

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP (M/F/X)

AREA: OTTOMAN HISTORY

START DATE: 1ST JANUARY 2026 (NEGOTIABLE)

DEADLINE: 14 NOVEMBER 2025

Located in the French-speaking part of Belgium, the University of Liège welcomes nearly 27,000 students of 123 different nationalities in a dynamic, multicultural city less than an hour away from Brussels and Cologne, two hours from Paris, and three hours from London and Amsterdam. ULiège is spread across 4 campuses and boasts over 5,700 staff members, including 3,600 teachers and researchers active in all areas of the humanities and social sciences, science and technology, and health sciences.

As a key player in social change and environmental awareness, ULiège promotes ethical, transdisciplinary, and open science. It contributes to the socio-economic development of its region through numerous partnerships with several institutions, including the university hospital (CHU). Given its international orientation, the University participates [in the European University of Post-Industrial Cities \(UNIC\)](#) initiative and has one of the most extensive collaborative networks in the world.

ULiège offers attractive career prospects [in a high-quality working environment](#) where well-being, diversity, and equality of opportunity are promoted. Since 2011, ULiège has been proud to display the European [Human resources strategy for researchers \(HRS4R\)](#) label, which reflects its commitment to open, transparent, and merit-based procedures. In addition, it upholds quality and diversity in line with the recommendations of the [Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#). ULiège encourages its academic staff to travel internationally and welcomes international researchers through its EURAXESS center.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Principal Investigator (PI): Prof. Viktoria von Hoffmann (Permanent Researcher, Fund for Scientific Research F.R.S.-FNRS / Associate Professor, University of Liège).

Project details: ERC Consolidator Grant PROXISENSES – Entangled Histories of the Proximal Senses (1350-1650). A Mediterranean History of (Subjective) Knowledge – (Project n° 101171391, 2025-2030).

The proximal senses—taste and touch—were linked historically to the body, femininity, and subjectivity. This both fed adverse socio-cultural, religious, and gender stereotypes and allowed the voices of women, subaltern subjects, and Mediterranean people to be dismissed as irrelevant to knowledge-making. It also influenced modern scholarship, which has given undue weight to sight and the observation practices of seventeenth-century Northern European men as signals of the advent of modern science.

PROXISENSES challenges this narrative, arguing that other forms, eras, and practitioners of experimental practices also contributed much to the production of knowledge about the natural world. Building on histories of the senses, food, knowledge, and the Mediterranean, it breaks new ground with three key questions, each tied to a research objective (RO). RO1 Practices: What was the epistemic value of the proximal senses before the alleged Scientific Revolution (i.e., 1350–1650)? RO2 People: To what extent did manual workers (e.g., fruit sellers, farmers, fishmongers, miners, winemakers) contribute to a better understanding of plants, minerals, and animals? RO3 Knowledge: What impact did a millennium of crosscultural encounters in the Mediterranean have on the construction of sensory knowledge?

To address these issues, PROXISENSES uses three food subprojects to investigate touch and taste across the Mediterranean. Each food represents a main category used to classify the natural world: salt (minerals), grapes (plants), and fish (animals). Explored through diverse, scattered primary sources using digital and archival methodologies, the subprojects offer both transversal joint food histories and detailed microhistories. By unearthing previously invisible knowledge-makers, PROXISENSES contributes to the urgent need to decolonise histories of science by offering a transformative vision of the genesis of empirical practices that are central to our view of natural sciences today.

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Leading **Work Package 3** of the ERC project PROXISENSES, which aims to scrutinize **Ottoman understanding of sensory knowledge and practices**. Digital methods will be used for information retrieval, before leading more qualitative contextual historical investigations based on close-reading techniques. Sources include travelogues (including captivity narratives), natural historical books (botany, mineralogy, zoology), and recipe books (books of secrets, recipe collections, and cookbooks).
- ▶ Undertaking their own associated research to examine related questions of interest to the project
- ▶ Attending and presenting research findings at internal academic meetings and external academic conferences, workshops, and seminars, in Belgium and abroad.
- ▶ Producing scholarly writing of an international standard, independently and in collaboration with the PI. At least two peer-reviewed articles about the project will be published in leading academic journals.
- ▶ Co-organizing workshops and co-editing a special issue of a journal or a volume of collected essays with the PI.

