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Oxford School of
Rare Jewish Languages

IMPACT REPORT 2022-23

Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages

Impact Report 2022–23

This report was compiled, designed and edited by the Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages (OSRJL) Coordinator, Madeleine Trivasse. A section of the report was authored by Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger and Madeleine Trivasse together, whilst others were written by Madeleine Trivasse, OSRJL students and teachers.

The data presented in this report reflect anonymised and/or non-personal information from and regarding student applications received by the OSRJL for the 2022–23 academic year; OSRJL class and lecture attendance records; responses to termly student and teacher surveys disseminated to all participating OSRJL students and teachers for their non-mandatory completion; as well as written communications between the OSRJL Coordinator, Madeleine Trivasse, and OSRJL students and teachers regarding feedback on the OSRJL programme. All processes of data collection were conducted during the 2022–23 academic year.

Images portraying and written materials produced by OSRJL students and/or teachers are published herein with the consent of said individuals. Names of individuals featured in this report have been eliminated upon request to preserve individuals' anonymity. Where relevant, citations and copyright notices are provided.

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Behind the Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages

Jewish languages are essential and incorporeal parts of Jewish history, creativity, culture and identity. Most of them are currently in danger of extinction while others are already dead, known only from early writing. Various research programmes stress the immense role of vernacular languages in Jewish life and culture as well as point to their fragility, yet universities offer very few learning opportunities for most of these rare Jewish languages.

Created in August 2021 by the Oxford Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies (OCHJS) in collaboration with the Institut des Langues Rares (ILARA) at Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE), Paris, the Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages (OSRJL) offers free, online teaching of rare Jewish languages and their cultural-historical contexts—along with a public lecture series, academic blog, Visiting Fellows programme, Jewish music classes and language Cafés—accessible at no cost to accepted students and members of the general public around the globe. By doing so, the OSRJL aims to preserve, spark interest in, enable access to and reflect on the nature and role of Jewish languages as rich linguistic facets of Jewish life and history. It is the first school of its kind globally.

Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger FBA & Madeleine Trivasse

Overview of the Programme

The Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages (OSRJL) built upon the great success garnered during its inaugural academic year, 2021–22, to develop and grow its programme during a second year, 2022–23. **This year, the OSRJL expanded its offerings to include classes on 3 rare Jewish languages new to the programme, thereby teaching a total of 15 vernacular languages spoken and/or written by Jews from the Middle Ages until today.** Additionally, several languages were offered in multiple classes and levels of difficulty both to accommodate a greater number of students due to high demand as well as to engage students with a variety of prior language skills effectively. We were pleased that all our teachers from 2021–22—leading academics at universities and skilled teachers in Europe and around the world—were eager to and did continue teaching with us this year alongside 3 new teachers.



According to its foundational model, the OSRJL persisted in offering all our language classes free of charge to accepted students, who applied to the programme and were selected through a competitive process. While continuing to give priority to current university students studying at any university globally, as per our stated criteria, the programme welcomed applications from members of the broader academic and non-academic publics, many of whom were accepted to the programme. All accepted students were eligible for certificates of participation at the end of the academic year subject to attendance requirements.

Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger FBA (OCHJS President; Director, Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies, Oxford; Professor of Hebrew Manuscript Studies, EPHE, Paris Science et Lettres [PSL]; and Fellow, Corpus Christi College, Oxford) continued to direct the programme. Madeleine Trivasse (OCHJS Academic Registrar and Publications Officer) remained the OSRJL Coordinator and oversaw all aspects of the programme's funding, operations and development. Celeste Pan also stayed on as OSRJL Administrator and carried out the programme's day-to-day administration. Priscilla Lange (OCHJS Academic Administrator) assisted the OSRJL through organising its public lectures, in conjunction with other series of the OCHJS, as well as Jewish music classes. Kerry Maciak (OCHJS Bursar) and Jun Tong (OCHJS Accounts Assistant) undertook all financial aspects of the programme's administration. Additionally, Michael Allaway (Software Engineer, University of Oxford) continued to refine and offer support regarding the OSRJL Tutorials platform, which he began developing for the programme in 2021.



*Current OSRJL
Administrative Staff
(L-R):*

*Professor Judith
Olszowy-Schlanger,
OCHJS President*

*Madeleine Trivasse,
OSRJL Coordinator,
OCHJS Academic
Registrar &
Publications Officer*

*Celeste Pan,
OSRJL Administrator*



*Priscilla Lange,
OCHJS Academic
Administrator*

*Kerry Maciak,
OCHJS Bursar*

*Jun Tong,
OCHJS Accounts
Assistant*

The OSRJL's Advisory Committee, which helped guide the programme through its second year, consisted of: Dr Sarah Bunin Benor (Hebrew Union College – Jewish

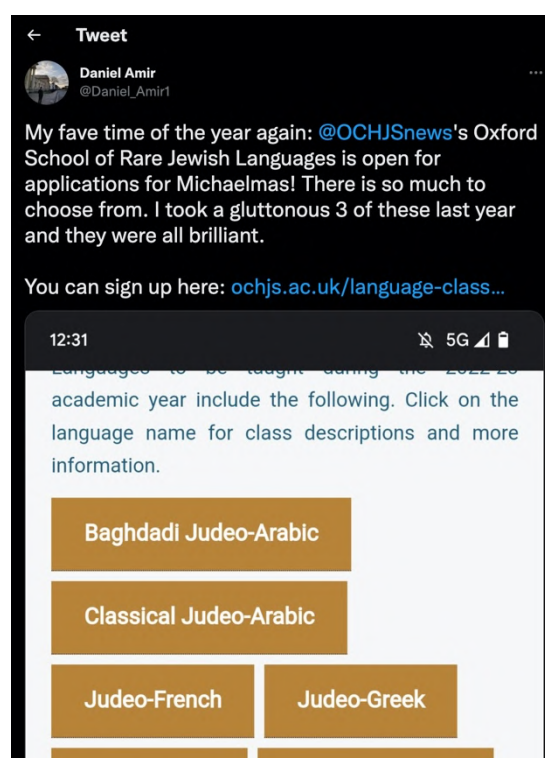
Institute of Religion); Dr Yehudit Henshke (University of Haifa); Professor Lily Kahn (University College London); Professor Geoffrey Khan (University of Cambridge); Professor Laurent Mignon (University of Oxford); Professor Ofra Tirosh-Becker (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem); and Professor Dr Ronny Vollandt (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München).

The OSRJL was and continues to be supported by 2 generous foundations, which committed to funding the programme for its first 3 years and which wish to remain anonymous at this time. This year, the OSRJL began a fundraising campaign to ensure the programme can continue beyond its initial 3 years.

