



Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages

IMPACT REPORT 2025-26

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Impact Report 2025–26

This report was compiled, designed and edited by the Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages (OSRJL) Administrator, Luhai ‘Luka’ Liu. A section of the report was authored by Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger and Luhai ‘Luka’ Liu together, whilst others were written by Luhai ‘Luka’ Liu, 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 2025–26 academic year, as well as previous academic years; 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 Administrator, Luhai ‘Luka’ Liu, and OSRJL students and teachers regarding feedback on the OSRJL programme. All processes of data collection pertaining to the 2025–26 academic year were conducted during said year, while other collection processes took place during previous years to which the data corresponds.

Images portraying and written materials produced by OSRJL students, teachers and/or supporters 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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Foreword: A Shared Commitment

The Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages (OSRJL) has always been guided by a simple conviction: that every Jewish language, however small its community of speakers or fragmentary its surviving record, preserves a unique way of understanding the Jewish past. Five years after the OSRJL's establishment by the Oxford Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies (OCHJS), in partnership with the Institut des Langues Rares (ILARA) in Paris, that same conviction continues to shape everything we do.

What began in 2021 as an ambitious experiment—to teach ten rare Jewish languages online—has developed into an international programme offering courses in up to eighteen languages. Students join us from across the world, learning from scholars whose research has transformed our understanding of Jewish linguistic traditions. Together, they have formed a vibrant community that extends well beyond the virtual classroom, through lectures, workshops, Visiting Fellowships, publications, music classes, and an ever-growing network of alumni.

The urgency of our mission has not diminished. Jewish communities have spoken dozens of languages across the Diaspora over the past two millennia, adapting local languages while enriching them with Hebrew and Aramaic vocabulary and expressing them through Hebrew script. These languages carried every aspect of Jewish life—from family stories and everyday correspondence to poetry, biblical exegesis, philosophy, law, and medicine.

Today, however, many have fallen silent. Some survive only with a handful of speakers; others are preserved solely in manuscripts and printed texts. Without sustained teaching, research, and public engagement, much of this linguistic heritage risks being lost.

The OSRJL was founded to address precisely this challenge and continues to make the study of rare Jewish languages freely accessible to learners worldwide. By combining world-leading scholarship with innovative online teaching, we seek not only to preserve these languages, but also to inspire new generations of students, researchers, and heritage communities to engage with them.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our supporters. We remain profoundly grateful to the David Berg Foundation, Louis Frenkel, the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe, Michelle and Paul Shaviv, Taube Philanthropies, one foundation that wishes to remain anonymous, and the many further individual donors whose commitment has sustained the OSRJL since its inception.



Dr Diana Matut, OSRJL teacher, and her OSRJL Beginners Old Yiddish students 2025–26

This year, we were especially heartened by the response of our alumni community to calls to supporting the programme in its next chapter. As former students reflected on the impact the OSRJL has had on their own academic and personal journeys, many chose to support its future through generous donations. Their encouragement is a powerful reminder that the OSRJL has become more than a programme of study – it is now a global community united by a shared commitment to safeguarding the world’s rare and endangered Jewish languages.

As we mark the OSRJL’s fifth year, we celebrate not only what has been achieved, but also what lies ahead. Every new student, every new course, every manuscript studied, and every language taught represents another step towards ensuring that these remarkable linguistic traditions remain a living part of Jewish scholarship and culture for generations to come.

Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger FBA & Luhai ‘Luka’ Liu

2025–26: A Year of Consolidation and Growth

Programme Highlights

The 2025–26 academic year marked another important milestone in the development of the Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages as we kept strengthening our teaching provision and expanding our global community of learners. Building on the foundations established during our first four years, the programme continued to grow in both scale and global reach while remaining committed to academic excellence and small-group, research-led teaching. Interest in the programme remained exceptionally strong, with applications from across the globe reflecting worldwide recognition of the OSRJL as a unique centre for the study of endangered Jewish languages.

