Laura Shannon Prize Book List

2020 AWARD
To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture
by Eleonory Gilburd

“A masterly and engrossing performance, To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture reveals just how ambiguous the Soviet Russian relationship was with Western people and art. In her remarkable and stunningly comprehensive work of scholarship, Eleonory Gilburd has the pulse of the people at her fingertips as she deftly counterpoints the ‘thaw’ of the 1950s with those of the 1930s and 60s.”

2019 AWARD
Violence as a Generative Force: Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in a Balkan Community
by Max Bergholz

“Reserved, humane, and beautifully written, and drawing intelligently on ethnography, psychology, and genocide studies, Violence as a Generative Force deserves to be read not only by Europeanists but by anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of mass violence.”

2018 AWARD
The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains
by Thomas W. Laqueur

“The dead matter to us, they always have. But, as Thomas W. Laqueur demonstrates in The Work of the Dead, why and how the dead matter has changed over time. Subtitled A Cultural History of Mortal Remains, this fascinating book transcends a focus on any one country, state, people, or historical moment to consider here and why the living have cared for the dead from antiquity through the twentieth century.”

2017 AWARD
Nations Under God: How Churches Use Moral Authority to Influence Policy
by Anna Gryzmal-Busse

“Nations Under God: How Churches Use Moral Authority to Influence Policy is an outstanding accomplishment of historically grounded and carefully contextualized comparative political science. Its richness of range and detailed empirical command are no less impressive than its conceptual and methodological sophistication. Together they make an exceedingly rare combination, appealing to historians and political scientists alike, while leaving scholars across the disciplines in its debt.”

2016 AWARD
Birth Certificate: The Story of Danilo Kiš
by Mark Thompson

“Mark Thompson’s Birth Certificate is an eloquent biography of a major Yugoslav writer too little-known in the Anglophone world. Impressive, eccentric, at times controversial, Danilo Kiš (1935-1989) belonged to many cultures and traditions. He is best-known for his playful use of literary form. Thompson traces his career with an eye toward Kiš’s literary significance. What is remarkable about this biography is how skillfully it relates literary significance to shifts in the history of central Europe.”