Madeleine Trivasse

Year in Review

After realising what great levels of interest there are in the study of Jewish languages, indicated by the overwhelming response to our programme in 2021–22, we honed our application form (using Microsoft Forms) and application evaluation process for 2022–23. As before, we advertised class offerings through the [OCHJS website](#), social



media accounts and email list, as well as through the Oxford Language Centre, various academic mailing lists across institutions and *The Jewish Chronicle*. We were delighted to see OSRJL alumni, Oxford professors and many other supporters spontaneously and enthusiastically share about our programme online, too, which no doubt increased our global audience and reach considerably.

We added 3 more languages to our class offerings this year – Judeo-Moroccan, Judeo-Provençal and Old Yiddish. Additionally, we included further sections and/or levels of Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic, Classical Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Persian, Judeo-Turkish, Ladino and Yiddish classes. Our advertised array of **15 languages taught** through the programme during the 2022–23 academic year and their teachers included:

Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic *Dr Assaf Bar Moshe, Freie Universität Berlin*

Classical Judeo-Arabic *Friederike Schmidt, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München*

Judeo-French *Dr Sandra Hajek, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen*

Judeo-Greek *Dr Julia G. Krivoruchko, University of Cambridge*

Judeo-Italian *Dr Marilena Colasuonno, University of Naples*

Judeo-Moroccan *Haviva Fenton*

Judeo-Neo-Aramaic *Dr Dorota Molin, University of Oxford, University of Cambridge*

Judeo-Persian *Dr Ofir Haim, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, & Maximilian Kinzler, Universität Hamburg*

Judeo-Provençal *Dr Peter Nahon, Université de Neuchâtel*

Judeo-Tat *Professor Gilles Authier & Dr Murad Suleymanov, EPHE, Paris*

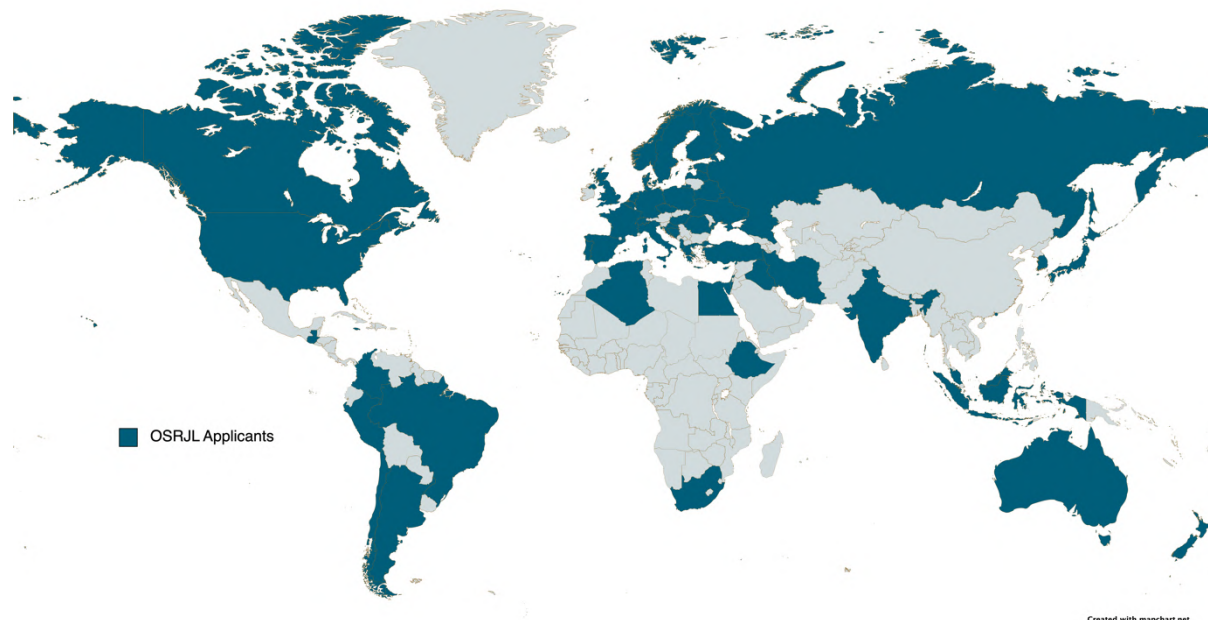
Judeo-Turkish *Professor Laurent Mignon, University of Oxford*

Karaim *Professor Henryk Jankowski, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań*

Ladino *Dr Ilil Baum, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, & Dr Carlos Yebra López, University College London*

Old Yiddish *Dr Diana Matut, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg*

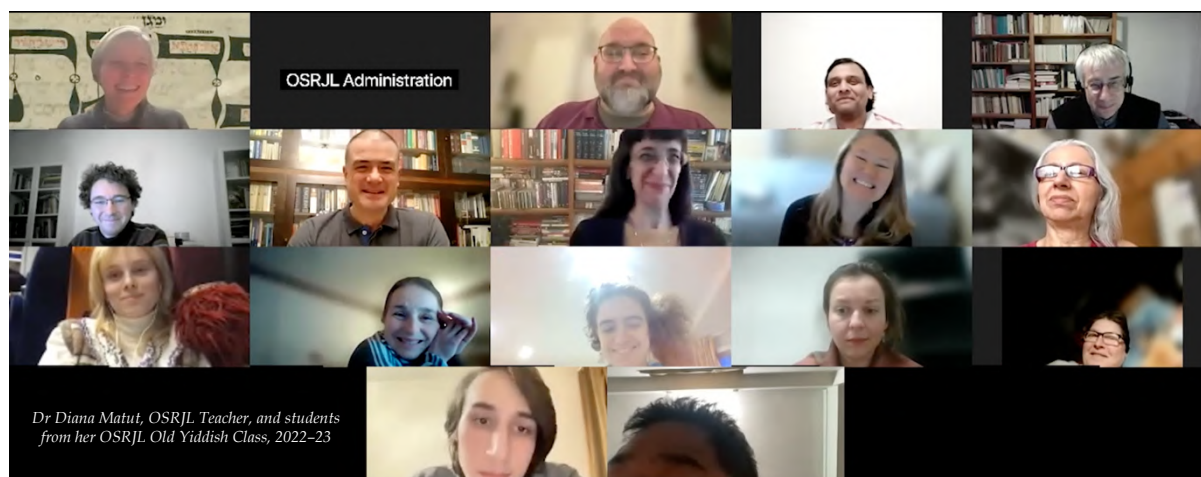
Yiddish *Dr Beruriah Wiegand, OCHJS, University of Oxford*



Throughout the course of the year, we received **514 applications from prospective students** (many of whom applied for multiple language classes) hailing from the following **54 countries**: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany,

Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Malaysia, Malta, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. While the number of overall applications we received in 2022–23 was lower than that of 2021–22, the geographical spread of our applicants broadened, and we were able to accept more students to the programme as a whole.

