A Greek transliteration of Judeo-Spanish: Notes on a poem from Trikala (1885)

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Abstract

For most of its lifetime, Judeo-Spanish, the dialect of Sephardic Jewry, was written in Hebrew characters. This study focuses on one of the few instances in which the Greek alphabet was employed to write Judeo-Spanish. The text originates in Trikala in 1885. I examine the social and historical implications that led to the implementation of the Greek alphabet to write Judeo-Spanish. I provide an analytical description of the transliteration mechanisms, especially regarding the adaptation of Greek orthography to convey Judeo-Spanish phonology, the application of Classical and Modern Greek orthographic rules, and the problems and issues resulting from such transliteration.

Keywords: Judeo-Spanish, Sephardic, transliteration, Judeo-Spanish phonology, Greek alphabet, Judeo-Spanish texts, Trikala.
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1 Introduction

This study is based on a late nineteenth-century Judeo-Spanish text written in the Greek alphabet; it originates from the city of Trikala, located in the region of Thessaly, modern Greece. Judeo-Spanish is the cultural language of Sephardic Jews, who settled throughout urban centers in the Ottoman Empire and the Eastern Mediterranean basin after their Expulsion from Spain in 1492. Even though this is a small text, a poem consisting of eight verses in Spanish and title and author's signature in Greek, I believe it is significant because (1) to my knowledge, Judeo-Spanish texts transcribed in Greek characters are rare, and (2) the author's choice of characters provides us with phonological information and other considerations for the study of Judeo-Spanish and Spanish-Greek bilingualism.

For most of its lifetime, Judeo-Spanish was written in the Hebrew alphabet, whether in block merubá style, Rashi, or Solitreo cursive. Orthographical conventions to represent the various Iberian Romances in Hebrew script were highly standardized in pre-Expulsion Iberia, and a phonetically-accurate spelling system was fully implemented for Judeo-Spanish by the eighteenth century (Minervini 1999, 416–431; Díaz-Más 1992, 98–99). The pioneer work of Foulché-Delbosc (1894) focused on the Judeo-Spanish transliteration based on Hebrew script, and this was followed by the significant contributions of Bunis (1975), Hassán (1978), Pascual Recuero (1988), and Minervini (1999). In spite of the hegemony of the Hebrew alphabet, some researchers mention that Judeo-Spanish has also been written in the Greek alphabet, but do not provide any detailed insight into the sociolinguistic context or orthographical mechanism used in such situation (Díaz-Más 1992, 99, among others). In the subsequent sections I will present the historical context of the Trikala community, and focus on factors that may have contributed to the adoption of the Greek script. A detailed description of the transliterated consonants, vowels, semivowels, and diacritics follows. Given the limited size of the text, my findings are open to modifications upon encountering additional data. My main objective is to encourage the collection and analysis of larger Judeo-Spanish corpora written in Greek letters in order to reach a detailed understanding of the origin and function of these texts. The poem used in this study has been reproduced in Appendix A.

2 The Jewish community of Trikala

The poem was likely written in Trikala, mentioned in the poem's title, in all capital Greek letters, ΙΣΡΑΗΛΙΤΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ ΤΡΙΚΚΑΛΩΝ *Israilitiki Koinotis Trikkalon* or 'Jewish Community of Trikala'. In addition, a seal stamped on the document (though not very legible) also contains the words ΙΣΡΑΗΛΙΤΙΚΗ 'Jewish' and ΤΡΙΚΚΑΛΩΝ 'of Trikala'. Inside the seal, the text is written in Judeo-Spanish with Hebrew block (*merubá*) characters. Part of it reads קומפאנייה ישראל [...] די לה אירמאנדאד טריקאלה «Kompania Israel [...] de

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la ermandad Trikala», translated as «Israel company [. . .] of the Trikala brotherhood». This is the only part of the text written in Hebrew characters, since the Judeo-Spanish language in the poem is transcribed using the Greek alphabet. The date of the document is handwritten as 1885 on the left side and the Hebrew date 5645 is on the right side.

Before the arrival of the Spanish-speaking Sephardim in the late fifteenth century, the Jewish community of Trikala was primarily Romaniot (Greek-speaking) Jews. The Sephardic exiles increased the overall urban population, and, according to the Ottoman Census, by 1530 the Jewish community of Trikala consisted of 181 families or about twenty-two percent of total households (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000, 202). Even though it is difficult to evaluate the initial degree of Greek and Spanish contact between the local Romaniot and the new Sephardic community, there was probably no significant Spanish to Greek linguistic shift. On the contrary, the Sephardim maintained a strong and separate cultural network and often refused to be represented by the Romaniot envoy to the Sultan and appointed their own (Sachar 1994, 77). In many Balkan and Mediterranean urban centers, the dominant Sephardic population, thanks to their mercantile and political prominence, created a linguistic and cultural shift in their favor, and most Romaniot communities adopted Judeo-Spanish language and liturgical rites, abandoning their Greek background (Fromm 2005, 148). Romaniot influence cannot account for the ultimate Spanish to Greek shift in Trikala or even for the utilizing the Greek alphabet to write Judeo-Spanish since the Romaniot used the Hebrew alphabet for their Yevanic or Judeo-Greek vernacular (De Lange 1996). Nevertheless, not all Romaniot communities were absorbed, and the Jewish community of Trikala comprised of Romaniot, Sephardim, and Ashkenazim who had been resettled from Hungary. In spite of this diversity, they were a divided minority, and the Jews shared the urban space with larger Muslim and Christian populations since the early Ottoman Period (Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece 2009; Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000, 202). In 1873, the community had between six hundred and seven hundred members, with professions such as tinsmiths, moneychangers, and a significant percentage of small fabric merchants. The population may have reached as much as eight hundred by the end of the nineteenth century (*Encyclopaedia Judaica* 2008, s.v. **Trikkala**).