Maintaining the quality of the learning experience remained our highest priority. In 2025–26, the OSRJL offered 31 classes covering sixteen rare Jewish languages, taught by internationally recognised specialists, across a range of proficiency levels. The curriculum was designed to support learners at different stages of their studies, enabling both newcomers and returning students to progress through structured pathways while deepening their knowledge of rare Jewish languages. This year, the programme expanded with the introduction of Advanced Old Yiddish. Additionally, we continued the rotating structure of our Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic programme by offering Advanced Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic (for alumni) in place of the Conversational course, which is offered in alternate years. Regrettably, due to unforeseen circumstances, classes in Judeo-Provençal and Judeo-French were not offered this year but will be taught next academic year. Altogether, the OSRJL delivered 488 hours of language teaching during the 2025–26 academic year. The table below provides an overview of the languages, as well as course levels and durations, offered during the 2025–26 academic year.

Language	Level and Duration	Teacher
Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic	Beginners (3 terms) Intermediate (2 terms) Advanced (1 term)	Dr Assaf Bar Moshe <i>Freie Universität Berlin</i>
Classical Judeo-Arabic	Beginners (2 terms) Intermediate/Advanced (2 terms)	Friederike Schmidt <i>Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München</i>
Haketia	Beginners (2 terms)	Dr Carlos Yebra López <i>California State University, Fullerton</i>
Judeo-Greek	Beginners (1 term) Advanced (1 term)	Dr Julia G. Krivoruchko <i>University of Cambridge</i>
Judeo-Hamadani	Beginners (1 term)	Dr Don Stilo <i>Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology</i>
Judeo-Italian	Beginners (2 terms) Intermediate (1 term)	Dr Marilena Colasuonno <i>University of Naples</i>
Judeo-Moroccan	Beginners (3 terms)	Haviva Fenton
Judeo-Neo-Aramaic	Beginners (3 terms)	Dr Dorota Molin <i>University of Oxford, University of Cambridge</i>
Judeo-Persian	Beginners (3 terms) Advanced (3 terms)	Dr Ilan Moradi <i>Beijing Normal University</i>
Judeo-Tat	Beginners (2 terms) Intermediate/Advanced (1 term)	Dr Murad Suleymanov <i>INALCO, Paris</i> Professor Gilles Authier <i>EPHE, Paris</i>
Judeo-Turkish	Advanced (1 term)	Professor Laurent Mignon <i>University of Oxford</i>
Karaim	Beginners (1 term)	Professor Henryk Jankowski <i>Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań</i>

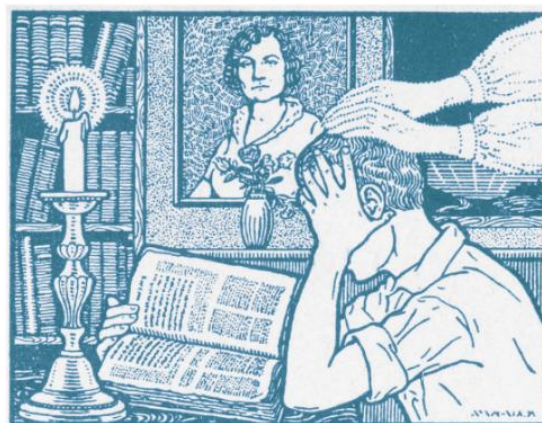
the programme's appeal to both academic and non-academic audiences. Furthermore, 276 applications – almost half of the total – came from first-time applicants, while 278 came from returning OSRJL alumni. In total, 900 places were offered, with many students enrolled in more than one course during the academic year.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, all OSRJL language courses remained free of charge for successful applicants. Demand for places continued to exceed capacity, making the admissions process highly competitive. Applications were reviewed by individual course instructors, who selected students on the basis of their academic background, motivation, and suitability for the course. Priority was given to students studying Jewish languages and/or related fields.

To preserve the interactive nature of our teaching, all classes were capped at 30 students, with waiting lists of up to 10 applicants maintained for oversubscribed courses. As places became available, applicants on the waiting lists were invited to join the programme. New and returning students alike were supported by the third edition of the OSRJL Student Handbook, prepared by former OSRJL Administrator Esther Edwards, which remained a valuable introduction and guide to the OSRJL.

Classes met online via Zoom for one hour each week, complemented by independent study and practice through the OSRJL Tutorials platform between sessions. In accordance with OSRJL policy, electronic certificates of participation were awarded to students who attended at least 75% of their classes, resulting in the issuance of 330 certificates. Although the OCHJS does not award academic credit for OSRJL courses, many participants are able to obtain formal recognition of their studies from their home institutions to count towards their degree programmes.