Applicants were a mix of current students studying a wide range of fields at academic institutions across the globe and members of the broader general public, both within and outside academia. In total, **349 individuals were accepted** to and took up student places in OSRJL language classes, with a number of them being accepted to multiple classes. Of these accepted students, 162 were current students in degree programmes elsewhere and 187 were members of the general academic and non-academic publics. 258 of the accepted students were entirely new to the programme, while 91 were OSRJL alumni who had studied with us during our inaugural year and chose to reapply for further classes with us this year.

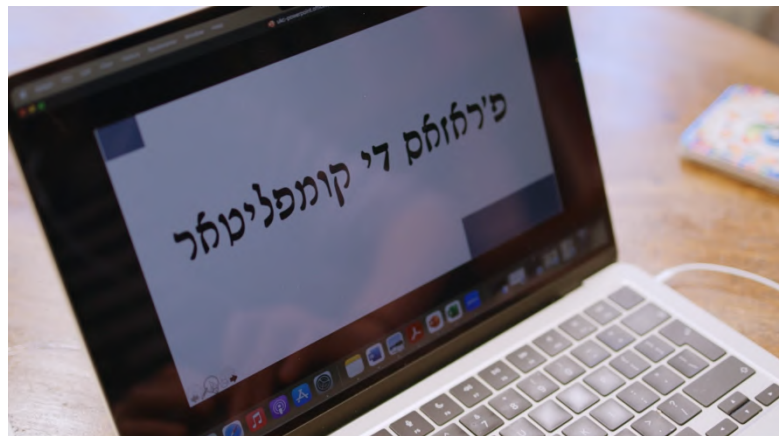


Following the piloting of a larger class size in our 2021–22 Judeo-Italian class, we decided to limit student places to 30 per class across all our offerings this year. Additionally, up to 10 applicants were placed on a waiting list for each class and offered places if and when they became available. From the very beginning of the year, accepted students benefitted from our new **Student Handbook**, produced by OSRJL Administrator Celeste Pan, that compiled comprehensive information about the programme and answers to frequently asked questions in one, succinct resource.

Our model of offering classes for 1 hour every week during Oxford terms (each 8 weeks long) online via Zoom continued and was complemented by the use of our ever-expanding OSRJL Tutorials platform, detailed below. Depending on the language being taught, classes were offered for 1, 2 or 3 terms—but, this year, the majority of languages were taught across all 3 terms. Those classes offered for multiple terms were contiguous ones in which the material built on itself term after term. Classes offered for 1 term included: Judeo-French, Judeo-Greek, Judeo-Provençal, Beginners and Advanced Judeo-Turkish and Karaim. Those offered for 2 terms included: Beginners and Intermediate/Advanced Classical Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Neo-Aramaic. Those offered for 3 terms included: Beginners and Intermediate/Advanced Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic; Judeo-Italian; Judeo-Moroccan; Beginners and Advanced Judeo-Persian; Judeo-Tat; both sections of Beginners as well

as the section of Intermediate Ladino; Old Yiddish; and all sections of Beginners Yiddish, plus Advanced Beginners and Lower Intermediate Yiddish, as well as Yiddish Literature. In total, the OSRJL offered **456 hours of language teaching** over the course of the year (an increase of 136 hours from the 2021–22 academic year).

Teachers continued to cover a variety of topics (grammatical and syntactical features, vocabulary, conversational phrases, etc.) and use a range of methods (conversational practice, reading of manuscripts, lectures on historical and cultural



contexts, discussion of linguistics and phonetics, etc.) depending on relevance for the language being taught. Resources for use outside and during classes were disseminated to students by teachers via our OSRJL Tutorials platform and/or email or even, in some cases, WhatsApp groups.

All language students were eligible for electronic certificates of participation at the end of the academic year subject to the programme's attendance requirements (missing no more than the equivalent of 2 sessions per term of the class[es] taken). OSRJL Administrator Celeste Pan kept weekly attendance records for each class throughout the year. Based on these records, and under the supervision of OSRJL Coordinator Madeleine Trivasse and Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, certificates were issued to qualifying students following the conclusion of each class. As previously, some students arranged to receive official recognition of their OSRJL studies through their home universities using their certificates of participation, though OSRJL language classes were not marked or offered for credit through the Oxford Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies directly.

The following forms of learning and engagement complemented the OSRJL's principal language classes throughout the 2022–23 academic year.

OSRJL Cafés: Last academic year, students expressed a desire for opportunities outside weekly classes to connect with other students studying different languages through the OSRJL. Therefore, this year, we created and launched our OSRJL Café series of online, once-termly gatherings during which OSRJL students, alumni and teachers across our various language classes met and learned from one another. During each of the 2 Cafés hosted this year (1 in Hilary Term 2023 and 1 in Trinity Term 2023), 2 students studying different languages with the OSRJL gave 20-minute presentations on particular aspects of Jewish languages. Topics covered ranged from heritage to digital linguistic tools to music and poetry to textual criticism. The events were emceed by student convenors, who introduced speakers and topics as well as moderated Q&A sessions after each presentation. The following pages feature posters detailing each Café, which 40 and 25 students, alumni and teachers signed up to attend respectively. In 2023–24, we look forward to hosting 3 more Cafés, this time organised around set themes and incorporating greater discussion time amongst all those in attendance.

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Inaugural OSRJL Café for Students & Teachers

Convened by Julio Alejandro (OSRJL Student)

14 March 2023, 16:00 UK Time, Online via Zoom

'Learning "Our Language": The Academic & the Personal in the Study of Judeo-Neo-Aramaic'



What is the purpose and impact of studying an ancestral cultural language as a Diaspora descendant removed from the context and origin of their community's language? In this presentation, Ilana Cruger-Zaken will discuss her experience studying Lishana Deni, the Judeo-Neo-Aramaic language of the Iraqi Kurdish region. She will examine how the personal and the academic converge in her research at New York University, where she is composing an auto-ethnographic study of the Jewish neo-Aramaic dialect of Zakho and what it means to learn an ancestral indigenous language after the dissolution of the language's originating source.

ILANA CRUGER-ZAKEN (OSRJL Student) is a Master's student at the Center for Experimental Humanities, New York University, where she is undertaking an interdisciplinary program of study merging Jewish Studies, Middle Eastern Studies and literary studies.

'Using a Judeo-French Simulator's Pipeline (and its Limitations) to Demonstrate the Language's Characteristics'

Iglika Nikolova-Stoupak will demonstrate the derivation of synthetic Judeo-French text based on an input of Old French. In the process, Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools will be used to mimic documented traits of the rare language, such as lexical borrowing of nouns and calque of Hebrew-based grammatical constructions. Eventually, transcribed text in Hebrew script that is as close to Judeo-French as historical resources and current technological tools permit will be issued.