The Trikala Sephardim were culturally and commercially linked to the nearby Jewish communities in Ioannina, Larissa, and Volos. By mid-sixteenth century, the Sephardim in Thessaly ran a powerful and technologically advanced network of textile manufacturing and exporting and competed with markets in Western Europe (Plaut 2000, 28; Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000, 39). Nonetheless, this dependency on the textile industry truncated economic versatility, and the eventual shift of international trade markets towards the Atlantic and the Americas became a devastating blow to Sephardic mercantile dominance (Sachar 1994, 93). The community failed to recover, and in 1826 the disbandment of the janissaries, whose clothing and textiles were exclusively a Jewish enterprise, ended the Sephardic economic golden age (Sachar 1994, 93–94). In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Greek and Jewish com-

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munities under Ottoman sovereignty experienced ethnic conflicts as European powers supported the Greeks in obtaining a greater control in the economic and government spheres, areas hitherto ran by Ottoman Sephardim. Greeks incited anti-Jewish riots and supported legislation which led to the pauperization and segregation of the Sephardic community (Sachar 1994, 93). Greek nationalistic fervor gained momentum with the establishment of the Kingdom of Greece in 1830, which increased Greek-Jewish friction since most Sephardim tended to support the Ottoman government (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000, 65–66). The nascent Greek State continued to gain European support and Ottoman territory, and it annexed the region of Thessaly, including Trikala, in August 1881. Two months later, King George I of Greece visited the city and the Sephardim welcomed their new king with a ceremony in the synagogue. The Greek sovereign even stayed in the home a local Jewish family (*Encyclopaedia Judaica* 2008, s.v. **Trikkala**; Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece 2009). The year 1881, both in the inclusion of Thessaly into the Greek Kingdom and the king's visit to Trikala, is highly significant in order to understand the transliteration of Judeo-Spanish in the Greek alphabet, since these historical events entail intense Greek nationalistic policies. In addition, the Jewish community itself was undergoing many cultural and educational improvements led by the author of this poem: Jacob Joseph Sidis.

The last line of the document, not part of the poem's verses and set on the right margin, is reserved for the author's name and it contains the Greek words Ὁ Προϊστάμενος, /ho proisˈtamenos/ meaning 'the chief'. Just below these words, on the left side, a stamped seal in Greek has the name ΙΑΚΟΒ ΣΙΔΙΣ /jakov siðis/ or Jacob Sidis. In addition, to the right side of the seal the letters I I Σ (iota iota and sigma) are handwritten in Greek cursive, perhaps the initials for «Jacob Joseph Sidis». And finally, below the Greek initials, the name סידיס 'Sidis' is written in Solitreo, the Sephardic style of Hebrew cursive. All this evidence indicates that Jacob Joseph Sidis, the leader of the Jewish community in the 1880s, is the author of this poem. Sidis came to Trikala from Ioannina in the 1870s, and he instituted significant educational and cultural improvements, such as the renovation of two synagogues (Trikala only had three), and the building of a *mikvah* or ritual baths. In addition, Jacob Sidis organized a boys choir and hired new teachers for the Talmud Torah, the main educational source for the community (*Encyclopaedia Judaica* 2008, s.v. **Trikkala**). In 1884, a local newspaper names «Iosif Sidis» as the chairman of the Jewish Charity Association (probably the Kompania Israel de la Ermandad Trikala mentioned in the first seal), and receives high praise for assisting the needy, providing for the education of poor students (Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece 2009). Jacob Sidis also donated money to the restoration of a synagogue in his native Ioannina, and his Hebrew name 'Yosef Sidis' יוסף סידיס is inscribed in a 1881 plaque honoring his contributions to the community.[1] Given the combinations of scripts (Greek, Greek cursive, Hebrew block, Solitreo) and languages (Spanish, Hebrew, Greek) in the document, and the many community projects

[1] See *The Stone Plaques of Ioannina* [accessed 20 July 2010].

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he spearheaded it appears that Jacob Joseph Sidis was an intellectual leader who focused on the educational needs of the community. Moreover, his leadership coincided with the acquisition of Trikala by the Greek Kingdom, a period of intense Greek nationalism when demonstrating allegiance to the new sovereign was crucial. Writing the vernacular, Judeo-Spanish, in the Greek alphabet can be interpreted as a way to show allegiance to Greece and to symbolize the adoption of their new Greek citizenship, language, and culture. A decade later, these incipient Hellenizing acts were further heightened by the Greek government itself on Jews and Muslims in the newly acquired lands. By the 1890s, aggressive Hellenizing policies caused many Sephardim in Thessaly to migrate northwards to Salonika, a city with a prominent Judeo-Spanish population and still under Ottoman control (Mazower 2004, 265, 333). In 1904, more than a decade after this poem was written, a traveler estimated about four thousand members in the Jewish communities of Trikala, Larissa, and Volos (Pulido Fernández 1905, 374). More specifically, the 1907 Greek census recorded 559 Jewish citizens, about a thirty percent decrease from the previous decade (Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece 2009).

