFMAN
Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For her dissertation: Between Heterodoxy and Religious Behavior: Asodet be-Gashmiyut in the Early Stages of Hasidism

Student Prize: Mr. ILYA BERKOVICH
Department of History, Faculty of Humanities
For his paper: Sheila: A Comparative Survey into the Nature of Medieval Warfare

Polonsky Prizes 2006

First Prize: Prof. YOSEF GARFINKEL
Institute of Archeology, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: Dancing at the Drown of Agriculture

First Prize: Prof. BENNY SHANO
Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences
For his book: The Antipodes of the Mind

Young Researcher Prize: Dr. HILA KEREN
Faculty of Law
For her article: Textual Harassment: A New Historiographic Reappraisal of the Peal Evidence Rule with Gender in Mind

Student Prize: Dr. ELISHVA RIGBI-SHAFRIR
Department of Musicology, Faculty of Humanities
For her dissertation: The Modern in Music: 1900-1920 against the Crisis of Historicism and the Breakdown of Rational Paradigm: A Critical Analysis of a Style

Student Prize: Ms. GABRIELA STERNFELD
Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For her dissertation: La Organización Laboral del Imperio Inca: Las Autoridades Locales Básicas

Polonsky Prizes 2005

First Prize: Prof. GABRIEL HERMAN
Department of History, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: Morality and Behaviour in Democratic Athens – A Social History

Young Researcher Prize: Dr. TZACHI ZAMIR
Department of English, Faculty of Humanities
For his book: Double Vision

Student Prize: Dr. EMMAELLE MAIN
Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For her article: Des Mercenaires Rhodiens dans la Judée Hasmonéenne? Étude du Morìf Floral de Monnaies de Jean Hyrcan et d’Alexandre Jannée

Student Prize: Mr. AHMED ABU-ABIED
School of Education
For his MA thesis: The Effect of Pre-school Attendance on Primary School Achievement

Polonsky Prizes 2004

First Prize: Prof. MARA BELLER
Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities

Second Prize: Prof. AVIHU ZAKAI
Department of American Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For her book: Jonathan Edwards’s Philosophy of History: The Reenchantment of the World in the Age of Enlightenment

Young Researcher Prize: Dr. ANAT HELMAN
Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies and Cultural Studies Program
For her dissertation: The Development of Civil Society and Urban Culture in Tel-Aviv during the 1920s and 1930s

Student Prize: Ms. OPHIR MINTZ-MANOR
Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities
For his work: Other Voices: Human, Jesus, and the Representations of the Other in Purim Poems from Byzantine Palestine