IGLIKA NIKOLOVA-STOUPAK (OSRJL Student) holds an MA in Literature (University of Essex) and MSc in Computing (Staffordshire University). She is currently conducting research in Natural Language Processing at Kyoto University, Japan, through a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Education. Her research interests include computational linguistics, corpus linguistics, translation studies and language education.



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Oxford School of
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First OSRJL Café, Hilary Term 2023; Convened by OSRJL student Julio Alejandro and featuring student speakers Ilana Cruger-Zaken and Iglia Nikolova-Stoupak

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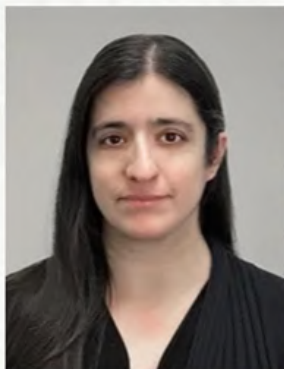
enquiries@ochjs.ac.uk
www.ochjs.ac.uk

Second OSRJL Café

Convened by Shirley Gabber (OSRJL Student)

8 June 2023, 15:30 UK Time, Online via Zoom

'Ladino, una lingua biva'



Take a trip across the 'World of Ladino' in 20 minutes! A brief introduction to the origins of Ladino and its linguistic influences will be followed by a dive into some basic vocabulary, along with short samples of music and poetry as vehicles of this beautiful language and culture. This talk will end with an overview of current efforts to preserve and transmit Ladino, an endangered language, to next generations.

DIANA FERREIRA (OSRJL Student) was born and raised in Portugal, has been living in Canada for more than 10 years, and is a former Portuguese Sign Language Interpreter. Her personal interest in Judaism began in 2019 and led her on a journey to learn and fall in love with Ladino. She is now a moderator of the 'r/djudeoespanyol' subreddit on Reddit and a contributor to the Djudeo-Espanyol (Judeo-Spanish) Dictionary on *Living Dictionaries*, a project by the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages.

'Textual Criticism of Judeo-Persian Translations of the Bible'

Today, an increase in the number of Judeo-Persian (JP) fragments and manuscripts discovered, on the one hand, and the unprecedented accessibility of these materials to scholars, on the other hand, have made it possible to talk about textual criticism of JP translations of the Bible. Apart from the growing number as well as high quality of materials discovered in the past several years, the development of more general theories and techniques in textual criticism have enabled the practice of more refined textual criticism of JP translations. The study of textual criticism of JP biblical texts tells us about the dissemination of scripture in Persian; sheds light on linguistic developments among Persian-speaking Jews; and reveals theological concerns, particularly those which could affect word choices in a translation, of Persian-speaking Jews.



ALI B. LANGROUDI (OSRJL Student) was born in Langarud, north Iran. He earned his first MA in History of Religion from the University of Rome and his second MA in Ecumenical Studies from the University of Bonn. Currently, he is a research assistant as well as PhD candidate at the Department of Iranian Studies, University of Göttingen.



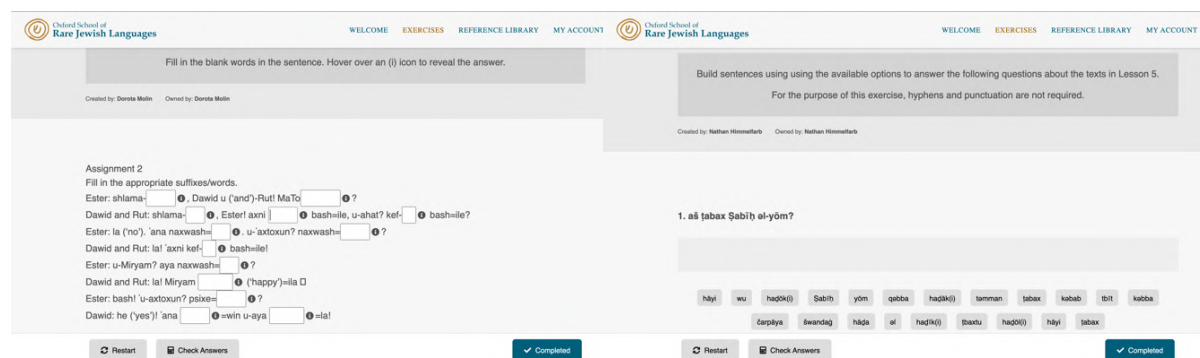
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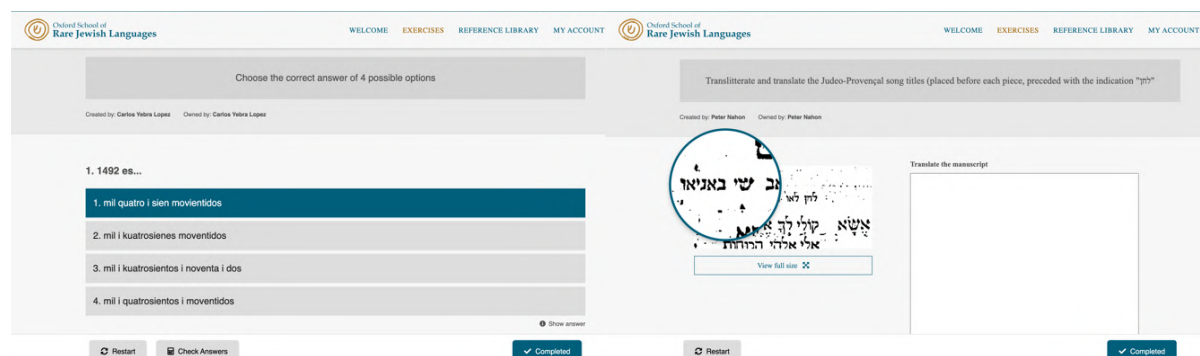
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Second OSRJL Café, Trinity Term 2023; Convened by OSRJL student Shirley Gabber and featuring student speakers Diana Ferreira and Ali B. Langroudi

OSRJL Tutorials Website: Our previously piloted online exercises platform enjoyed broader use across our language classes during the 2022–23 academic year. Through it, teachers created and assigned self-correcting exercises to students for completion outside class sessions to supplement and bolster students’ language learning. Further resources—including text, image, audio and video files—also were made available through the platform for such purposes. Now that more teachers and students have used the site, we have a better sense of ways in which it can be improved further, and we look forward to implementing new developments to it over the course of 2023–24.