3 Consonants

A total of fifteen Judeo-Spanish consonantal sounds are represented in the Greek alphabet, either by a single letter or pairs known as digraphs or digrams. Single-letter transliterated occlusive phonemes include the voiceless bilabial stop /p/ written with pi π, as in πόρ /por/ 'through, by', the voiceless dental stop /t/ written with tau τ, as in Ἔστω /ˈesto/ 'this', and the voiceless velar stop /k/ written with kappa κ, as in Κὸν /kon/ 'with'. Single-letter fricatives include the voiced labiodental /v/ written with beta β,[2] as in βὰν /van/ 'they go', the voiced interdental fricative /ð/ written with delta δ, as in πουέδη /ˈpweðe/ 'it is able to (do something)', and the voiced velar fricative /ɣ/ written with gamma γ, as in ἀμίγου /aˈmiɣo/ 'friend, lover'. The sibilants are also transliterated with one letter, for example the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ represented by sigma, both in its default grapheme σ, as in σὲ /se/ 'impersonal pronoun' and its final variant ς, such as ἔς /es/ 'it is'. The voiced alveolar fricative /z/ is transliterated by zeta ζ, as in δίζη /ˈðize/ 'it says'. The nasal consonants are written with one Greek letter. The bilabial nasal /m/ is conveyed with mu μ, as in ἀμίγου /aˈmiɣo/ 'friend, lover', and the alveolar nasal /n/ is depicted with nu ν, as in ἀντίγου /anˈtiɣo/ 'old, former'. Finally, the last set of phonemes transcribed with one Greek letter are the liquids /l/ written with lambda λ, as in λὸ /lo/ 'direct masculine pronoun', and /ɾ/ written with rho ρ as in πόρ /por/ 'through, by'. The choice of rho is interesting since the Greek /r/ is tense whereas Judeo-Spanish has the lax /ɾ/. These twelve phonemes always occur with one corresponding Greek grapheme and they do not have alternative spellings in the text.

[2]The typeset of this beta, which appears four times throughout the text, is actually a bit different, with the upper loop drawn smaller, raised and disconnected from the bottom loop.

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Some phonemes are spelled with digraphs. The voiced palatal fricative /ʝ/ is written with a gamma γ combined with iota ι: γι, as in the word γιάμα /ˈʝama/ 'he calls'. This spelling seems to be motivated by the fact that in Greek a /g/ followed by a front vowel /i/ or /e/ is palatalized as /ʝ/ throughout the language (cf. the palatal glide in § 4). This spelling poses an interesting dilemma if the writer wishes to write the Judeo-Spanish word /ˈgia/ 'guide', which would have gamma followed by a front vowel, but the combination should produce two sounds and a not the palatal fricative. Then, both the reader and the writer would have to rely on context clues in order to produce an accurate reading. Most digraphs present this kind of problematic distribution. Another digraph is mu μ combined with pi π to represent the voiced bilabial stop /b/, as in μπεβὴρ /beˈviɾ/ 'to live'. In this combination, it appears that the bilabial, voiced, and occlusive features of /m/ have been combined with the bilabial and occlusive features of /p/ in order to render /b/, which could be interpreted as a denasalized /m/ or a voiced /p/. However, this digraph only has the /b/ value word-initially. Word-medially it may represent the voicing of /p/ to a /b/, as in Νόμπρη /ˈnombɾe/ 'name', where the μπ digraph clearly represents the /mb/ group. The distribution of this digraph is further complicated by the transliteration of words in Spanish that have the /mp/ combination, in which /p/ is not voiced by /m/. The poem presents this third alternative of μπ as /mp/ in κομποέστω /kompoˈesto/ 'composed' and in Σγιέμπρη /ˈsjempɾe/ 'always', where this combination is not a digraph or used to represent /mb/. Therefore, the reader must be able to differentiate using the context and distribution whether the digraph mu + pi μπ has the phonetic values of /b/, /mb/, or /mp/. These alternative readings also exist in Modern Greek, as the language has borrowed words such as κομπιούτερ /komˈpjuter/ 'computer' and σαμπουάν /samˈpwan/ 'shampoo', which require the /mp/ reading.

Another digraph is the nu ν + tau τ combination ντ used to represent the voiced dental stop /d/ word-initially. In a similar fashion, the logic behind this representation is that the voiced and occlusive features of /n/ have been combined with the dental and occlusive features of /t/ in order to produce /d/. The digraph has this value only word-initially, as in ντὲ /de/ 'of'. In other contexts, the nu + tau combination represents /nd/, where the tau has been voiced. This phonetic value occurs word-medially, and in the poem in ἀντάρ /anˈdaɾ/ 'to walk'. Similar to the μπ digraph, the nu + tau ντ pair is problematic for words in which /t/ is not voiced and which require the /nt/ group. The poem has a word that exemplifies such spelling, ἀντίγου /anˈtiɣo/ 'former, ancient', in which nu + tau have the /nt/ reading. Again, the correct readings must be based on the context, as well as the distribution of these digraphs. Modern Greek has a similar orthographic intricacy in that most nu + tau combinations word-medially are read as /nd/, but some words such as αντίθεση /anˈtiθesi/ 'contrast', and αντιπαθώ /antipaˈθo/ 'dislike' have the /nt/ group. These spelling and sound disagreements appear to be the result graphemic representations lagging behind phonological change. Another problematic combination, although not a digraph, is the lambda λ + tau τ pair which is read as /ld/. This phonetic value is found in the poem in the word Μελτὰρ /melˈdaɾ/ 'to read'. The voicing

