



Dr. Peter Hill

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Northumbria historian receives prestigious research prize

A Northumbria University academic has been awarded an acclaimed Philip Leverhulme Prize for his research on Middle East history and the origins of worldwide imperial power in the nineteenth century.

[Dr Peter Hill](#) is a historian specialising in the Arab world. The Philip Leverhulme Prize, worth £100,000, will fund his research project examining popular politics in Ottoman Syria and its place in the installation of a worldwide, British-dominated imperial order in the nineteenth century.

The Philip Leverhulme Prize prides itself on supporting only the most talented researchers carrying out projects of the highest originality. With more than 400 nominations this year, Dr Hill is one of just 30 academics chosen to receive a 2023 Philip Leverhulme Prize.

Dr Hill said: “I hope that this research will contribute to our understanding of imperial power, capitalism, and violence in the Middle East and globally – themes which continue, unhappily, to have strong relevance today. My main project will be a study of the popular politics of Ottoman Syria in the 1840s, in the context of an international geopolitical crisis and the worldwide expansion of capitalism and European power. It will combine detailed historical research with theoretical perspectives drawn from anthropology, sociology, and political economy.”

Dr Hill added that the Prize should allow him to explore, and help to preserve and digitise, archives and sources relating to Ottoman Syria and Lebanon. “These include materials often neglected by historians, such as Arabic dialect poetry, oral histories, and private family collections,” he added.

The Prize also recognises Dr Hill's previous research in Arabic intellectual and political history. His second book, *Prophet of Reason: Science, Religion and the Origins of the Modern Middle East*, will be published by Oneworld in spring 2024.

Professor Caron Gentry, Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences at Northumbria, commented: “To win any Leverhulme Prize is a clear mark of excellence, and a reflection of the quality and impact of our world-class research at Northumbria. Making the Philip Leverhulme Prize list is a stand-out achievement for Dr Hill and a recognition of his contribution to our understanding of Middle East history.”

Professor Anna Vignoles, Director of the Leverhulme Trust, said: “In its twenty-second year, this scheme continues to attract applications from exceptionally high calibre researchers. The Leverhulme Trust is thrilled to award prizes to academics undertaking work on an impressive range of topics, from plant evolution to the history of capitalism, family law to theoretical statistics, and the philosophy of science to human trafficking. We are very proud to support these researchers through the next stage of their careers. Selecting the winners gets tougher each year, and we are incredibly grateful to the reviewers and panel members who help us in our decision-

making.”

For more information on research at Northumbria please visit:

www.northumbria.ac.uk/research

For more information about the Leverhulme Trust, please visit

www.leverhulme.ac.uk

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