Screenshots of several exercise formats on OSRJL Tutorials (l-r, top-bottom): fill-in-the-blank (Judeo-Neo-Aramaic), sentence building (Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic), multiple choice (Ladino) and manuscript transliteration and translation (Judeo-Provençal)

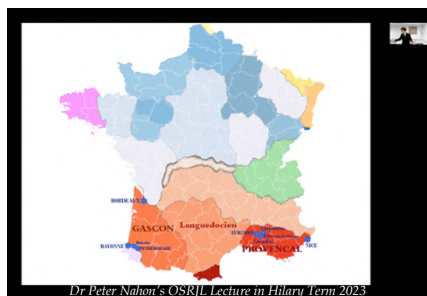


OSRJL Lectures: As part of the OCHJS’s public-lecture offerings, we continued to host a series of talks focused on topics related to rare Jewish languages to provide both OSRJL students and the general public glimpses into the broader historical, cultural, literary and linguistic contexts of such languages. The following lectures—organised and run by OCHJS Academic Administrator Priscilla Lange—took place in a hybrid format (those by Dr Peter Nahon, Dr Beruriah Wiegand/Professor Ber Kotlerman and Professor Dr Saloumeh Gholami) or online via Zoom (those by Professor Siam Bhayro, Dr Alan Bern and Professor David M. Bunis) throughout the year and were attended by a range of individuals globally in varying numbers. Three of the lectures were recorded and made available on the [OCHJS’s Vimeo account](#), where previous OSRJL Lectures as well as other events of the OCHJS are also available for viewing.

Michaelmas Term 2022

[‘Judeo-Syriac: Fragmentary Evidence for Jewish-Christian Scholarly and Technical Collaboration in the Middle Ages’](#) Professor Siam Bhayro, University of Exeter

Hilary Term 2022



Dr. Peter Nahon's OSRJL Lecture in Hilary Term 2023

'Dialects of the Jews in the South of France: From Written Sources to Spoken Varieties'

Dr Peter Nahon, Université de Neuchâtel

'Yiddish Music for the Stage: Megile fun Vaymar (The Megile of Weimar) – A Purimplay for the 21st Century'

Dr Alan Bern

'Reading Workshop: Contemporary Yiddish Poetry & Prose from Oxford & Bar-Ilan'

Dr Beruriah Wiegand, OCHJS, University of Oxford, & Professor Ber Kotlerman, Bar-Ilan University

Trinity Term 2022

'Judeo-Iranian Languages and Their Importance in Reconstructing the Extinct Vernacular Languages of the Region' *Professor Dr Saloumeh Gholami, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt*

'Judezmo/Ladino as a Jewish Language'

Professor David M. Bunis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

3.2 Alphabet: Hebrew, and distinctive use of non-Jewish alphabets

The Hebrew or 'Jewish' alphabet was used in the sphere of writing—of Judezmo and of course Hebrew and Aramaic.

In printed Judezmo works, 'Square' letters were traditionally used for titles and bold face; and 'Rashi' letters for regular text.

Here: An example from the 18th century: Yisḥaq Magriso, *Sefer Me'am Lo'ez: Exodus*, vol. 2, Constantinople 1746, a "[...] *deklaro en ladino* [...]" (... explication [of the Twenty-Four Books of the Hebrew Bible] in Ladino...):

Professor David M. Bunis's OSRJL Lecture in Trinity Term 2023

Jewish Music Classes: After an extremely well-received first year of music classes, offered in conjunction with the OSRJL's language classes, Dr Diana Matut gave a further 3 classes in 2022–23 on specific facets of Jewish music and related to the theme of Jewish languages. Classes in this latest set were titled: 'The Oud, the Singer and her Lover . . . An Introduction to Sephardic Song Cultures' (Michaelmas Term 2022, 24 students), 'Yiddish Music for the Stage' (Hilary Term 2023, 22 students) and 'The Third Space: Interactions of Jewish and Black Music Cultures' (Trinity Term 2023, 14 students). As with the OSRJL language classes, these music classes were offered once a week for 1 hour per session during the 8 weeks of each Oxford term. Music classes were designed to be less formal than our language classes; attendance records were not kept and certificates of participation were not issued for them.

The Jewish Languages Bookshelf, An Academic Blog: This year, our academic blog, entitled *The Jewish Languages Bookshelf* (*The Bookshelf*), welcomed 9 articles on particular pieces of material and book culture written by 8 specialists from around the world.

'Edward Pococke Reading Saadiah's *Tafsīr* in Oxford' *Professor Dr Ronny Vollandt, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München*

'A Judeo-Provençal New Year's Eve Dinner in the 18th Century' *Dr Peter Nahon, Université de Neuchâtel*

‘Adapting the Sefer ha-Zohar in Old Yiddish’
National de la Recherche Scientifique

Dr Jean Baumgarten, Centre

‘The Maḳre Dardeḳe Manuscript with Judeo-Italian and Judeo-Arabic Glosses’ Professor Javier del Barco, *Universidad Complutense de Madrid*

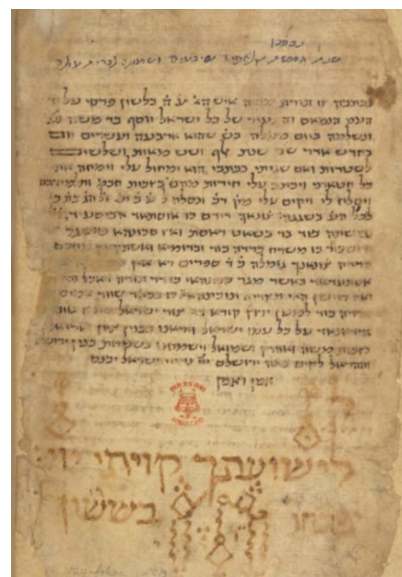
‘Uncovering Unknown Judeo-Romance Dialects in a Bodleian Miscellany (MS. Heb. g. 1)’
 Dr Peter Nahon, *Université de Neuchâtel*

‘Writing the Stars: An Early 15th-Century Judeo-Portuguese Astrological Text (MS. Laud Or. 310)’ Jonah Skolnik

‘Colophons of Judeo-Iranian Manuscripts: A Delicate Balance of Jewish and Non-Jewish Traditions’ Professor Dr Saloumeh Gholami, *Goethe-Universität Frankfurt*

‘A List of Grammatical Terms from MS. Opp. 152’ Dr Sandra Hajek, *Georg-August-Universität Göttingen*

‘In a Money Lender’s Shop in Late Medieval Poland’ Professor Judith Olszowy-Schanger, *OCHJS; University of Oxford; EPHE, PSL*



The colophon of Torat Moshesh, Iran, 1319, British Library, Or.5446, Fol 124v. From ‘Colophons of Judeo-Iranian Manuscripts’ Professor Dr Saloumeh Gholami



OSRJL Visiting Fellowships: The OCHJS hosted 2 OSRJL Visiting Fellows this year – Dr Peter Nahon (Université de Neuchâtel) in Hilary Term 2023 working on ‘Uncovering Unknown Judeo-Romance Dialects in a Bodleian Miscellany’ and Professor Dr Saloumeh Gholami (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt) in Trinity Term 2023 researching ‘Judeo-Gorani: The Gūrānī Texts in Hebrew Script’. Both contributed articles to *The Bookshelf* blog based on their time in Oxford, as well as gave [OSRJL Lectures](#). Additionally, Dr Nahon went on to teach Judeo-Provençal through the OSRJL in Trinity Term 2023, while Professor Dr Gholami will begin teaching Judeo-Hamadani with the programme in Michaelmas Term 2023.