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of tau τ /t/ poses a challenge for Judeo-Spanish words that have /lt/, such as /ˈalto/ 'tall' or /balˈta/ 'ax'. The reader would have to rely on context in order to provide an accurate reading. These orthographic representations for the dental stop /d/, in combination with those for the dental fricative /ð/ presented in the beginning of this section are good arguments to suggest that /d/ and /ð/ are two different phonemes in Judeo-Spanish. Each phoneme is written with a different set of graphemes, /d/ with ντ word-initially and as a voiced t after a nasal or lateral, and /ð/ is always written with delta δ. This is the exact allophonic distribution in Modern Spanish in which [d] occurs in onset position after a pause, nasal or lateral, and /ð/ occurs elsewhere. However, in Judeo-Spanish, at least in the language used in the poem, both [d] and [ð] occur in the same phonological context, as onsets after a vowel in words like ντὲ /de/ and δίζη /ˈðize/. Although arguing for the phonemicization of /ð/ goes beyond the main scope of this paper, I must note that some texts written in the Hebrew Rashi script make a clear orthographical distinction between [d] and [ð] when they occur word-medially. A summary of the consonantal sounds found in the poem and their Greek orthographic is included in Appendix B.

4 Vowels and semivowels

The five Spanish cardinal vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/ are present in the document, although their transliteration is not uniform. Throughout the text, the central low vowel /a/ has been transliterated with alpha α as in βὰν /van/ 'they go', and Μελτὰρ /melˈdaɾ/ 'to read'. The mid front vowel /e/ is represented by epsilon ε, as in ντὲ /de/ 'of', and with eta η, as in Νόμπρη /ˈnombɾe/ 'name'. These two transliterations appear together in the words Σγιέμπρη /ˈsjempɾe/ 'always' and πουέδη /ˈpweðe/ 'it is able to (do something)', in which the first /e/ has been translated with epsilon and the second one with eta. Also, there is a third spelling with the digraph alpha + iota αι, but this only occurs in the word, καὶ /ke/ 'that, who', which appears twice in the text. Since this is the only word in which this digraph appears, and due to its Greek homophone with identical orthography καὶ /ke/ 'and', I will treat it as kind of «nonce» spelling in which the writer has identified a Spanish word with a homophonous Greek word. The high front vowel /i/ has two transliterations, one with iota ι, as in ἀμίγου /aˈmiɣo/ 'friend, lover', and a second spelling with eta η, as in Μπεβὴρ /beˈviɾ/ 'to live', and σή /si/ 'himself'. The verb ἐσκριβὴρ /eskɾiˈviɾ/ 'to write' shows both ways of writing /i/ in the same word. The mid back vowel /o/ has three spellings. One with omicron o, as in Κὸν /kon/ 'with', a second spelling with omega ω, as in Ἔστω /ˈesto/ 'this', and a third with an omicron ο and upsilon υ digraph ου, as in ἀντίγου /anˈtiɣo/ 'old, former'. These spellings coexist in the some words, for example in κονώση /koˈnose/ 'he knows' where the first /o/ has been transliterated with omicron and the second with omega, and also in ἀτόδους /aˈtoðos/ 'to everyone' where the first /o/ is written with omicron, and the second one with the ου digraph. Finally, the high back vowel /u/ only

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appears with one spelling, the digraph omicron and upsilon ου, as in οὐν /un/ 'one, indefinite article', σοῦ /su/ 'his', and ἀοὺν /aˈun/ 'at one'.