Alongside our language classes, we continued to offer a wide range of opportunities to explore the rich world of Jewish languages and cultures. These included our popular Jewish Music Classes, three specialist lectures, two Visiting Fellowships, and publication of resources with UCL Press, all of which further strengthened the OSRJL as an international centre for teaching, research, and public engagement. These initiatives are described in greater detail below.



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Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages
STUDENT HANDBOOK
 2025–2026



People Behind the Programme



Left: Esther Edwards, OSRJL Administrator from Autumn 2024 to Autumn 2025



Right: Celeste Pan, OSRJL Administrator from Spring 2022 to Autumn 2024

We are deeply grateful for their support.

We were fortunate that many of our teachers—prominent university academics and experienced educators from all around the world—continued teaching in the programme. As always, Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger FBA (President of the OCHJS; Director of the Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies, Oxford; Professor of Hebrew Manuscript Studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Université Paris Sciences et Lettres [PSL]; and Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford) provided steadfast leadership for the programme as its Director. Esther Edwards

stepped down from her role as OSRJL Administrator in August 2025 to complete her MPhil studies. Following a careful handover and training by Esther, Luhai ('Luka') Liu took up the position, with the generous guidance of Celeste Pan, the OSRJL Administrator before Esther, and Madeleine Trivasse, who formerly served as OSRJL Coordinator, a role that has since been merged into the OSRJL Administrator position.

Madeleine continued to support the OSRJL programme, particularly its Visiting Fellowships, as the OCHJS Academic Registrar, as did Priscilla Lange, OCHJS Academic Administrator, who organised the annual OSRJL public lectures and Jewish Music Classes. This year, we were delighted to welcome Sheila Phillips, the former OCHJS Bursar and newly appointed OCHJS Fundraising Officer, whose invaluable assistance, together with that of Kerry Maciak (OCHJS Bursar) and Jun Tong (OCHJS Accounts Assistant), has been instrumental in overseeing all financial aspects of the programme's administration. We also welcomed Caleb Klein, who was appointed OCHJS Communications Officer. In this newly created role, he has helped promote the OCHJS's vibrant programme of lectures, workshops, events, and news, including activities related to the OSRJL. Michael Allaway (Software Engineer,



2024–25 OSRJL Administrative Staff (L-R):

*Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger
OCHJS President*

*Luhai 'Luka' Liu
OSRJL Administrator
Madeleine Trivasse
OCHJS Academic Registrar*

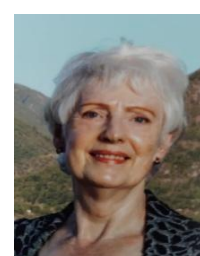
*Priscilla Lange
OCHJS Academic Administrator*