PROFILE

○ REQUIRED SKILLS :

- ▶ PhD degree in **late medieval or early modern history** (awarded or on the point of completion)
- ▶ The ability to substantively engage with **Ottoman primary sources**, as well as with Turkish secondary literature, is the key requirement for this post
- ▶ Excellent research, writing, and communication skills

- ▶ Excellent publication track record (in light of current research experience)
- **DESIRABLE SKILLS :**
 - ▶ Good knowledge of the fields of the history of science, medicine, and technology; sensory history; gender history; and/or food history
 - ▶ Digital skills (including database construction and management)
 - ▶ Experience with workshop and conference organization
- **HUMAN SKILLS :**
 - ▶ Capacity to work autonomously while collaborating effectively within a team
 - ▶ Rigorous, reliable, organized, proactive
 - ▶ Enthusiastic, with excellent interpersonal skills
- **LANGUAGES :**
 - ▶ Excellent knowledge of **English**
 - ▶ **Command of old Turkish or Ottoman Turkish**
 - ▶ Knowledge of French is desirable (it will be easier to settle in in Liège if the researcher is able to speak or willing to learn French)

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ **TYPE OF CONTRACT:** Fixed term
- ▶ **WORKING HOURS:** Full-time 38 hours/week
- ▶ **CONTRACT DURATION :** 12 months (renewable)
- ▶ **EXPECTED START DATE:** 1st January 2026 (negotiable)

OUR OFFER

With your career path and personal details, ULiège Human Resources Department can assess the gross monthly salary. Employment benefits also include access to a [variety of training](#) and development opportunities.

The postdoctoral researcher would also have the opportunity to request **a laptop** and **additional funding to cover other research costs**.

Employment benefits such as reimbursement of public transportation fees and access to a [variety of training](#) opportunities are also included.

▶ WORK ENVIRONMENT

The successful candidate will join a dynamic and collaborative research environment, working closely with **Prof. Viktoria von Hoffmann** (Permanent Researcher, F.R.S.-FNRS/Associate Professor, ULiège). The ERC PROXISENSES team will consist of two postdoctoral scholars, three PhD candidates (to be recruited in September 2026), and a Research Coordinator (Nina Lavrenteva).

HOW TO APPLY?

Please send the following documents in pdf to rise@uliege.be **by 14 November 2025**. Please quote the reference “PROXISENSES-02” on your application and in any correspondence about this vacancy:

- ▶ A detailed **Curriculum Vitae** (CV)
- ▶ **A cover letter in English** describing the applicant’s research interests and their alignment to the project’s goal, and relevant research experience, along with details about previous archival experience and languages (ancient and modern) mastered
- ▶ **A one-page statement in English describing the associated research project** that the applicant would be leading personally in order to examine related questions of interest to the project
- ▶ **Two writing samples** (published or unpublished articles or chapters)
- ▶ Short-listed candidates will be asked to provide the names and contact details of two scholars who could submit letters of recommendation on short notice – it is recommended that applicants alert their referees in advance.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

Evaluation process: A first selection of suitable candidates will be made on the basis of the CV and application file. Short-listed researchers will be invited to participate in an interview, which may be organised in person or remotely. It is anticipated that the interview for this post will be held **on Tuesday 2 or Wednesday 3 December 2025** at the University of Liège.

This position is ideally suited for R2 or R3 researchers. However, a candidate at level R1 may be given preference in case of true alignment of the profile with the research goals and convincing enthusiasm to carry it out.

Our corporate policy is based on diversity and equal opportunity. We select candidates on the basis of their skills and do not discriminate on grounds of age, sexual orientation, origin, beliefs, disability or nationality.

CONTACT DETAILS

Informal inquiries about the project are welcome. Please feel free to contact Viktoria von Hoffmann by email v.vonhoffmann@uliege.be.

Release date: 13/10/2025

Privacy policy

Personal data collected following your application will be processed by Viktoria von Hoffmann of the University of Liege for the sole purpose of recruitment.

The data will be processed within the framework of pre-contractual measures (art. 6-1, b. of the General Data Protection Regulation) and kept for up to 9 months after the publication of the vacancy. Your personal data will not be passed on to any third parties.

In accordance with the provisions of the GDPR (EU 2016/679), you may exercise your data protection rights (right of access, rectification, erasure, restriction, and portability) by contacting ULiège Data Protection Officer (dpo@uliege.be - Mr. Data Protection Officer, Bât. B9 Cellule "GDPR", Quartier Village 3, Boulevard de Colonster 2, 4000 Liège, Belgium). You may also lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Authority (<https://www.autoriteprotectiondonnees.be> , contact@apd-gba.be).