The alternate spellings for /e/, /i/, and /o/ seem to be motivated by two factors: stress and orthographic conventions. In Classical Greek, eta η and omega ω represented the long vowels /e/ and /o/, corresponding with the short vowels epsilon ε /e/ and omicron ο /o/ respectively (Allen 1987, 89). In Modern Greek, vowel length distinctions are no longer phonemic, but stressed vowels have allophones with longer duration than unaccented vowels (Matsukas 2003, xvi; Allen 1987, 93). If Jacob Joseph Sidis was aware of long and short vowels in Classical Greek, and if he linked vowel length with stress as in Modern Greek, this would explain why eta η with the /i/ value appears only when /i/ is stressed, as in ἐσκριβὴρ /eskɾiˈviɾ/ 'to write' and Μπεβὴρ /beˈviɾ/ 'to live'. This also explains why eta η has the /i/ value in monosyllables, as in σή /si/ 'himself' and ἢ /i/ 'and', since stress falls on the only vowel. However, this mechanism is not exclusive, since there are other words with stressed /i/ spelled with iota, such as ἀμίγου /aˈmiɣo/ 'friend, lover', ἀντίγου /anˈtiɣo/ 'old, former', and δίζη /ˈðize/ 'it says'. In addition, this stress-length association also fails to explain omega ω for /o/, since from the nine stressed /o/ in the text, only one is spelled with omega: κονώση /koˈnose/ 'he knows'. A larger text is necessary in order to verify if indeed authors with high literacy in Greek writing Judeo-Spanish with the Greek alphabet made a connection between length and stress. The second factor, which is by far more consistent, is the orthographic convention for marking stress in Classical Greek. One of the remarkable characteristics of this text is that the author indicates stress in all words, with the exception of three monosyllables (a detailed description of diacritics follows below). One of the rules for signaling stress in post-Classical Koine Greek stated that if the last syllable of a word has a long vowel, then an accent mark may only be placed above one of the last two syllables (Dobson 2005, 349). If the author chooses to mark the stressed vowels in transliteration, then this orthographic rule requires the long vowels eta η and omega ω in the last syllable of transcribed oxytones (words with stress in the last syllable) and paroxytones (words with stress in the penultimate syllable). Taking into account that the omicron-upsilon digraph ου was also considered a long vowel in Classical Greek and its historical connection with omega ω (Allen 1987, 76–77), then the stress-marking orthographic rule accounts for all instances in the text in which η /e/, ω /o/, and ου /o/ appear in the last syllable instead of the expected ε /e/ and ο /o/ graphemes. The majority of the words in the poem are paroxytones, for example Ἔστω /ˈesto/ 'this', and κομποέστω /kompoˈesto/ 'composed, written', the only two instances in which omega was chosen as the final long vowel. Also, ἀμίγου /aˈmiɣo/ 'friend, lover', ἀντίγου /anˈtiɣo/ 'old, former', and ἀτόδους /aˈtoðos/ 'to everyone' in which the marking of the penultimate stressed is allowed by the long digraph ου. And finally the paroxytones τγιένη /ˈtjene/ 'he has', νόμπρη /ˈnombɾe/ 'name', κονώση /koˈnose/ 'he knows', Σγιέμπρη /ˈsjempɾe/ 'always', πουέδη /ˈpweðe/ 'it is able to (do something)', in which marking penultimate stress is justified by the long vowel epsilon η having /e/ value. This last long-vowel rule also accounts for long η with the stressed /i/ in oxytones, as in ἐσκριβὴρ /eskɾiˈviɾ/ 'to write'

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and Μπεβὴρ /beˈviɾ/ 'to live', in which the long epsilon with /i/ value appears in the last syllable. And this may also account for long ou as a stressed /u/ in ἀοὺν /aˈun/ 'at one'. The presence of a long vowel in the last syllable in order to mark penultimate or ultimate stress is a very consistent explanation for the variation in graphemes, with οὐνὸρ /oˈnoɾ/ 'honor' as the only exception.

Before concluding this section on vocalic transcription, I would like to address the interaction between /o/ and /u/ written with ου. As mentioned previously, ου is the long unstressed form of final /o/ in paroxytones, in the same distribution as omega ω. However, ου with /o/ value is also found in unstressed non-final syllables, as in οὐνὸρ /oˈnoɾ/ 'honor' above. Whenever ou is in a stressed syllable, the value is always /u/, as in σοῦ /su/ 'his', and ἀοὺν /aˈun/ 'at one'. The fact that the /o/ and /u/ values of ου represent an orthographical inconsistency is best illustrated in the word /ˈkon/, spelled both Κὸν and κοὺν in the same verse. The spelling with omicron Κὸν is parallel with the omicron in other monosyllables such as λὸ /ˈlo/ and πὸρ /ˈpoɾ/. However, given the fact that stress has been marked in most monosyllables in the text, and if stress is associated with long vowels as I argued previously, the author has chosen the long vowel digraph ou to denote the inherited length by stress. However, a stressed ου has the /u/ value throughout the text. Unfortunately, we cannot obtain a complete picture since the text does not have words with unstressed /u/ or oxytones and paroxytones with final /u/ vowels. Therefore, we need to obtain more Judeo-Spanish texts written in Greek characters in order to conclude how the authors resolved this transliteration problem. The conflictive /o/ and /u/ values of ου are the result of applying Greek orthographic rules to Spanish. Researchers familiar with Judeo-Spanish dialectology may suggest that a simpler, straightforward explanation may exist for the spelling variants using omicron-upsilon ου for /o/ and eta η for /e/. If we assume that these Greek spellings actually stood for /u/ in the case of ου and /i/ for η, then we would actually have words like ἀμίγου pronounced as /aˈmiɣu/ and words like Νόμπρη transcribed as /ˈnombɾi/. The raising of /o/ to /u/ and that of /e/ to /i/ in unstressed position occurs in the Judeo-Spanish dialects of Monastir (Bitola, Macedonia) and Pristina (Kosovo). However, after consulting with Judeo-Spanish dialectologist Aldina Quintana, we concluded that this allophonic distribution had not spread to the Judeo-Spanish dialects spoken in Thessaly (Larissa, Volos, and Trikala). Therefore, an explanation based on stress and Greek orthographic conventions constitute my best explanation for those spelling variants (Aldina Quintana, personal communication, December 16, 2010). A summary of the vocalic transcription is found in Appendix B.