*Caleb Klein
OCHJS Communications Officer*

*Jun Tong
OCHJS Accounts Assistant*

*Kerry Maciak
OCHJS Bursar*

*Sheila Phillips
OCHJS Fundraising Officer*

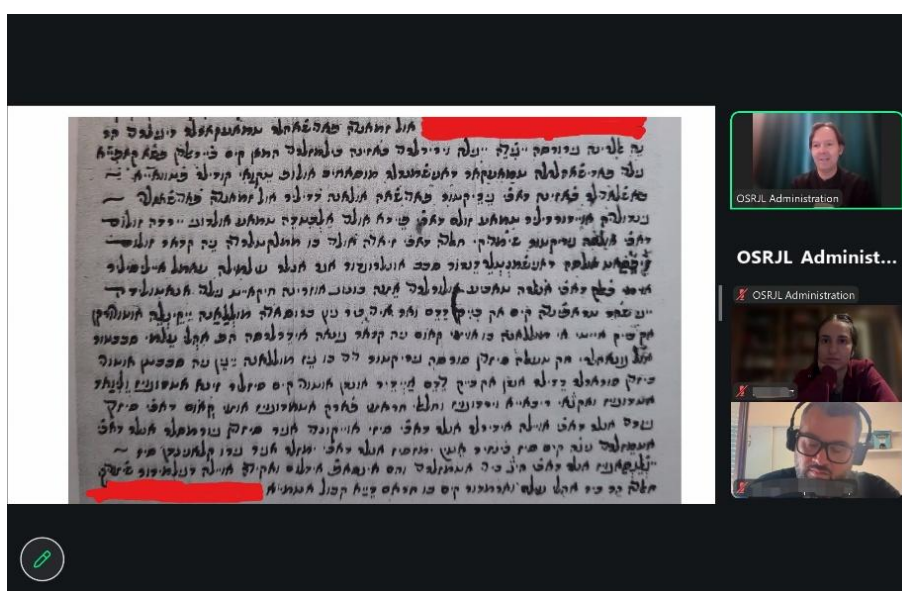


University of Oxford) further developed the OSRJL Tutorials platform, implementing a range of improvements in response to feedback from teachers and students.

The OSRJL's Advisory Committee, whose distinguished membership has remained unchanged, provided invaluable guidance and support. The Committee is comprised 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's unique programme was continuously sustained by generous individual donors and charitable foundations. Throughout the year, the OSRJL team carried on its fundraising efforts to secure the programme's long-term future. When reaching out to our OSRJL alumni community in June 2026, Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger reflected on the remarkable growth of the OSRJL programme since its founding in 2021 – from its original aim of teaching ten endangered Jewish languages to today's offering of up to eighteen languages – and invited alumni to help shape its next chapter. We were deeply encouraged by the generous response to this appeal and extend our sincere thanks to the many alumni whose donations will help sustain the programme and safeguard rare and endangered Jewish languages for future generations.

Beyond the Classroom



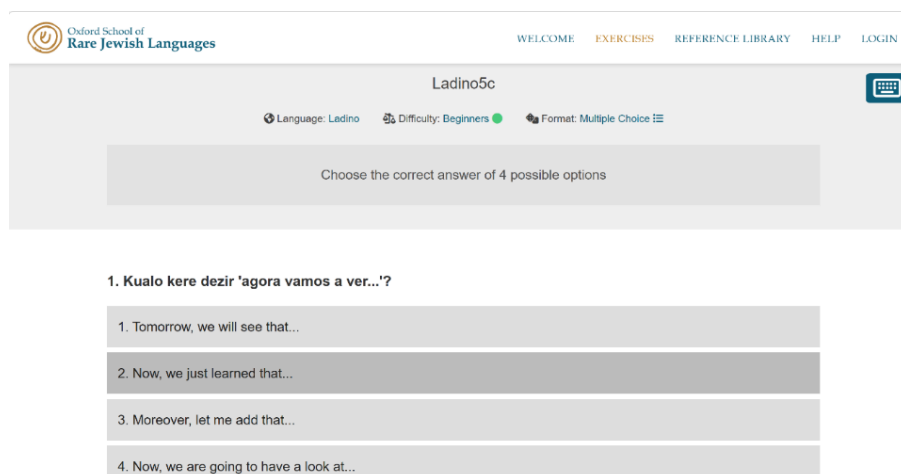
Professor Laurent Mignon, OSRJL teacher, and his OSRJL
Advanced Judeo-Turkish class

While language teaching remained at the heart of the OSRJL, the programme also offered other enriching activities. Throughout the 2025–26 academic year, we continued to offer a diverse programme of lectures, music classes, Visiting Fellowships, publications, and other initiatives, all of which were met with enthusiasm by our students and the wider public.

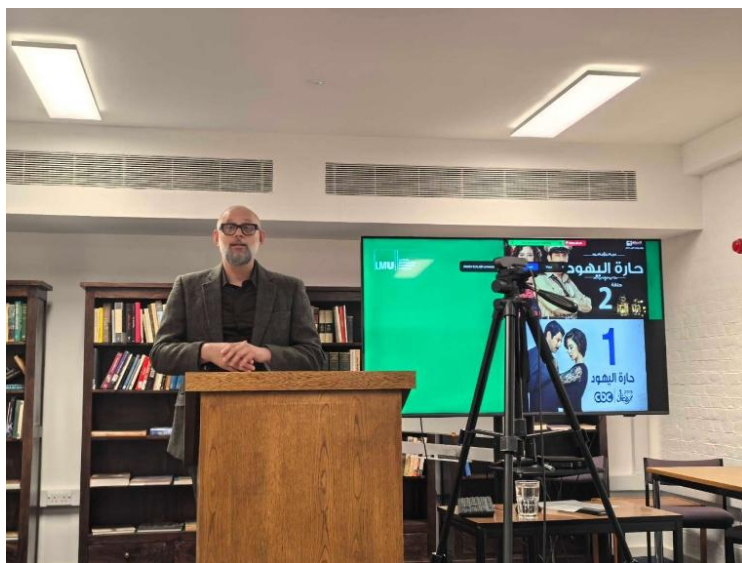
OSRJL Tutorials Website: The OSRJL Tutorials website continued to play a central role in supporting language learning throughout the 2025–26 academic year.

