

## Generic job description and selection criteria

Job title	Research Associate (RA 3 and RA 4): “Global Microhistories of Middle Eastern Sectarianism”
Department	Faculty of History
Division	Humanities
Location	Faculty of History, George Street, Oxford
Grade and salary	Grade 7 spine point 1-3: £34,308- £36,386 per annum
Start date	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed term of 36 months from start date (limited by external funding)
Method of application	Electronic (see ‘How to Apply’ below)
Application deadline	Midday on Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
Number of referees required	Two references (please note that reference letters will only be requested at the shortlisting stage)
Vacancy reference	161570
Recruitment contact	<a href="mailto:recruitments@history.ox.ac.uk">recruitments@history.ox.ac.uk</a>

## Job description

### Overview of the role

Applications are invited for the position of Research Associate on the ERC-funded project ‘Moving Stories: Sectarianisms in the Global Middle East’. Reporting to the Principal Investigator, the post holder will be a member of a research project based at Oxford, and they will work independently to carry out research for a discrete area of the project. Four researchers are being sought across three main areas of focus. This is the job description for the **third and fourth** of the four positions: RA 3 and RA 4 whose research will focus on ‘**Global Microhistories of Middle Eastern Sectarianism**’.

Please note that these four posts are advertised as three separate vacancies: RA1, RA2, and RA3/RA 4 (the last vacancy has two positions for the same work package). If you would like to be considered for any or all of these posts, please apply to each position individually. The additional Research Associate role, RA 5, has different terms and a different work brief, so likewise requires a separate application.

## About the project and the role

This project is called ***Moving Stories – Sectarianisms in the Global Middle East***. It is funded by the ERC under the Horizon 2020 programme and runs until 30th September 2026. It aims to explore a number of new approaches in the examination of this topic.

### About the project

The emergence of sectarianism forms a key element of the impact of modernization and globalization on Middle Eastern history. Yet we still lack a full picture of how new forms of sectarianism developed within the region, and in exile, and how these sectarianisms became such a powerful force in the volatile history of a decolonizing Middle East. The *Moving Stories* project concentrates on two areas of research. First, the project will explore the global circulation of Middle Eastern sectarianism and the variety of sectarianisms that developed in specific localities across the Middle East, the Americas, and Europe. Second, the project will focus on what it calls the 'moving stories', or emotive forms of storytelling, used by individuals to describe, explain, and represent sectarianism as much to themselves as to multiple publics in local, national, and international contexts.

At the heart of the project lies an activist strategy of outreach aimed at identifying sources that remain even now hidden away in private, family, and communal archives. Using these sources, the project will reconstitute an 'Archive of Sectarianism' spanning four continents, more than half a dozen Middle Eastern and Western languages, and a wide variety of records, documents, and literary sources from the 18th to the 20th twentieth century. The project's main objective is to write a global history of sectarianism that pays as much attention to the microhistories of individuals and communities as it does to macro narratives of political, social, and religious change. Looking beyond the Middle East, however, the project will also provide a model for understanding how other modern forms of sectarianism have developed through complex shifts in identity in which émigré and diaspora communities have often played a formative role. In this way, the project will open avenues for future research into the comparative study of sectarianism among historians, social scientists, and literary scholars.

Further details about the project including the key research questions Q(1) to Q(5) can be found below in the *Appendix*.

### About the application process

*Moving Stories* is based at the Faculty of History at the University of Oxford and will have a core team of seven, led by Professor John-Paul Ghobrial. The team will include a Project Administrator, a Research Associate with special focus on a project source book (details in a separate vacancy job description, RA 5) and four full-time researchers as Research Associates 1-4, each focussing on a particular aspect within the scope of the work.

### About the role: Research Associates 3 and 4

#### ***Research Associate 3 and 4 (two posts): 'Global Microhistories of Middle Eastern Sectarianism'***

By the First World War, approximately half a million Ottoman subjects, mostly Christians, had established themselves in the Americas with the largest communities based around three main hubs: Buenos Aires (110,000), Sao Paulo (107,000), and New York City (100,000) – but also further afield in rural communities scattered across places like Kansas, Nebraska, and North Dakota.<sup>59</sup> Alongside the popular faces of this migration – for example, the poet Khalil Gibran – these communities were comprised of a socially and economically diverse assortment of factory owners, wage labourers, entrepreneurs, and of course the countless numbers of peddlers – men and women,

young and old – who sold small objects and handicrafts during their peregrinations across America. Some of them established local newsletters and periodicals for their communities; others became the subject of writing by their neighbours, local journalists, and the bureaucracies that governed their lives.