The Spanish semivowels /j/ and /w/ are present in the text. The palatal glide is transcribed with the digraph gamma γ plus iota ι, γι + stressed vowel, as in τγιένη /ˈtjene/ 'he has', and σγιέΜπρη /ˈsjempɾe/ 'always'. This digraph was seen before with the consonantal value /j/ as a syllabic onset. However, in these both examples it follows the consonant + glide + stressed vowel pattern, and there are no examples of post nuclear glides as in Judeo-Spanish /lej/ 'law'. There is only one example of the labiovelar glide /w/, transcribed with the omicron ο and upsilon υ digraph ου, in πουέδη /ˈpweðe/ 'it is able to (do

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something)'. Like palatal glide, the semivowel /w/ occurs after a consonant and before a stressed vowel. Thus, adding the semivowel, the digraph ου now has the readings /o/, /u/, and /w/ depending on its position in the word, stress, and position inside its syllable. A summary of the semivowels is also included in Appendix B.

5 Diacritics

Six diacritics are placed on top of vowels in order to indicate stress, breathings, and syllabic divisions. From these, dasia (̔) and dialytika (¨) appear exclusively in the Greek part of the text. Dasia represents a «rough breathing» or aspiration before a vowel, phonetically transcribed as /h/, as in Ὁ /ho/ 'the' (Goodwin 1900, 9). Dialytika separates two vowels in order to prevent the misreading of a diphthong. Thus, the dialytika on the iota ι in Προϊστάμενος /prois'tamenos/ 'chief' indicates that /o/ and /i/ belong to different syllables, and it should not be confused with the diphthong oi, pronounced /oj/ in Classical Greek (Allen 1987, 80, 83), and /i/ in Modern Greek (Matsukas 2003, xvii).

The following diacritics are used in the Judeo-Spanish part of the text. Psili (̓) is used at the beginning of every word starting with a vowel. Also called a «soft breathing», as opposed to the roughness of dasia /h/, this diacritic simply indicates the lack of aspiration before a vowel. None of the Spanish words in the text begin with /h/ + vowel, therefore, this lack of aspiration is marked with psili throughout the text, as in Ἔστω /'esto/ 'this', ἔς /es/ 'it is', ἀμίγου /a'miɣo/ 'friend, lover', ἢ /i/, 'and', ἐλ /el/ 'the', ἀτόδους /a'toðos/ 'to everyone', ἀντίγου /an'tiɣo/ 'old, former', Ἐσκριβὴρ /eskɾi'viɾ/ 'to write', ἀοὺν /a'un/ 'at one', ἀντάρ /an'daɾ/ 'to walk'. When the digraph ου begins a syllable without aspiration, the psili is collocated on top of the upsilon, as in οὖν /un/ 'one, indefinite article' and οὐνὸρ /o'noɾ/ 'honor' (Goodwin 1900, 9, 26).

The remaining three diacritics, oxia (́), varia (̀), and perispomeni (͂), are used in the text to indicate primary stress. However, these marks were originally used in Ancient and Classical Greek to indicate pitch, as the language had a melodic accent based on tones, rather than on stress. The change to a stress-accent was probably already in progress by the fifth century C.E. (Goodwin 1900, 25–26; Allen 1987, 116, 130–131). The author, Jacob Joseph Sidis, has employed these diacritics to signify primary stress in most words, with the exception of a few monosyllables. Oxia or acute accent is used to indicate primary stress in Ἔστω /'esto/ 'this', ἔς /'es/ 'it is', κομποέστω /kompo'esto/ 'composed, written', ἀμίγου /a'miɣo/ 'friend, lover', ἔλ /'el/ 'he', πόρ /'poɾ/ 'by, as' σή /'si/ 'himself', τγιένη /'tjene/ 'he has', ἀτόδους /a'toðos/ 'to everyone', Νόμπρη /'nombɾe/ 'name', ἀντίγου /an'tiɣo/ 'old, former', κονώση /ko'nose/ 'he knows', γιάμα /'jama/ 'he calls', Σγιέμπρη /'sjembɾe/ 'always', δίζη /'ðize/ 'he says', and πουέδη /'pweðe/ 'it is able to (do something)'. Varia or grave accent is also used to mark primary stress, as in ντὲ /'de/ 'of, from, by' Ἢ /'i/ 'and', πὸρ /'poɾ/ 'by, as', Καὶ /'ke/ 'that, who', λὸ /'lo/ 'direct masculine pronoun', Ἐσκριβὴρ /eskɾi'viɾ/ 'to write', Μελτὰρ /mel'daɾ/ 'to read', βὰν /'van/ 'they go', ἀοὺν /a'un/