Developed specifically for the OSRJL by Michael Allaway (Software Engineer, University of Oxford), the platform provides students with a wide range of self-marking exercises and multimedia learning resources—including text, image, audio, and video materials—

enabling them to solidify their learning between weekly classes. Both teachers and students continued to make extensive use of the platform, and it remained an integral and highly valued component of the OSRJL learning experience.



OSRJL Tutorial Website's Exercises Page: Beginners Ladino



Professor Dr Ronny Vollandt, OSRJL Advisory Committee member, delivering his OSRJL Lecture in Hilary Term 2026

OSRJL Lectures: OCHJS Academic Administrator Priscilla Lange once again organised a series of OSRJL Lectures as part of the OCHJS's public lecture programme. Offered both in person and online, these lectures brought together OSRJL students, researchers, and members of the wider public to explore topics related to rare Jewish languages, manuscripts, and Jewish intellectual history. This year's series featured three distinguished speakers. Professor Dr Ronny Vollandt

(Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München), a member of the OSRJL Advisory Committee, presented *Steinschneider 2.0*, an ongoing digital humanities initiative to develop a comprehensive online handbook of Judeo-Arabic literature and thus open new possibilities for research into the Jewish intellectual heritage of the Islamic world. Both this year's OSRJL Visiting Fellows at the OCHJS also delivered lectures: Dr Elly Moseson explored the role of the vernacular in Jewish magical literature, while Dr Bernardino Pitocchelli presented new textual and material investigations into the Oxford–New York Judeo-Italian Bible. The lectures delivered during each academic term are listed below

Hilary Term 2026

'Steinschneider 2.0: A New Digital Handbook of Judaeo-Arabic Literature'
Professor Dr Ronny Vollandt, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich

Trinity Term 2026

'Textual and Material Investigations on the Judeo-Italian Bible of Oxford–New York'
Dr Bernardino Pitocchelli, Università di Napoli Federico II

'On the Vernacular in Jewish Magical Literature'
Dr Elly Moseson, Harvard University¹

Jewish Music Classes: Dr Diana Matut continued to lead the OSRJL's popular Jewish Music Classes. From Michaelmas Term 2025 to Trinity Term 2026, her course *The Sound of the kley zemer* explored the history of Jewish instrumental music, tracing its development from biblical times to the nineteenth century and beyond. It examined the place of instruments in Jewish religious, social, and cultural life. As in previous years, these music classes complemented the OSRJL's language programme by introducing students to another important dimension of Jewish cultural heritage.

OSRJL Visiting Fellowships: During Trinity Term 2026, we were delighted to welcome Dr Elly Moseson (Harvard University) and Dr Bernardino Pitocchelli (Università di Napoli Federico II) as OSRJL Visiting Fellows in Rare Jewish Languages. The Visiting Fellowships programme enables scholars working on Jewish languages and cultures to engage with the academic community at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies while contributing to the intellectual life of the OSRJL.



Dr Bernardino Pitocchelli
OSRJL Visiting Fellow



Dr Elly Moseson
OSRJL Visiting Fellow

In addition to delivering public lectures as part of the OSRJL and OCHJS lecture series, both Visiting Fellows met and worked with OCHJS scholars, OSRJL teachers, and students, thereby creating valuable opportunities for academic exchange and collaboration. Their visits further strengthened the OSRJL's international research network and enriched its academic programme.

¹ This lecture was part of the series of the David Pattern Lectures in Trinity Term 2026

Listening and Learning

Throughout the 2025–26 academic year, we invited students and teachers to share feedback on their experience of the OSRJL through our annual monitoring and evaluation surveys. Their comments remain invaluable in guiding the continued development of the programme and are shared anonymously with course instructors and the programme’s Director. Together with the advice of the OSRJL Advisory Committee, this feedback informs curriculum development, student support, and the future direction of the OSRJL.