Publications: We were delighted to begin collaborating with UCL Press on the publication of an OSRJL subseries, specifically dealing with rare Jewish languages, in the *Textbooks of World and Minority Languages* series, edited by Professor Lily Kahn and Dr Riitta-Liisa Valijärvi. Already, 4 of our teachers have submitted manuscripts for review, and 2 projects (those pertaining to Ladino, by Dr Carlos Yebra López, and Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic, by Dr Assaf Bar Moshe) have proceeded to the next publication stage. Further details about the subseries will be made available on our website in due course.

Madeleine Trivasse

Monitoring, Evaluation & Reflection



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This year, we acted on a number of pieces of feedback and learnings garnered from our inaugural year and mentioned in the 'Looking Forward' section of our 2021–22 Impact Report. These points included, but were not limited to: capping all our class capacities to a maximum of 30 student places; honing and standardising our application form through Microsoft Forms; developing new exercises on our OSRJL Tutorials platform and using it as a resource to support more of our classes; creating and disseminating a Student Handbook for incoming students; establishing our OSRJL Cafés; and producing textbooks on rare

Jewish languages taught through our programme.

In keeping with the monitoring and evaluation practices established during our inaugural year, we released surveys (refined versions of those used in 2021–22) to all our students and teachers following each term. Our administrative staff analysed the results and shared anonymised, relevant information with teachers to make constructive changes throughout the year. Such analysis, along with advice from our Advisory Committee (which continues to inform our major decisions), has been used to plan and prepare for this upcoming academic year.

Below, you can read reflections and pieces from several of our students and teachers regarding various aspects of their involvement with our programme.

Madeleine Trivasse

The OSRJL has been an incredible resource for expanding my knowledge of Judeo-Spanish, otherwise known as Ladino. One of the things that stood out to me about studying Ladino with the OSRJL was the programme's intuitive yet well-structured approach to language learning. Through the course materials, conversations with participating students and our teacher's guidance, I gained a deeper understanding of the linguistic nuances distinguishing Judeo-Spanish from standard Spanish. We were fortunate to have Dr Carlos Yebra López, a linguistic expert, as our teacher. I am thrilled to have received such high-quality education.

As a PhD student studying the Jewish history of Salonica, I found that my overall academic productivity was directly increased by my studies with the OSRJL. Although I was competent to an extent in the 'pillar languages' of Ladino (such as Spanish, French, Greek, Hebrew and Turkish), this class was fundamental to equipping me with the necessary tools for reading primary-source materials. Moreover, we learned much about Sephardic culture and practices in the historical and contemporary worlds. I know I wouldn't be alone in suggesting that we all

appreciated the time given to discussion of different versions and traditions of Ladino worldwide!

I highly recommend the OSRJL to anyone interested in learning more about Jewish languages. The programme provides an excellent balance of academic rigour and social engagement. Through discussions, group projects and other collaborative activities, I felt like I was part of a vibrant community of learners working together to deepen our understanding of the language and Sephardic culture.

Defne Özözer, OSRJL Student

My background is in law, but I always have been interested in languages, both modern and ancient/classical. Having some experience with Old French through my studies of medieval English law, I thought that taking a class in Judeo-French could be a good starting point for learning Hebrew. I enjoyed the weekly classes very much. **Beyond learning about the language, I was interested to explore the Jewish history and culture in France during Rashi's time, as well as to meet a group of enthusiasts like me from around the world.**

Lukas Swyton, OSRJL Student

I have had some outstanding students in my first year of teaching Judeo-Moroccan with the OSRJL. Four such students are now collaborating with me to perfect teaching methods of the language. One of them has even embarked on a PhD in Judeo-Moroccan and is currently in Israel meeting professors in the field as well as individuals who still speak the language, to all of whom I was delighted to refer her.

Haviva Fenton, OSRJL Judeo-Moroccan Teacher

As a Jewish educator, I found the benefits of taking classes through the OSRJL to be twofold. **Personally, studying at the OSRJL has brought me Jewish joy; professionally, I'm grateful for the expertise I've gained from the Judeo-Provençal and Judeo-Greek classes.** This expertise, in the first instance, encompasses the tools to decipher and research ancient texts on my own. In the second instance, it entails the background knowledge needed for understanding ancient texts in their historical context. Thirdly, the expertise I garnered through the classes gave me insights regarding resources for further study of the languages. I am truly grateful for the excellent teaching at the OSRJL by its teachers, who are a source of motivation for me to learn more rare Jewish languages.

Sarah Borowik-Frank, OSRJL Student

I was thrilled to find the Beginners Ladino class at the OSRJL as I had never seen an opportunity to learn Ladino before. I'm glad I applied and chose to take the class—it was well worth it. The class was fast-paced and engaging, and its combination of lectures and group work made good use of the online format. I'm incredibly thankful to the OSRJL for this opportunity.

Rina Torchinsky, OSRJL Student

OSRJL classes have been pivotal for both my academic enrichment and networking endeavours. **The classes I have taken through the programme provided a deep and comprehensive exploration of various Jewish linguistic traditions, thereby enhancing my understanding of their historical and cultural contexts.** The adept instructors not only illuminated intricate linguistic concepts, but also fostered an engaging learning atmosphere. Collaborative activities and interactive sessions enabled me to connect with peers who share my passion and, thus, to create a network of individuals with similar academic interests. **This combination of the OSRJL's expanding my knowledge of Jewish languages and facilitating the establishment of a valuable network in the field enriched my scholarship and helped develop connections which hold immense promise for my continued academic and professional growth.**

Anonymous, OSRJL Student

My experience participating in the 2022 Limmud Festival as an OSRJL teacher exceeded my expectations. The organisers were readily available and supportive during all stages of preparation, and the audience was great and engaged. Although I gave my two talks remotely, the audience actively participated by reading some words in literary Judeo-Italian directly from the manuscripts, answering my questions and trying to solve riddles. At the end of my talk on modern Judeo-Italian, I had the great pleasure of listening to two people from the audience accept my challenge to recite a poetic dialogue in the Judeo-Roman dialect after a just few minutes of training. I thank the OSRJL for inviting me to participate in this inspiring edition of the Limmud Festival. I hope to participate in it again in person next year.