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'to one', Κὸν /ˈkon/ 'with', σὲ /ˈse/ 'impersonal pronoun', κοὺν /ˈkon/ 'with', οὐνὸρ /oˈnor/ 'honor', and μπεβὴρ /beˈvir/ 'to live.' Finally, the perispomeni or circumflex is used to demonstrate primary stress only once in σοῦ /ˈsu/ 'his'. It is interesting that, although the author is writing Judeo-Spanish, which is not a tonal language, he is applying the orthographic conventions designed for pitch in Classical Greek. Even though these rules are applied haphazardly, they help determine whether oxia (´) or varia (`) appear to designate the stressed syllable. Classical Greek rules of accentuation dictate that, if an acute accent (oxia) occurs in the last syllable of a word, then it must be changed to a grave accent (varia) if followed by another word in the same clause (Goodwin 1900, 27; Dobson 2005, 350). Taking into consideration that the author has assigned the acute accent as the default, the obligatory change from acute to grave accent in oxytones explains the grave accent in the following sequences: (1) ντὲ οὺν ἀμίγου, /ˈde ˈun aˈmiɣo/, where the first grave is put on the first monosyllable followed by the rest of the sentence. Notice that in this sequence, the monosyllable /ˈun/ did not have a written accent; (2) Ἤ ἔλ /ˈi ˈel/, with the grave accent in the first monosyllable; (3) πὸρ ἀμίγου /ˈpor aˈmiɣo/; (4) Καὶ ἐλ Νόμπρη /ˈke ˈel ˈnombre/, where the grave accent occurs in the first monosyllable. Notice that in digraphs, the accent is placed on the second letter, just like the psili. Also in this phrase, /ˈel/ has no written accent; (5) ντὲ σοῦ /ˈde ˈsu/; (6) Ἤ ἐλ καὶ λὸ κονώση /ˈi ˈel ˈke ˈlo koˈnose/, where all the accents in the monosyllables are grave; (7) λὸ γιάμα /ˈlo ˈjama/; (8) Ἐσκριβὴρ ἢ Μελτὰρ, βὰν ἀοὺν ἀντάρ /eskɾiˈviɾ i melˈdaɾ ˈvan aˈun anˈdaɾ/ with three oxytones having a grave accent; (9) Κὸν Μελτὰρ ἢ ἐσκριβὴρ /ˈkon melˈdaɾ i eskɾiˈviɾ/ where the last oxytone has a grave accent since the rest of the verse follows; (10) σὲ πουέδη /ˈse ˈpweðe/; and (11) κοὺν οὐνὸρ μπεβὴρ /ˈse ˈpweðe ˈkon oˈnor beˈvir/; surprising the last oxytone has a grave accent, probably since the last verse in Greek follows it. Even though this accent-marking orthographic rule helps explain the presence of the grave accent (varia), there are some instances in which it does not apply and the monosyllables keep their acute accent (oxia): ἔλ πόρ σή /ˈel ˈpor ˈsi/; if the rule had applied, at least the first two monosyllables should have had a grave accent since the last word is separated from the rest of the verse by a comma. This is the only exception to the oxia to varia rule that I found. The last diacritic is the perispomeni or circumflex (˜), which appears only once in the entire text in the word σοῦ /ˈsu/ 'his'. According to Classical Greek accent writing rules, a circumflex may only be placed over a long vowel, and originally this was done when the first part of the long vowel (the first of two moras) had a high pitch (Goodwin 1900, 26; Dobson 2005, 349; Allen 1987, 77, 125). Since only one word in the entire text presents this diacritic, the data does not provide a clear pattern for its usage. I suggest that since a previous analysis of vocalic transliteration in the text concluded that ou had the /u/ value when stressed, and since ou was also considered a long vowel, then the only way to have the /ˈu/ reading is with a circumflex, written on the second letter of the digraph σοῦ, /ˈsu/. Failing to indicate stress on the long vowel gives the possibility of reading σου as /so/, similar to the words ἀμίγου /aˈmiɣo/ and ἀτόδους /aˈtoðos/, among others. Unfortunately, this is very little evidence to construct a pattern,

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and the only other words that have stressed /u/ either have a grave accent ἀοὺν /aˈun/ or no stress diacritic at all οὐν /ˈun/.

6 Conclusion: The fate of the Trikala community

Jacob Joseph Sidis must have had an extensive knowledge of Classical Greek and proficiency in Modern Greek in order to accomplish the transliteration of this Judeo-Spanish poem with Greek letters. Not only is the orthography closely linked to Spanish phonetics, such as the distribution of the /d/ and /ð/, but Greek spelling rules regarding vowel length and accent marking are also taken into consideration. The extensive knowledge of Greek language on this leader indicates the degree of acculturation that the community must have experienced as a reaction to Greek nationalism. Later in the early twentieth century, when facing Hellenization, community leaders in Sephardic Salonika aggressively instituted Greek language lessons in their schools, as well as publications in Judeo-Spanish to explain Greek language, history, and culture to the older generation (Ginio 2002, 235, 237). Just like Salonika in 1912, the Jews of Trikala had no choice but to acculturate and acquire the official language (Ginio 2002, 238). The main difference was that, unlike Salonika and Thrace, Trikala had a Jewish minority, and Hellenization arrived at least thirty years earlier and at a faster pace (Fromm 2005, 161). Due to the Sephardic majority in Salonika, Greek influence on the language and culture of the Jewish community was not felt until the late 1930s (Bunis 1999, 45; also Mavrogiannis 2006–2007, for a study on Greek lexicon in Judeo-Spanish). For the most part, studies on Greek-Spanish contact have focused on the Salonika community.