This year’s responses were once again overwhelmingly positive. Participants praised not only the quality of teaching and the dedication of our instructors, but also the unique opportunity to study rare Jewish languages within a vibrant global community of learners. Many expressed a desire to continue to study at more advanced levels, while others reflected on the friendships, collaborations, and intellectual exchange that had grown through the programme. Such responses are a powerful reminder that the OSRJL is more than a collection of language courses: it is a worldwide community united by a shared commitment to preserving, studying, and celebrating the diverse linguistic heritage of the Jewish people.

As the OSRJL continues to grow, we remain committed to listening carefully to the voices of our students and teachers. Their experiences, suggestions, and aspirations not only shape the evolution of the curriculum, but also help us build an increasingly inclusive, collaborative, and globally connected environment in which scholarship and cultural heritage can flourish. The following comments from students and teachers capture the enthusiasm, generosity, and international spirit that continue to define the OSRJL community.

Luhai ‘Luka’ Liu

I signed up to Judeo-Italian as I am interested in Early Modern Jewish history of the Mediterranean world and Renaissance Italy. Each class was challenging yet easy to comprehend without any prior knowledge of Judeo-Italian; only basic knowledge of Italian and Hebrew script was needed. After the study of our first Early Modern Judeo-Italian text, I was fascinated to learn in the first lesson about Lecce’s Jewish history and that it is likely to be one of the very first areas Jews settled in Europe after they were taken as slaves by the Romans from their homeland of Israel 2,000 years ago. I also learned how the original Italian Jews liked to keep a separateness from the Sephardic Jews who arrived in the 15th century in order to maintain a certain cultural continuity. This, and the lessons in general, left me with the desire to travel to Lecce’s Jewish history museum and to continue my study of the rare language and the history of the different Italian Jewish communities. I am very thankful to the OSRJL for allowing me to have access to such terrific teachers and texts for free!

Hannah Clapinson, OSRJL Student

I signed up for Beginners Yiddish because I was interested in learning more about the language and the Jewish communities in which it developed. Although I had no previous knowledge of Yiddish, the course was accessible, engaging, and highly rewarding. Through the lessons, I learned basic vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and expressions that allowed me to gain an initial understanding of the language. What made the course especially valuable was that we learned much more than Yiddish itself. Our teacher also introduced us to many aspects of Jewish history, traditions, customs, literature, and everyday life. These discussions helped me understand the cultural and historical background of the language and made each lesson more meaningful. One of the most memorable parts of the course was the end of each class, when our teacher would play and sing a Yiddish song for us. This created a warm and enjoyable atmosphere and allowed us to experience the language through music as well as through textbooks. I am very grateful for the teacher's knowledge, patience, enthusiasm, and dedication. Beginners Yiddish has greatly enriched my understanding of Jewish language and culture, and it has inspired me to continue learning more about Yiddish in the future.

Siyu He, OSRJL Student

Thanks to OSRJL I studied Judeo-Italian this year with Marilena Colasuonno from the University of Naples. I have progressed through level 1 and 2 of the Beginners course in the first two terms and finally reached the Intermediate level in April. The course allowed us to study directly from the medieval manuscript of the Prophet Jonah (manuscript Parma, 3068) which was extremely precious and formative. I am a BA student in Hebrew/Jewish studies and BA in Catholic theology with a passionate interest for the Jewish history of Southern Italy and Sicily so I was able also to understand the evolution of the Italian language with its regional variations. I found Marilena Colasuonno's teaching of a very high standard, especially regarding the linguistic of the text not only in Judeo-Italian but also in many aspects of the Medieval Italian variations. I have gained strength and confidence in reading the manuscript as weeks went by. It was also fantastic to have the opportunity to share knowledge and information among students from different parts of the world and to discuss specific issues raised by the analysis of the manuscript in class. The educational platform online was also a precious support, easy to access and very well designed. I really want to continue studying with OSRJL. I would like an advanced course in Judeo-Italian but also keep an eye on Judeo-French, Judeo-Provençal and the summer seminar on manuscripts.

I feel so grateful and blessed that I have had this amazing opportunity! Thank you OSRJL!