Dr Marilena Colasuonno, OSRJL Judeo-Italian Teacher

I've been attending OSRJL classes for the past two years, and its Yiddish, Old Yiddish and Jewish music classes have been crucial for my Yiddish learning. I live in Italy, a country where Yiddish Studies simply doesn't exist, and so the OSRJL's online classes have been a wonderful, free alternative to taking expensive classes abroad. Nonetheless, it's not just a matter of convenience. First of all, the teachers (Dr Beruriah Wiegand for Yiddish and Dr Diana Matut for Old Yiddish and Jewish Music)

are great scholars, endowed with an infectious enthusiasm. Every single class of theirs is fun and enjoyable. Second, the students create a wonderfully diverse community, full of passion and learning. I made a few friends, and some of us have even set up an informal Yiddish reading club in addition to our class. **It's thanks to the OSRJL, its teachers and its students that I have found the strength to keep studying Yiddish on my own and to start translating Yiddish literary texts into my native language, Italian.** I'm looking forward to next year, as I'd like to keep taking Yiddish classes and explore Judeo-French.

Enrico Benella, OSRJL Student

I attended the Judeo-Persian course taught by Dr Ofir Haim, who is an ever-knowledgeable, patient and organised teacher. I particularly enjoyed the balance between PowerPoint lectures and communal reading of documents in class. The online format of classes enabled students from all over the world, coming from various disciplines (linguistics, history, Area Studies, etc.) and working at institutions or as independent scholars to participate. This diversity of students made the discussions particularly enriching. **The OSRJL has launched an amazingly open and democratic educational platform that bridges the gap between academic institutions and the wider world – this is what I call real impact!**

Dr Arezou Azad, OSRJL Student

I am interested in Turkic languages, so had read several papers on Karaim. The language seemed very peculiar to me because of its somewhat unusual features. Unfortunately, not all useful works on Karaim are easily accessible (and many of them are in Polish, which I do not understand very well) and researchers of Karaim are rather few. Therefore, my knowledge of the language was very superficial, and no possibility for me to deepen my understanding of the language seemed to be on the horizon. **You can imagine my surprise and excitement when my friend told me there was an online course on Karaim through the OSRJL.** I immediately investigated and applied for it, and now can say that I am really happy to have participated in it. During the one-term class, Professor Jankowski was able to cover all relevant domains of Karaim and provide us with the materials necessary to bolster our learning. **Many thanks to the OSRJL for organising such excellent classes – many of which are the only options to study some of these languages from anywhere in the world with an internet connection. I think the programme has a significant impact due to this fact.**

Niyaz Kireyev, OSRJL Student

I have studied different languages within the OSRJL, including Judeo-Tat/Juhuri and Ladino, as well as Hebrew through the broader OCHJS. However, while I

have enjoyed learning all these different languages, nothing has been more exciting to me and rarer than to have the opportunity to learn Judeo-Moroccan. My background is Moroccan and, like many Moroccan Jews who grew up in Israel, I did not have the opportunity to learn the language, history or culture of my family, as they had left it all behind when they fled Morocco.

Being in Haviva Fenton’s class has been such a wonderful experience, which enabled me to learn more about the culture and history of my heritage through language. Haviva goes above and beyond for our education and understanding to ensure that Judeo-Moroccan does not become a forgotten language. **Because of the OSRJL and Haviva, I have been able to learn so much about myself and other Jewish cultures. I hope that I and others in my class can continue our learning in future, as I am so incredibly thankful for this programme!**

I am glad I was able to find the OSRJL and have been a student since it first began in 2021. I hope the programme continues to grow and more Jewish languages can be added to it. The teachers and staff are incredibly passionate, and I hope their hard work in preserving languages is rewarded through the engagement of eager students.

Sahar Amsalem, OSRJL Student

ḡakrayāt ‘Memories’

Written by Dani Darwish Dror, OSRJL Student

Baghdadi-Judeo Arabic

*ana Dāni.
 əl-ʿāʔala māl-i mən-bēt Darwīš.
 kəll-əm mən-Baḡdād.
 nūlādtu b-Israʔəl wu-kbaḡtu b-Tel Aviv.
 abū-yi, Xḡūri Darwīš, kān ʿənd-u maʿmal
 mal-šməʿdanāt wiya-xwət-u. əsm əl-
 maʿmal kān Fantāzya.
 əmm-i Ğulēt mən-bēt Darwīš.
 abū-yi w-əmm-i wlād ʿamm.
 sant əl-xəmsīn ḡō l-Israʔəl.
 ʿənd-i tlaṭ ʿwlād.
 mā ʿənd-i bnāt.
 aḡki b-əl-ʿarabi l-ʿarāqi l-ihūdi wiya-wlād-i.
 yaftəhmōn bas ʿšʿīb ʿlē-həm yḡawbōn.
 abū-ha lə-mḡāt-i Liyāhu mən-bēt ʿšmīʿ.
 əmm-a ʿZīza mən-bēt Səltūn.*

English

My name is Dāni.
 I come from the Darwīš family.
 All my family originates from Baghdad.
 I was born in Israel and I grew up in Tel Aviv.
 My father, Xḡūri Darwīš, and his siblings had a factory for Hannukah lamps. The factory’s name was Fantasia.
 My mother is Ğulēt Darwīš.
 My parents were cousins.
 They immigrated to Israel in 1950.
 I have three sons.
 I have no daughters.
 I speak the Jewish dialect of Baghdad with my children.
 They understand it but it’s difficult for them to reply using the dialect.
 My wife’s father is Liyāhu Šmīʿ. Her mother is ʿZīza Səltūn.