In spite of its early Hellenization, the Jewish community in Trikala experienced anti-Semitic accusations, prejudice, and riots in 1893, 1898, and as late as 1911 (*Encyclopaedia Judaica* 2008, s.v. **Trikkala**), which caused a mass migration towards Salonika and out of Greece. On the other hand, the remnants of the community seem to have been fully integrated only a few years later, as the Sephardim of Trikala contributed with men and money to defend Greece in World War I and again in World War II (Bowman 2009, 19; see also Bowman 2006). In the latter conflict, Bowman (2006) lists Sam Sidis and Samuel Sidis, perhaps relatives of Jacob Joseph Sidis, as two of the many Jewish patriots from Thessaly who join the resistance to defend the Greek homeland during the Nazi occupation. Italy occupied most of Southern Greece, including Trikala, but the Italian army did not implement the Final Solution of isolation, relocation, and extermination occurring elsewhere in German-occupied Europe. Many Jews fled to the Italian occupation zone in South and Central Greece (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000, 170). However, after Italy capitulated in September of 1943, the German army quickly invaded Southern Greece, and initiated the systematic detention and deportation of entire Jewish communities, starting with Ioannina, Arta, Preveza, Volos, Larissa, and Trikala in the spring of 1944. By the summer of 1944, most Jewish communities of Southern Greece, including the Peloponnesus, Crete, and Rhodes, had been deported (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000, 171;

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Bowman 2009, 80). In 1947, after the war, sixty-seven percent of the Jews of Thessaly had survived (Benbassa & Rodrigue 2000, 256). Some researchers attribute this survival rate to the high Hellenization of Jewish communities, as they were able to mix with the local population and evade detection. Trikala lost more than thirty percent of its Jewish population, counting about 270 members in the late 1940s. The community experienced constant emigration, with dwindling numbers throughout the late twentieth century. In 1972, the Jewish Agency's Athens office calculated 97 Jewish citizens in Trikala, most of them being twenty-six years and older (Plaut 2000, 103). In 2009, the community's website claimed forty members, a small but integral part in the history of Trikala (Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece 2009).

Appendix A. The text

Text with phonetic transcription and English translation underneath each verse.

(1) a. ΙΣΡΑΗΛΙΤΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ ΤΡΙΚΚΑΛΩΝ
b. /israiliti'ki koi'notis trik'kalon/
c. 'Jewish community of Trikala'

(2) a. Ἔστω ἔς κομποέστω ντὲ οὺν ἀμίγου :
b. /'esto 'es kompo'esto 'de 'un a'miɣo/
c. 'This was written by a friend'

(3) a. Ἢ ἔλ πόρ σή, τγιένη ἀτόδους πὸρ ἀμίγου :
b. /'i 'el 'por 'si, 'tjene a'toðos por a'miɣo/
c. 'And by his own merit, everyone is his friend'

(4) a. Καὶ ἐλ Νόμπρη ἐς, ντὲ σοῦ ἀντίγου ἀμίγου :
b. /'ke 'el 'nombre 'es, 'de 'su an'tiɣo a'miɣo/
c. 'For his name is, of this old friend'

(5) a. Ἢ ἐλ καὶ λὸ κονώση, λὸ γιάμα ἀμίγου :
b. /'i 'el 'ke 'lo ko'nose, 'lo 'jama a'miɣo/
c. 'And whoever meets him, calls him friend'

(6) a. Σγιέμπρη δίζη
b. /'sjempre 'ðize/
c. 'He always says'

(7) a. Ἐσκριβὴρ ἢ Μελτὰρ, βὰν ἀοὺν ἀντάρ :
b. /eskri'vir 'i mel'dar, 'van a'un an'dar/
c. 'Writing and Reading go hand in hand'

(8) a. Κὸν Μελτὰρ ἢ ἐσκριβὴρ, σὲ πουέδη κοὺν οὺνὸρ
b. /'kon mel'dar i eskri'vir, se 'pweðe 'kon 'onor/
c. 'With Reading and Writing, with honor you can'

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(9) a. μπεβὴρ :
b. /beˈviɾ/
c. ‘live’

(10) a. Ὁ Προϊστάμενος
b. /ho proisˈtamenos/
c. ‘The chief’

Appendix B. Transliteration tables

Summary of phonemes and their Greek transliteration. An asterisk (∗) means the context is not provided in the text.

1. Consonants

Phoneme	Greek spelling		Examples
	Word-initial	Elsewhere	
/p/	π	π	πόρ, κομποέστω
/b/	μπ	μπ /mb/	μπεβὴρ, Νόμπρη
/t/	τ	τ	τγιένη, Ἔστω
/d/	ντ	ντ /nd/, λτ /ld/	ντὲ, ἀντάρ, Μελτὰρ
/k/	κ	κ	καὶ, ἐσκριβὴρ
/v/	β	β	βὰν, μπεβὴρ
/ð/	δ	δ	δίζη, ἀτόδους
/s/	ς	ς	σὲ, Ἔστω, ἐς
/z/	∗	ζ	δίζη
/ȷ/	γι	∗	γιάμα
/ɣ/	∗	γ	ἀντίγου
/l/	λ	λ	λὸ, Μελτὰρ, ;λ
/ɾ/	∗	ρ	Νόμπρη, οὐνὸρ
/m/	μ	μ	Μελτὰρ, ἀμίγου
/n/	ν	ν	Νόμπρη, ἀντίγου, Κὸν
/j/	∗	γι	τγιένη
/w/	∗	ου	πουέδη

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2. Vowels

Phoneme	Greek spelling				Examples
	Other vowels		Last long vowels		
	Stressed	Unstressed	Stressed	Unstressed	
/a/	α	α	α	α	ἀντάρ, Μελτὰρ
/e/	ε	ε	*	η	Σγιέμπρη, μπεβὴρ
/i/	ι, η	ι	η	*	ἐσκριβὴρ, δίζη, σή
/o/	ο, ω	ου	*	ου, ω	κομποέστω, ἀμίγου, λὸ, κονώση
/u/	ου	*	ου	*	ἀοὺν, σοῦ

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