



International Balzan Prize Foundation

Press Release - 13 September 2021

The 2021 Balzan Prizewinners

One of the prizes was not awarded at this time

The amount of each prize is 750,000 CHF (approximately 690,000 EUR; 815,000 USD; 590,000 GBP) for each subject area.

Half of the total amount must be used for projects that involve young researchers.

Milan, 13 September 2021 – The winners of the 2021 Balzan Prizes are:

- **Saul Friedländer** (Israel), University of California Los Angeles, for *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*
- The 2021 Balzan Prize for *Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East* **was not awarded at this time.**
- **Jeffrey Gordon** (USA), Washington University Saint Louis, for *Microbiome in Health and Disease*
- **Alessandra Buonanno** (Italy), Albert Einstein Institut, Potsdam, and **Thibault Damour** (France), Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques, Paris, for *Gravity: Physical and Astrophysical Aspects*

The Balzan General Prize Committee reached its decision at its annual conclusive plenary meeting, where it evaluated and selected the candidates put forward by academies, universities, and research centres around the world. The Committee based its choice on the validity, current relevance and coherence of the candidates' research, identifying the specific factors that guarantee the advancement of knowledge in the respective fields of study.

The names of the winners were announced today in Milan by the President of the Balzan Foundation "Prize", **Alberto Quadrio-Curzio**, and by the Chairman of the Balzan General Prize Committee, **Luciano Maiani**, during the traditional evening event held at the Fondazione Corriere della Sera.

Each winner will receive 750,000 CHF (approximately 690,000 EUR; 815,000 USD; 519,000 GBP), half of which must be invested in research. Since 2001, the rules and regulations of the General Prize Committee stipulate that the Prizewinners must use half of the amount of their prize to finance research carried out by young researchers.

Every year, four new subject areas are chosen from these two broad categories: literature, moral sciences, and the arts; and physical, mathematical and natural sciences, and medicine. This rotation of subject areas makes it possible to give precedence to new or emerging lines of research, and to support important areas of study that might be overlooked by other major international awards.

In its sixty years of existence, the Balzan Prize has come full circle in recognizing all fields of knowledge, thus achieving the Foundation's goal – as stated in the rules and regulations – of fostering culture, the sciences and the most meritorious humanitarian initiatives, regardless of nationality, race or creed.

After announcing the winners of the 2021 Balzan Prizes, the Chairman of the General Prize Committee, Luciano Maiani, announced the **subject areas for 2022**:

- **Moral Philosophy**
- **Ethnomusicology**
- **Biomaterials for nanomedicine and tissue engineering**
- **Glaciation and ice-sheet dynamics**

In 2022, the amount of each Balzan Prize will be 750,000 CHF.

>> *The Motivations*



International Balzan Prize Foundation

The Motivations for the 2021 Balzan Prizes
Presented at the announcement of the winners on 13 September 2021

Peter Kuon and Marjan Schwegman of the Balzan General Prize Committee read the motivation for the Balzan Prize for *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* to **Saul Friedländer**:

For his unparalleled impact on the development of Holocaust Studies. For his masterpiece, an integrated history of the persecution and extermination of all European Jews. For creating a historical narrative that expresses the unspeakable, intertwining scholarly analysis with the disruptive voices of the victims, perpetrators and bystanders.

The 2021 Balzan Prize for *Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East* **was not awarded at this time.**

Jules Hoffmann of the Balzan General Prize Committee read the motivation for the Balzan Prize for *Microbiome in Health and Disease* to **Jeffrey Gordon**:

For founding the field of human microbiome research and revolutionizing our understanding of its roles in health and disease, including in our nutritional status.

Paolo de Bernardis of the Balzan General Prize Committee read the motivation for the Balzan Prize for *Gravity: Physical and Astrophysical Aspects* to **Alessandra Buonanno and Thibault Damour**:

For their leadership in the prediction of the gravitational wave signals produced when compact objects like neutron stars and black holes spiral together and eventually merge. Their work was instrumental in the detection of gravitational waves, providing an extremely accurate confirmation of General Relativity as the theory of gravitation, and allowing the LIGO and Virgo detector complex to promote a type of astronomy which uses gravitational waves as new, powerful messengers of the universe.



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Awards Ceremony for the 2021 Balzan Prizes

Milan 13 September 2021 – The President of the Balzan Foundation “Premio” **Alberto Quadrio--Curzio** announced that since the awards ceremony of the 2020 Balzan Prizes, which should have been held last autumn in Rome, was postponed because of the Covid-19 emergency, the calendar of the 2020 and 2021 awards ceremonies has been changed as follows:

18 NOVEMBER 2021 in ROME: awards ceremony of the 2020 BALZAN PRIZES

1 JULY 2022 in BERN: awards ceremony of the 2021 BALZAN PRIZES

The awards ceremony of the 2020 Balzan Prizes will take place at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in the presence of the President of the Italian Republic.

After the 2022 Balzan Prizes are announced in that year in Milan and subsequently presented to the winners in Rome in November, the tradition of alternating the location of the awards ceremonies annually – in Rome in even-numbered years, and in Bern for odd-numbered years – will be resumed.

The International Balzan Foundation, founded in 1956, has two headquarters. At the International Balzan Foundation "Prize" in Milan, with Alberto Quadrio-Curzio as President, the General Prize Committee chaired by Luciano Maiani selects the candidates and chooses the subject areas in which to award prizes. The International Balzan Foundation "Fund", in Zurich, with Gisèle Girgis-Musy as President, administers Eugenio Balzan's estate, and provides the financial means necessary for the International Balzan Prize Foundation "Prize" to do its work.