Myriam Benamza, OSRJL Student

I took Advanced Yiddish Literature with Dr Beruriah Wiegand this year, and it was one of the most enjoyable and rewarding courses I have taken. The class greatly deepened both my Yiddish language skills and my understanding of Yiddish literary history.

Before each class, Dr Wiegand would send us a selection of fascinating Yiddish poems or literary texts to prepare. We always began by sharing our recent experiences using Yiddish, which was a wonderful opportunity to hear about the many activities taking place in the global Yiddish community. We then worked together to read and translate the assigned texts. I especially enjoyed studying the poetry of Malka Heifetz Tussman and the short stories of Y. L. Peretz.

Every class concluded with a beautiful Yiddish folksong selected and performed by Dr Wiegand, who accompanied herself on the guitar. These musical moments created a warm and immersive Yiddish atmosphere that made each class unique. My experience in the OSRJL Yiddish program is one that I will always cherish, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to learn from such an inspiring teacher.

Xuye Song, OSRJL Student

My teaching of Ladino and Haketia through OSRJL this year has been a genuine highlight. Watching students grow more confident with each term—and seeing retention rise significantly across all three terms—was especially gratifying. What's stood out most is seeing students take their learning beyond the classroom: getting involved in community events and even conducting their own fieldwork. I'm grateful for the opportunity and excited to keep nurturing the next generation of Ladino and Haketia scholars.

Dr Carlos Yebra López, OSRJL Ladino & Haketia Teacher

Ladino and Judeo-Italian courses were highly professionally taught.

The Ladino course was taught in different ways, e.g., Kahoots, various texts (Rashi), and had assignments with other participants in groups. My 13-year-old son often listened to Ladino lessons with me and found them inspiring. The Ladino course also inspired me creatively (written several songs in Ladino) and deepened my understanding of the Sephardic Jews in relation to others, in my research for my new novel about the 17th century.

In the Judeo-Italian course, I have greatly enjoyed learning the Book of Jonah in Judeo-Italian.

Galia Rubinov, OSRJL Student

The Intermediate–Advanced Judeo-Arabic class has been extremely valuable for my research. Working through a wide range of Geniza texts has significantly

strengthened my reading skills and deepened my understanding of the linguistic challenges posed by documentary sources. The course has provided me with both practical experience and greater confidence in working independently with Judeo-Arabic documents and manuscripts.

Clara Pitocchi, OSRJL Student

Supporting the Success of the OSRJL

‘Convinced of the need for this project and its role in preserving endangered languages, we are now working on establishing a firm foundation for the future of the OSRJL.’

Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger FBA

The Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages was established in 2021 as an ambitious pilot project with a simple but urgent mission: to preserve and revitalise the rich linguistic heritage of the Jewish people through free, university-level teaching and research. In just five years, that vision has grown into an internationally recognised programme, bringing together hundreds of students, teachers, and researchers from around the world through courses in eighteen rare Jewish languages.

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of our supporters. Their support has allowed us not only to keep every course free of charge to accepted students, but also to develop innovative digital resources, publish teaching materials, host public lectures and Visiting Fellowships, and build an international community dedicated to the study and preservation of Jewish languages.

This year, we were especially encouraged by the response to Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger’s appeal to alumni, students, and friends of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies for funding of its OSRJL. Many members of our growing community chose to support the next chapter of the OSRJL’s development through generous donations. We are sincerely grateful for every contribution, which reaffirms the lasting impact that the OSRJL has had on so many academic and personal journeys.

As we continue to build on the success of the OSRJL’s first five years, our priority is to secure a sustainable future for the programme. We hope to expand opportunities



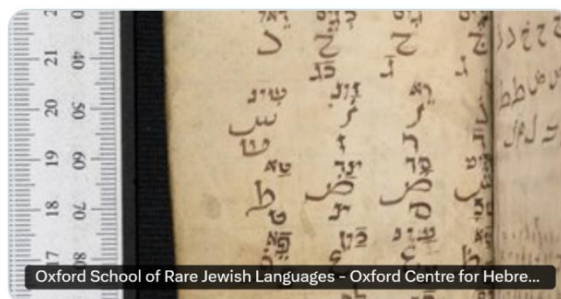
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Applications are now open for Trinity Term 2026 classes with our Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages! Be sure to [#Apply](#) by noon on Apr. 10th, UK time!

ochjs.ac.uk/language-class...