Two RAs will focus on writing global microhistories of the everyday sectarianisms that developed in specific localities in the Global Middle East. Preliminary sketches of some of these communities have already been carried out by local historians of race, migration, and identity in the Americas, for example in Linda Jacobs' meticulous identification of over 3,000 Syrians living in New York City from 1880 to 1920. Building from such works, each RA will identify specific case studies – individuals, events, localities, or institutions – that will serve as the subject of further focused research. The aim will be for each RA to write a monograph of their chosen research subject at multiple scales of analysis: individual, local, national, and global. Depending on the subject of focus, the RAs will adopt an approach of connected history, comparative history, or global microhistory, the latter of which is an approach that has been refined in the PI's recent publications.

#### **Other roles on this project with separate application processes:**

##### ***Research Associate 1 (3-year post): 'Sectarianism, Arabic Scholarship, and the Writing of History'***

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, visions of the Middle Eastern past became a veritable battleground for sectarian ideas, aspirations, and dreams. In some cases, as we have seen with Louis Cheikho, scholars used philology, manuscript studies, and footnotes to advance new ideas about the Middle Eastern past which interpreted evidence in purposeful (and sometimes, deceptive) ways. This phenomenon has been the subject of some recent interest among historians of Eastern Christianity, not least a workshop and forthcoming volume edited by Feras Krimsti and the PI in 2019.<sup>56</sup> More generally, there remains a dearth of scholarship on the interplay between sectarianism and intellectual and scholarly cultures in the modern Middle East. In part, this is a reflection of how little has been written about modern Arabic history-writing in and of itself. Even the comparatively sizable literature on the publication of periodicals in this period has tended, with some exceptions, to remain focused on debates about science, modernity, and politics, with less attention paid to interrogating the sectarian elements of these works.

In consultation with the PI, Research Associate 1 (RA 1) will explore the ways in which sectarianism expressed itself in Middle Eastern scholarship, history-writing, and intellectual culture more broadly. Potential topics of interest include the sectarian identity of various journals and the competition that existed between these journals; the study of the circle of Catholic scholars based around *al-Machriq* such as Louis Cheikho, Paul Sbath, Antoine Rabbath, and others; the interaction between sectarianism and history-writing in Arabic; the variety of intellectual publics that developed around works of Arabic scholarship; and the relationship between scholarship in Arabic produced in the Middle East and other traditions of scholarship produced in contexts of migration and their respective academic institutions. Of particular importance will be scientific periodicals, histories, and editions of manuscripts published in this period. In researching these topics, RA1 will focus especially on (Q1) and (Q5), that is, on the subtle, scholarly forms of sectarianism that circulated in this period as well as the reading audiences that consumed them in the Global Middle East.

The above research can be completed by a post-doctoral RA with good knowledge of Arabic in three years. Many of the sources are published works, and they can normally be accessed in either print or digital form in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. In addition, we will invite Dr Feras Krimsti (Erfurt) as a Visiting Senior Researcher to come to Oxford to conduct a special workshop with the research team on the history of scholarship in the age of sectarianism.

### ***Research Associate 2 (3-year post): 'The Lives and After-Lives of Sectarianism in the Global Middle East'***

Middle Eastern sectarianism was a phenomenon that moved globally, but it was also a reality that was experienced locally in different ways at the level of individual lives. The focus of RA 2 will be on the view of sectarianism obtained in a range of first-hand sources including autobiographies, correspondence, diaries, poetry, memoirs, and other ego-documents. Using these sources, RA 2 will adopt a comparative approach to the study of lived experience in different localities. Recent research has demonstrated the important roles played by women, for example, in the emergence of religious internationalism and humanitarianism in this period, but little work has been done on similar questions in the context of the Middle East.

Moreover, RA 2 will focus on a set of critical questions about how the experience of sectarianism differed across categories of gender, age, and class. To this end, RA 2 will carry out focused research around (Q3) and (Q4). Especially productive topics for research include: the role of women in the circulation of sectarianism; the ways in which different generations – young and old – reflected on sectarianism; the memory and commemoration of sectarianism; and the ways in which sectarian identities interacted with other forms of identity including tribal affiliation, confessional identity, and geographic place of origin.