<i>sətt-i, əmm-u l-abū-yi, Sarīna, kanət-^ʿēyyi wiyyā-na b-əl-bēt.</i>	My grandmother on my father's side, Sarīna, used to live in the same house with us.
<i>əmm-i kanət-^ʿtsəmmī-ha ^ʿamm-a.</i>	My mother used to call her ^ʿ amm-a. (Auntie).
<i>sətt-i mā qablət təḥki ^ʿəbrāni.</i>	My grandmother was unwilling to speak Hebrew.
<i>kəntu kəlləš ^ʿziz ^ʿənd-a. kanət-^ʿtqūm mən-ḡəbša wu-tsayəl-ni: 'aš yə^ʿḡəb-ak aṭbəx-l-ak əl-yōm ^ʿbdāl-ak?'</i>	I was very dear to her. She used to wake up at dawn and ask me: 'What would you like me to cook for you today, <i>bdāl-ak</i> (dear, literally: my penance)?'
<i>kəntu-arḡa^ʿ mən-əl-madrassa wu-^ʿala-ṭ- ṭəbbāx kan aku ḡdūra. kəntu-^ʿakšəf-a lə-ḡdūra, aštamm, w-a^ʿāyən aškāl alwān ṭəbxanāt: plāw ^ʿb-ḡiḡ, šafta, šalōna, əngrīyyi, ṭumīyyi wiya-na^ʿna^ʿiyyi, šwandaḡ.</i>	When I came back from school there would be pots on the stove. I used to uncover the pots, absorb the smell, and see a wide variety of dishes: <i>plāw ^ʿb-ḡiḡ</i> (rice with chicken), <i>šafta</i> (meatballs), <i>šalōna</i> (fish in sweet and sour sauce), <i>əngrīyyi</i> (eggplants stew with beef), <i>ṭumīyyi</i> with <i>na^ʿna^ʿiyyi</i> (garlic and mint stew), <i>šwandaḡ</i> (red beet stew). The eyes would devour them with lust.
<i>tsūf-ha l-^ʿən wu-təštāhi. kəll-yōm ^ʿxmīs kanət-təṭbəx kəčri.</i>	Every Thursday she used to cook <i>kəčri</i> (rice with lentils).
<i>kanət-^ʿtsayəl-ni: 'ha fədwa, kēm bēdi tǰīd aqāl-l-ak wiya-l-kəčri wu-l-laban?'</i>	She used to ask me: 'Oh <i>fədwa</i> (dear, literally: my penance), how many eggs do you want me to fry for you to eat together with the <i>kəčri</i> and the Laban (fermented dairy beverage)?'
<i>yōm əḡ-ḡəma^ʿa l-ḡīḥi mal-lə-^ʿḡūq wiya-l- bebəḡān əl-maqli kanət-təqtəl. nəḡam bēt-a əšlon ^ʿḡwāyəḥ.</i>	On Fridays, the aroma of ^ʿ ḡūq (salty latkes) accompanied by fried eggplant was absolutely irresistible. The fragrances exuded were simply delightful.
<i>b-əl-^ʿyād, kēf yə^ʿḡəb-ni, kanət-^ʿtsawwi pāča: ṭəšši m^ʿiyāt wu-təṭbəx səḡəq. wu- kanət-təṭbəx bēt wəld.</i>	During the holidays, and since I liked it, she would make <i>pāča</i> : she would stuff cow intestines and cook them. She would also cook <i>bēt wəld</i> (stuffed chicken womb).
<i>b-^ʿīd lə-zyāga kanət-ṭəḡḡəḡ qēmaḡ wiya- kāhi wu-fuqāt-u silān.</i>	In Shavuot, she would prepare <i>qēmaḡ</i> (sweet cream) with <i>kāhi</i> (fried flaky pastry) and pour <i>silān</i> (date syrup) on top.
<i>kəlləš yə^ʿḡəb-ni hāda d-dars. astəndəḡ-u sbū^ʿ b-^ʿsbū^ʿ-u. qad-at^ʿllam wu-qad-asma^ʿ kaləmət mā smə^ʿtū-ha snīn. awḡəš-a iyyām əz-zamān.</i>	I like this class very much. I eagerly anticipate it every week. I learn and I hear words that I haven't heard for years. I miss the good old days.

Looking Forward

For the OSRJL, 2023–24 is shaping up to be an exciting year. We already have received 671 applications for Michaelmas Term 2023 alone – more applications than we received in total across all 3 terms in 2021–22 and 2022–23! Clearly, interest in rare Jewish languages is on the rise, and we greatly look forward to facilitating access to and engagement with them in the coming year and beyond.

We will be expanding our offerings even further to include classes on 3 additional languages at the Beginners level – Haketia (Dr Carlos Yebra López, University College London), Judeo-Hamadani (Professor Dr Saloumeh Gholami, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt) and Kivruli (Dr Hélène Gérardin, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales/EPHE). Doing so means we will be teaching a record 18 languages alongside continuing our many other activities.

Such activities include a **new set of 3 Jewish music classes**, taught by Dr Diana Matut. Dr Matut has set at theme for the entire year, ‘Introduction to the History of Yiddish Music’, with a special emphasis in each term. The first class in this series, ‘The Origins of Yiddish Music, 1300–1800’, will commence in Michaelmas Term 2023. For the first time, Dr Matut will be using our OSRJL Tutorials platform to share resources for her music classes.

We will continue to support more of our teachers in creating **new exercises for OSRJL Tutorials** by increasing their hours, as well as enlisting paid student helpers when necessary. We also plan to implement a series of **upgrades** to the site this year based on feedback received from students and teachers to make it more user friendly.

Further OSRJL Lectures and posts on *The Bookshelf* will continue, as will our **OSRJL Café series**. This year, Cafés will be organised around the themes of ‘Heritage’, ‘Use of the Hebrew Alphabet’ and ‘Literature’. We look forward to facilitating greater student discussion and connection through these well-received events.

New OSRJL Visiting Fellows will join us in Oxford in Hilary and Trinity Terms 2024 – first, Dr Jean Baumgarten (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) working on compiling ‘An Anthology of Old Yiddish Literature (16th–18th Centuries)’, followed by Dr Ilana Wartenberg (Tel Aviv University) researching ‘A Hitherto-Unpublished Hebrew and Judeo-Italian Astronomical Glossary from the Italian Renaissance (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Opp. 696)’.

Finally, we eagerly anticipate the **publication** of the first 4 textbooks submitted by our teachers to our OSRJL subseries in UCL Press’ *Textbooks of World and Minority Languages* series. Another 4 teachers have expressed interest in contributing volumes, and we hope to keep growing the subseries in the coming years.



Plate from Setta Colm-Richter, ‘Der Zauberfächerhalter’, with illustrations by Heinz Wallenberg (Berlin: Berthold Lezy, Jüdischer Buchverlag, 1938). © Leopold Müller Memorial Library. Colouring not original.

Madeleine Trivasse

Thank You

On behalf of all those involved in the running of the OSRJL, thank you for your interest in and support of our programme during its second year. Particularly, we would like to thank our generous funders, enthusiastic students and committed teachers for making the programme such a success. We look forward to engaging with you further this upcoming academic year and beyond.

In the meantime, if you wish to learn more about or apply for our classes, then please visit [our page on the OCHJS's website](#) or email our Administrator, Celeste Pan, or Coordinator, Madeleine Trivasse, at osrjl@ochjs.ac.uk.

Currently, we are seeking donations to ensure all our OSRJL activities can remain free of charge to students and participants in years to come. If you wish to join with us in preserving, sparking interest in, enabling access to and reflecting on the nature and role of Jewish languages, then contact our Coordinator, Madeleine Trivasse, directly at registrar@ochjs.ac.uk regarding how to make a donation to support the work of the OSRJL.

In gratitude,

The OSRJL & OCHJS Team

P.S. If you have not seen it yet, watch the [50th-Anniversary Film of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies](#) – in which the Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages features!



Oxford School of
Rare Jewish Languages



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