[#languagelearning](#) [#oxford](#) [#jewishhistory](#)



Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages - Oxford Centre for Hebre...

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3:41 pm · 9 Mar 2026 · 1,572 Views

for advanced language study, strengthen our digital resources, support new research collaborations, and establish long-term endowments for individual Jewish languages. Every gift, whatever its size, helps ensure that these remarkable linguistic traditions continue to be taught, studied, and preserved for future generations.

If you would like to support the work of the OSRJL, we warmly invite you to visit the Support page of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies' website where donations can be made securely online via PayPal, bank transfer, or cheque: <https://www.ochjs.ac.uk/support/>.

Thank you for being part of the OSRJL community and for helping us build its future.

Luhai 'Luka' Liu

Looking Ahead: A Firm Foundation for the Future

As the Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages enters its sixth year, we do so with confidence, optimism, and a renewed sense of purpose. The achievements of the past five years have demonstrated not only the growing international demand for the study of rare Jewish languages, but also the importance of building a global community committed to their preservation.

One of the most encouraging developments this year has been the continued expansion of that community. Applications were received from 41 countries, and I myself, was particularly delighted to welcome a growing number of my compatriots from China joining our programme. I sincerely believe this reflects an increasing interest in Jewish languages and cultures among students and researchers in East Asia. This widening geographical reach demonstrates that the study of Jewish languages is no longer confined to traditional centres of Jewish Studies but is becoming a genuinely global endeavour.

The coming academic year will also bring a new chapter in our teaching programme. While we bid farewell to Dr Sandra Hajek, our valued colleague who taught Judeo-French and whose dedication has helped shape the OSRJL in recent years, we are delighted to welcome Dr Bernardino Pitocchelli to the teaching team. Having joined the OSRJL as a Visiting Fellow during Trinity Term 2026, he will now take forward the teaching of Judeo-French. His appointment is a wonderful example of how the OSRJL's Visiting Fellowship programme fosters lasting scholarly relationships and brings cutting-edge research directly into the classroom.

Alongside our established language courses, we look forward to further strengthening opportunities for advanced study; expanding our programme of public lectures, and workshops; and continuing to develop innovative digital resources that support students both in and beyond the classroom. We also remain committed to developing our Visiting Fellowship programme, which provides valuable opportunities for collaboration with scholars from around the world. Next year, Dr Ariane Sadjed (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften) and Professor Dr Ronny Vollandt (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich) As the programme evolves, we remain committed to maintaining the high academic standards, close-knit

learning environment, and spirit of collaboration that have defined the OSRJL since its foundation.

My first year as OSRJL Administrator has been one of learning, stewardship, and building connections. It has been a privilege to contribute to the OSRJL at such an important moment in its development, and I am deeply grateful to Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger for her trust and guidance, and to my colleagues, teachers, and students for their patience, encouragement, and support throughout the year. While there has inevitably been much to learn, I look forward to building on this experience and continuing to serve the OSRJL community with growing confidence, care, and commitment in the years ahead.

Above all, we look forward to welcoming new students, teachers, researchers, and supporters into the OSRJL community. Every new learner broadens the reach of the programme; every returning student deepens its academic life; every teacher and researcher enriches its intellectual vitality; and every donor helps secure its future.

Our ambition remains unchanged: not simply to preserve rare and endangered Jewish languages as objects of historical study, but to ensure that they continue to be learned, taught, researched, and celebrated by new generations around the world. Through the collective efforts of our students, teachers, alumni, partners, and supporters, we look forward to writing the next chapter in the story of the Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages.

Luhai 'Luka' Liu

Thank You

On behalf of all those involved in running the OSRJL, thank you for your interest in and support of our programme during its fifth 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 during the 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 new Administrator, Luhai 'Luka' Liu at osrjl@ochjs.ac.uk.

As we continue endeavouring to ensure the stability of the future of the programme, we are seeking donations to enable all our OSRJL activities to 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 OSRJL Administrator directly at osrjl@ochjs.ac.uk, or the OCHJS Fundraising Officer at fundraising@ochjs.ac.uk, regarding how to make a donation to support the work of the OSRJL.

In gratitude,

The OSRJL & OCHJS Team



Oxford School of
Rare Jewish Languages



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