The above tasks can be completed by a post-doctoral RA with experience and a good knowledge of Arabic and Western languages (e.g., English, Spanish, French) in three years. Ability to also work with Ottoman Turkish is desirable. In addition, we will invite Professor Marilyn Booth as a Visiting Senior Researcher to consult with the research team on methods for working on subjectivity, gender, and the study of literature.

Each RA will carry out research on their case studies across the five research questions. Topics will be chosen according to the RA's interests, and in consultation with the PI. Potential topics include: the study of everyday sectarianism in specific communities such as New York, Buenos Aires, or Sao Paolo; particular philanthropic, civic institutions, or individuals, for example the British Syrian Relief Fund, the United Maronite Society, and major writers such as Ameen Rihani and Asad Rustum; and specific events of sectarian mobilization and the audiences that developed around them, for example the 1840 blood libel in Damascus, the massacre of Christians in Syria in the 1860s, the Coptic Congress of 1911, the European Congress of Muslims in 1935, and the debates about sectarianism that circulated in print to multiple publics. The criteria for selection of the case studies will be to focus on individuals, communities or institutions that permit an analysis of sectarianism on multiple scales of analysis.

Candidates are encouraged to present all relevant skills. The above tasks can be completed by post-doctoral RAs with research experience and a good knowledge of Arabic and English, Spanish, or Portuguese. An ability to read Ottoman Turkish would also enable the RAs to engage with Ottoman archives and especially material produced at Ottoman consulates in the Americas.

Further information about the project is contained in an appendix at the end of this document.

### **Responsibilities/duties**

- Manage own academic research and administrative activities. This involves small scale project management, to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines
- Adapt existing and develop new research methodologies and materials

- Prepare working theories and analyse qualitative and/or quantitative data from a variety of sources, reviewing and refining theories as appropriate
- Contribute ideas for new research projects, and develop ideas for generating research income through suggestions for future research from the outputs of this project.
- Undertake comprehensive and systematic literature reviews
- Collaborate in the preparation of research publications, book chapters, and monographs
- Produce a single-authored study (e.g., monograph, articles, etc.) on some central aspects of the project's research questions.
- Present papers at conferences or public meetings
- Represent the research project at external meetings/seminars
- Carry out collaborative projects with colleagues in partner institutions, and research groups

## Practical information

We expect to hold interviews in late January 2023. Overseas candidates shortlisted will be offered an interview on Microsoft Teams. The interview panel will require submission of a piece of published or unpublished research, such as an article or dissertation chapter, from your existing portfolio as a sample of your work. Full details on deadlines and how to send it in will be supplied at that time.

For an informal discussion about this opportunity or if you have any questions, please contact Professor John-Paul Ghobrial at [john-paul.ghobrial@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:john-paul.ghobrial@history.ox.ac.uk). All practical and procedural queries should be sent to our recruitments team: [recruitments@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:recruitments@history.ox.ac.uk). All enquiries will be treated in strict confidence; they will not form part of the selection decision.

The position is based at the History Faculty and the expectation is that the candidate will be able to participate in the academic life of Oxford and enjoy the benefits of team working on this project. The university follows a flexible working policy and blended working will be considered.

## Selection criteria

Applications will be judged only against the criteria which are set out below. You should make sure that your application shows very clearly how closely your skills and experience meet these criteria. We are committed to fairness, consistency, and transparency in selection decisions. Chairs of selection committees will be aware of the principles of equality of opportunity and fair selection, and there will be both female and male members of the selection committee. **Selection committees will explicitly take into account any career breaks or other factors, such as part-time working or disability, which may have had an impact on the quantity of candidates' publications.**

## Essential

- Hold a relevant PhD/DPhil, or evidence that a doctorate is close to completion, together with relevant experience
- Possess sufficient specialist and linguistic knowledge in the discipline to contribute research to the main questions of the project, in particular written Arabic, which may be tested at interview
- Ability to manage own academic research and associated activities
- Previous experience of contributing to publications/presentations
- Ability to contribute ideas for new research projects and research income generation through suggestions for future research from the outputs of this project.
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to write for publication, present research proposals and results, and represent the research network at meetings

## Desirable

- Experience of independently managing a discrete area of a research project
- Experience of actively collaborating in the development of research articles for publication
- Knowledge of one or more relevant fields (e.g. modern Middle Eastern history, migration studies, literary studies, global history)
- Experience working in archives and collections of sources relevant to the project's research area
- Experience of public engagement around historical research
- Ability to use Ottoman Turkish (RA 1) and/or other relevant languages according to research needs, such as French, Spanish, Portuguese, or other Western languages.

## How to apply

Applications are made through our e-recruitment system and you will find all the information you need about how to apply on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them at shortlisting stage.

You will be asked to upload the following materials:

1. The *Supporting Statement* must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants).

2. CV, including a list of publications.
3. Additionally, please provide a statement of a Research Plan of a specific topic, research, or publications you propose to complete as part of your work for the project. This should be no more than one page of A4.

Please upload all three documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Shortlisted candidates will be requested to provide a written sample in advance of interviews.

## Pre-employment screening

### Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at: <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

## Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

## If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the recruiting department directly at [recruitments@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:recruitments@history.ox.ac.uk).

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: [www.recruit.ox.ac.uk](http://www.recruit.ox.ac.uk).

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our online recruitment portal to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail if you do not receive this email.**

## About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit [www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation).

## The Humanities Division

The Humanities Division is one of four academic divisions in the University of Oxford, bringing together the faculties of Classics; English; History; Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics; Medieval and Modern Languages; Music; Oriental Studies; Philosophy; and Theology and Religion, as well as the Ruskin School of Art. The Division has more than 500 members of academic staff, approximately 4,100 undergraduates (more than a third of the total undergraduate population of the University), 1,000 postgraduate research students and 720 students on postgraduate taught courses.

The Division offers world-class teaching and research, backed by the superb resources of the University's libraries and museums, including the famous Bodleian Libraries, with their 11 million volumes and priceless early book and manuscript collections, and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. Such historic resources are linked to innovative agendas in research and teaching, with an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary study. Our faculties are among the largest in the world, enabling Oxford to offer an education in Arts and Humanities unparalleled in its range of subjects, from music and fine art to ancient and modern languages.



## Faculty of History

The Faculty of History in Oxford is the largest in the United Kingdom and one of the largest in the world. It has a very strong international reputation for its scholarship and its teaching of undergraduate and graduate students, with particular strengths in the history of the British Isles, continental Europe, imperial and global history, the United States, economic and social history, intellectual history and the history of science, medicine and technology. Within the Faculty there is also a department for the History of Art and a number of dedicated research centres.

The Faculty is located in the Old Boys' High School, George Street. This is a very central location, less than 10 minutes' walk from the rail station, and very close to bus station, shops and other University locations. The premises house a community of around 20 administrative staff and up to 30 other users, comprising doctoral students, researchers, and academics and professors. The building is also used for teaching and seminars.

More information about the Faculty can be found at: [www.history.ox.ac.uk](http://www.history.ox.ac.uk).

The Faculty holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

## Important information for candidates

### Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>.

### The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82, which with effect from 1 October 2023 will be 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For existing employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

### Equality of opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

# Benefits of working at the University

## Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of other employee benefits and discounts also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

## University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See [www.club.ox.ac.uk](http://www.club.ox.ac.uk) and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

## Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service website includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

## Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We also subscribe to the Work+Family Space, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities. The service offers a free telephone advice line, and the ability to book emergency back-up care for children, adult dependents and elderly relatives. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries.

For full details, including how to apply and the costs, see <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

## Disabled staff

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>

## Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

## The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See [www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk](http://www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk).

## Appendix: Further Background on the *Moving Stories* Project

### Extended abstract about the project, methodology, and objectives

The global history of sectarianism has long been neglected. This is because no project has endeavoured to connect the writings, experiences, and lives of Middle Eastern communities into a single analytical framework. Instead, the existing scholarship is fragmented and divided along linguistic, disciplinary, and scholarly lines. As a result, even the most basic questions have yet to be answered. In what ways did sectarianism express itself, or not as the case may be, in the diverse localities of the globalizing Middle East? Why did some individuals reject sectarian practices, ideas, and aspirations, while others took refuge in confessional identities even when they found themselves far from their places of origin in the Middle East? What forms of oral, written, and visual storytelling represented sectarianism, and who were the multiple publics that developed around these narratives? These are questions that naturally raise a set of wider issues at the intersection of social, political, intellectual, and even literary history.

Answering these questions requires a global approach to the study of sectarianism, one that takes seriously the transformations wrought by migration, globalization, and the circulation of literature in this period. In adopting such a framework, the *Moving Stories* project seeks to answer a fundamental question about the meaning, scale, and variety of sectarianism, that is, was there a core set of processes that united the diverse sectarianisms that developed in the Global Middle East?

#### *The Project's Methodology and Research Questions*

The project will be the first to adopt a global approach to the study of sectarianism, one that combines the study of sources from the Middle East, the Americas, and Europe. Where scholars working on sectarian discourse have long focused on a small circle of political and ideological works published in Arabic by reformist thinkers in the Middle East, the *Moving Stories* project will assemble a range of sources drawn from the multiple contexts of the everyday lives of communities stretching from the Ottoman Empire to the Americas. These sources include: Arabic printed periodicals and newspapers; first-person narratives such as letters, diaries, and autobiographies; novels, essays, and creative works written by Arab-American immigrants; oral histories; and the understudied records of the civic, cultural, political and religious institutions established by Middle Eastern Christians and Muslims.

The project will bring these sources together in a single analytical framework, and it will use a defined set of criteria to identify those that are most relevant to our analysis. From a selection of these archival, documentary, and literary sources, the project will also publish a *Sourcebook* entitled *The Archives of Sectarianism in the Global Middle East*, which will model the methodological approach of the project for use by scholars working on sectarianism in other contexts. The *Sourcebook* will make available to students, researchers, and scholars a collection of new sources for future research in Middle Eastern history.

The identification of these sources, however, is not a goal in itself; rather the research team will use these sources to write a global history of sectarianisms in the Middle East by publishing a series of monographs. To this end, there are five main questions that will drive forward the team's research: **(Q1)** In what ways did sectarianism express itself differently across the multiple localities in which Christians and Muslims from the Middle East came together?; **(Q2)** How did migration, globalization, and the circulation of information (especially print media) contribute to the interplay between local sectarianisms in the Global Middle East?; **(Q3)** In what ways did individuals document, represent, and narrate sectarianism in this period, and what local, national, and international publics developed around stories of sectarianism?; **(Q4)** How did the lived experience of sectarianism vary across

categories of gender, age, and class?; and finally **(Q5)** What role did political, academic, religious, cultural, and economic institutions play in the act of 'sect-making', and how did these roles change across time under various Ottoman, colonial, and national regimes?

In sum, the project seeks to set a new agenda for the historical study of sectarianism, communalism, and religious difference in the Middle East, and beyond. It has four objectives. First, it will identify, recover, and analyse a vast corpus of relevant sources in Middle Eastern (e.g., Arabic, Turkish, Syriac) and Western languages (e.g., English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian). Second, it will use these sources to write the first global history of sectarianism in the Middle East. It will do so in a way that combines the study of the *circulation* of sectarianism with an *interpretation* of its expressions in different contexts. The project's third objective is to contribute a sophisticated methodology to the use of family papers and literary sources in Middle Eastern and global history. Finally, the project will provide a model for understanding how other modern sectarianisms have developed through complex shifts in identity in which émigré and diaspora communities have often played a formative role. Looking beyond the Middle East, therefore, the project will open new avenues for further research into the comparative study of sectarianism among historians, social scientists, and literary scholars.

Finally, this project will be innovative in its methodological insistence on seeing sectarianism as something more than just an alternative to the secularizing projects of the twentieth century. *Moving Stories* will engage, therefore, with recent debates about what some have called the 'crisis of secularism' in the contemporary world. It is no longer defensible to write a history of sectarianism that sees it as a form of resistance against modernity; indeed, it probably never was. Instead, the project looks to understand sectarianism as a historical process that was always in dialogue with the connected, and competing, trajectories of secularism in the twentieth century. In this way, the project seeks to contribute as much to our historical understanding of sectarianism as to contemporary debates about secularism taking place today.

The project will deliver a number of outputs including articles, events and a Source Book, provisionally entitled *A Global Archive of Middle Eastern Sectarianism*. The four post-doctoral researchers based in Oxford will work across the Ottoman, American, and global contexts of sectarianism. Their combined skills will enable the analysis of sources in the wide range of Middle Eastern (e.g., Arabic, Turkish, Syriac) and Western sources (e.g., English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian).