The Americanization of Greek Names

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On Tuesday, February 10, 1953, the following article appeared in the *Columbus Dispatch:*

> CHICOPEE, MASS., A young student leaving for induction Friday may get out of some unpleasant Army chores for what may be the reluctance of first sergeants to call out his name.
>
> He is Lambros A. Pappatoriantafillospoulous.
>
> However, word may get around before he is long in the Army that he'd answer if called Pappas or even Mr. Alphabet. He said his friends sometime call him one or the other of those names.

To most of the *Dispatch's* subscribers, this was just another funny story involving an unusual name that belongs to someone else. But, to anyone who is familiar with the Greek language, or with the names of Greek people in America, the story has a significance which goes far beyond the realm of its admittedly inherent humor.

In the first place, "Mr. Alphabet's" surname has probably been misspelled. The first *o* and the first *s* in the name were inserted either through typographical error or in a deliberate attempt to cause the name to appear even more absurd than it already is. The correct spelling is probably *Pappatriantafillopoulos,* which is a transliteration of Παπατριανταφυλλόπουλος. Translated into English, this means 'the son of reverend (priest) Triantafillos.' In turn, "Triantafillos" is derived from the Greek word for 'rose.'

That such a name should give trouble to anyone who has occasion to write or read it, or indeed, to its owner, does not come as a great surprise. At first sight, even to attempt to pronounce it seems inconceivably difficult. But, the word *alphabet* is also of Greek origin and is derived from the names of the first two Greek letters, alpha and beta. Although this gives us a clue as to how to arrive at the pronunciation of Greek names, there remains the problem of accent. There are entirely too many syllables in *Pappatriantafillopoulos* to make it easily adaptable to the speech habits of the English and Americans. It would seem that the logical thing to do is to abbreviate the name to Pappas or to change it completely into something more familiar, like *Alphabet,* for instance.

In the article cited, the given name *Lambros* is itself quite unusual. It is derived from the adjective λαμπρός, 'bright'; the accent has been shifted to the first syllable and the first letter capitalized to give Λάμπρος, from which *Lambros* is derived by transliteration and phonetic respelling.

Do we dare conjecture as to what the "A." of Mr. Alphabet's middle name represents? It is probably the name of his father which in Greek would take the genitive ending -ου indicating that *Lambros* is the 'son of' *Adamantios, Athanasios, Anastasios,* or *Alexandros.* In English, the middle name is written

in the nominative case to conform with the pattern of English or American middle names. Among the Greeks in America, the middle name is usually adopted as a means of differentiating cousins who are all named after the same paternal grandparent and therefore have the same first and last names. This is generally true with respect to female cousins as well, thus producing some peculiar sounding girls' names. To avoid such anomalies as, for example, "Mary Theodore Pappas," girls of Greek descent often merely abbreviate their middle name, using only the first letter as Mr. Alphabet, for some other reason, has done. Often, when the girls are pressed to reveal the significance of their middle initial, they just good-naturedly change the gender of the masculine name and give Theodor*a* or some analogous name as their middle name.

The Columbus telephone directory lists twenty-five Pappas's; and this does not include the students at Ohio State University. Probably none of them is even remotely related to Mr. Alphabet. Nevertheless, to these readers of the *Columbus Dispatch,* his story was probably in some way reminiscent of similar situations which no doubt prompted them to shorten their own names to Pappas. For example, their names were probably often misspelled just as Mr. Alphabet's was. The inconvenience which many of their names caused their American friends and neighbors is one of the primary factors that motivated the Greek people to adopt shorter, more euphonious names. The parish register of the Greek Orthodox Church in Columbus contains the names of over three hundred Greek families. What are some of the names which Greek-Americans bear? How did these names originate? How are they pronounced? What do they mean? How have they been changed from Greek to American-English? What are the cultural implications of such changes? It is the purpose of this article to answer these questions.

As I have already indicated the sources for the material which will be examined in this thesis are: the parish register of the Greek Orthodox Church "Annunciation," the telephone directory of the City of Columbus, and a list of students of Greek descent obtained from the Council on Religious Affairs at Ohio State University.

For the sake of scientific objectivity the phonetic transcriptions of the American pronunciations will represent the speech of Mr. George Chakeres rather than my own. Mr. Chakeres was the first child of Greek parentage to have been born in Columbus and has always been active in the affairs of the Greek community. Therefore, he is old enough to know the older generation and young enough not to have a "Greek accent." To my judgment, he is more likely than anyone else to give us a "standard" pronunciation without our running into the dangers of personal pride and affectation. The transcriptions of the Greek pronunciations will represent the speech of Mr. Michael Giannaros, who is a graduate of the University of Athens and is, therefore, well qualified to give us the correct pronunciation of the Modern Greek language.

By thus taking the pronunciation of a single individual for each language, we have what amounts to a control experiment in constant operation; we are maintaining identical conditions except for one varied factor, the factor of languages. In this way the two languages can be more accurately compared and their causal significance inferred. Furthermore, we can thus avoid the mistake of confusing mere dialectical differences with true phonemic substitution.

I am further indebted to Mr. Giannaros for his priceless assistance in the derivation of many names whose meanings are idiomatic and are based upon

dialectical connotations. There are also many words of Turkish origin which are not listed in the few available Modern Greek-English dictionaries. These words, however, have been sufficiently assimilated into the spoken language as to be easily identified, if not understood, by a native Greek. What has made Mr. Giannaros particularly valuable is the fact that he is a graduate of Ohio State University as well as the University of Athens, and therefore has been able to explain in English whatever my limited knowledge of Greek prevented me from understanding.

The dearth of reliable dictionaries made it necessary to have four hundred questionnaires mimeographed by which information pertaining to the names in the appendix was solicited. The first one hundred questionnaires were sent to those members of the Columbus parish who live out-of-town, and to those who live in Columbus but are not listed in the telephone directory; of these questionnaires, only fifteen were returned. Since the results through the mail were so discouraging, it became necessary to complete many of the remaining questionnaires through telephone conversations and personal communications.

Fortunately, I had already received a list of three hundred and twenty-five names written in Greek, with their English equivalents, from Reverend George Zoganas. Many of those names belonged to the people who were called upon for supplementary information. The fact that I already knew their names in Greek and could speak their language turned out to be a great advantage. Sensitive as most people are about their names, these people were justifiably suspicious as to the purpose of my inquiries. After a brief explanation, however, they generally became very cooperative (sometimes too cooperative).

At least two hundred people were spoken to on the telephone; of these, questionnaires were filled out for one hundred and twenty-three. At least fifty people were spoken to personally (although questionnaires were filled out for only twenty-five). Another hundred questionnaires were later mailed to people who could not be contacted, but the results were just as discouraging as before. However, I was still able to use the list which the local priest had given me to answer at least my first question for each of the original three hundred and twenty-five names.

The questions were phrased in such a way as to divulge: the name of the husband in Greek and English, the maiden name of the wife in Greek and English, the meanings of the surnames, the given-names of children in Greek and English, the meanings of the given-names, how middle names are bestowed, the geographical area in Greece in which the surname originated, reasons for changing or not changing the name, and how the name was changed.

The last four questions were particularly effective in revealing the social and cultural implications in name changing, and the psychological processes involved as people changed or did not change their names. The first five questions served to indicate the method whereby the written forms of the names were changed. The primary method was that of transliteration. Then there were the clippings: terminal, medial and initial. There were a few cases of what may be called *metathesis*. Some names were translated directly or approximately from Greek to English. Others were radically changed in an arbitrary and irrational manner. Some phonetic respellings were obvious to see, but for the most part, the phonetic adaptations from Greek to American-English were to be observed only by comparing the pronunciations of the names in each of the two languages.

WHEN THE FIRST GREEK IMMIGRANTS began to trickle into the United States, about the first thing that impressed them, or rather, was impressed upon them, was the fact that their names were entirely too long to suit the efficiency of literary and spoken American-English. Starting at Ellis Island and proceeding down to the time when the first Greeks were beginning to become naturalized Americans, a constant pressure was exerted upon them by social, economic, and political forces to change their names to something more easily pronounceable, easier to write, and short enough to accommodate the business machines which made out their paychecks. Thus, the Greek immigrant found himself torn between his deeply ingrained theories of national and family tradition, and the desire to adjust and "belong" to the new and strange society by which he was now surrounded.

A part of the tradition with which the Greek immigrant wishfully identified himself was what he considered to be a social as well as biological heritage from the Greeks of antiquity. His national pride refused to allow him to believe that he was anything short of a direct lineal descendant of Alexander the Great, or even Homer. One of the things that only served to augment his pride in the "glory that was Greece" was the fact that the Greek alphabet had been adapted by the Romans and handed on, with slight modification, to general European use.

To the newly arrived Greek, Hellenic influence was well illustrated by the fact that there were many characters of the "American" alphabet whose written form was analogous to the letters of the Greek alphabet. On the other hand, for those Greek letters which did not have an English (Roman) analogue, he discovered that there were combinations of letters which could be used to approximate, if not to imitate exactly, the sounds which those Greek letters represented. Thus, he realized that his name could be changed into English by transliteration or phonetic respelling, or by combinations of these two processes.

Depending upon the degree to which the Greek immigrant wished to assimilate to his new cultural environment, and upon his ability to distinguish phonemic differences, he respelled his

name according to the phonemic pattern of the American language. Also depending upon the degree to which he wished to assimilate, he decided to change his name even more by shortening it, by juggling its component letters around, or by translating it directly or approximately into American-English. When and if he finally decided that he was not going back to Greece, he might adopt a name that would unquestionably identify him as an "American."

Probably the most obvious method of changing a name from one language to another is by simply translating it literally or approximately from the original, or from the meaning of one of its component parts. Thus, Mr. *Foteinos,* from *foteinos,* 'luminous, lucid, clear,' becomes Mr. *Brilliant.* A man by the name of *Chrysoules,* (from *chryso,* 'gold, golden,' and the diminutive suffix *-oules* denoting 'dear, little, or son of') becomes *Golding. Petrakis* (from the proper noun *Petros,* 'Peter' and the diminutive ending *-akis* also denoting 'dear, little, or son of') becomes *Peterson.* Mrs. *Ioannou* (from *Ioannes* 'John,' and the genitive ending *-ou,* meaning 'son of,') becomes Mrs. *Johnson;* similarly, *Giannakopoulos,* [from *Giannes* (the short form of *Ioannes*)] when combined with the patronymic suffix *-poulos,* 'son,' becomes *Johnson.*

An example of an approximate translation is the name *Pegadiotes* (from *pegadi,* 'well') which becomes *Wellman;* although this is a close enough translation, the ethnic suffix *-ites* would indicate that Mr. *Wellman's* ancestors were citizens of the village of *Pegadia.* An example of partial translation is the name *Diamantides* (from *diamanti,* 'diamond,' and the diminutive suffix *-ides,* 'son') which simply becomes *Diamond.* Similarly, *Mastorides* (from *mastores,* 'master, artist') may become either *Masterson* or just *Masters.* This latter name also has phonetic similarity to recommend it; it is usually pronounced [mæstɛr'Iidəs] or [mæstɛr'aIdəs], hence ['mæstərz]. Very rarely, we find a partial translation by analogy with a language foreign to both Greek and English. Such an example is *Soterovich,* from *Soteropoulos* (from *Soterios* and *-poulos,* 'son of').

Not all Greek names are suitable to translation, however. *Mauromates* (from *mauro,* 'black,' and *mati,* 'eye') would literally, as well as figuratively, "give a man's name a black-eye." Similarly, the name *Pikras* (from *pikra,* 'bitterness') would be a "bitter pill to swallow," and the name *Sfekas* (from *sfeka,* 'hornet, wasp') would

have an unpleasant "sting" to it if translated. People with names such as those just mentioned would find translation an unsuitable method of changing their names and would therefore have to resort to some other way of finding an appropriate appellative for themselves.

A university student whose name is *Triantafyllides,* from *trianta-fyllon,* 'rose' (from *trianta,* 'thirty,' and *fyllon,* 'leaf'), prefers not to change his name because of family pride and respect of the family name, despite the frequent practice among his friends, of calling him Gus (from *Constantinos*) Rose, or *Gus Tri* ['*trIi*]. Thus many Greek names retain their original form in transliteration. Indeed, some Greeks will not hesitate to add a letter to their names, as in *Poulimenakes* from *Polymenakes.*

The system of transliteration used in this article is to a large extent followed by American Greeks depending upon acquaintance or lack of acquaintance with the "conventional system" of transliteration as depicted in the Greek-English-English-Greek dictionaries issued by such companies as the *National Herald* and *D. C. Divry.*[1] Some of the variations result from the equating of all the Greek letters which represent the Greek [i] sound with the English letter *i* which looks like the Greek ι, or with the English letter *e* whose name in English, pronounced [Ii], approximates the Greek sound [i]. The Greek letter ε is usually represented by *e,* but occasionally it is equated with *a,* by a confusion of the name of that letter [εI], [eI], with the Greek sound [ε]. However, these, and other deviations in transliteration may be the result of phonetic respelling.

The Greek letter β is usually transliterated as a *b* and is pronounced [b] in most Americanized names. Thus, *Balabanes* [vala'-vanis] becomes *Balaban.* However, this is not always the case. In many Greek names the *beta* is represented by its phonemic value, which can be very nearly approximated by the American letter *v.* Therefore it is not unusual to find the name *Basileios* [va'silios] written *Vasilios* or the name *Batsoures* [va'tsuris] written *Vatsoures.* Occasionally the *beta* is represented by a *w,* as in *Balasopoulos* [vala'sopulos], which has been changed to *Wallace,* possibly by confusing [v] and [w] with each other.

The Greek letter γ is usually transliterated as a *g* or *ng.* However,

before the sounds [ɛ] and [i], this consonant is pronounced like the *y* in yeast [j]. It is, therefore, sometimes written as a *y* in the process of Americanization. For example, *Bagianopoulos,* [vaja'nopulos] is first shortened, and then written *Bayian.* Sometimes, by analogy with the name *Giannes* (John) it is written as a *J,* as when *Giouchales,* ['juχalis] is shortened and becomes *Juhas.*

The Greek combination *mp* in rapid, unpremeditated spoken Greek, is pronounced very much like the American [b]. Therefore, Greek names containing this combination of consonants are not always transliterated *mp* but respelled phonetically with the letter *b.* Thus, *Mpitsolas,* [bi'tsolas] is written *Bicholas,* and *Mpelles* ['bɛlis], by changing the vowels and dropping the *s,* becomes *Bally.* Similarly, *Mpozines* [bo'zinis] is shortened and written *Bozin,* while *Harmpes* [χar'bis] drops its *s* and becomes Harbi. Sometimes the *mp* combination is given a nasalized pronunciation, resulting in something like [mb]. In such cases, names like *Haralampos* [χa'ralabos] becomes *Haralambos* and *Lampros* ['labros] becomes *Lambros* ['læmbrəs].

The Greek consonantal combination *nt* is usually pronounced approximately like the American *d.* The realization of this phonemic similarity has led some Greek people to substitute the *d* for the *nt,* producing such spellings as *Dafloukas* for *Ntafloukas* [daf'lukas] and *Duros* for *Ntouros* ['duros]. Situations often arise when people with identical names will vary the spelling of their names according to their individual conception of Greek pronunciation. Thus, two people named *Antales,* [ada'lis] might represent their names variously as *Antalis* [æn'tɛlas] and *Adalis* [ə'deIləs]. Like the *mp* combination, the *nt* is often nasalized, giving a sound something like [nd]. A case in point is the name *Koumantarakis* [kumada'rakis] which becomes *Coumandarakis,* and eventually, *Commander.*

The Greek [tz] sound is a very unstable one. When it is preceded by an *n* it is sounded like [dz]. For example, when the name *Tzelepes* [tzɛlɛ'pis] is preceded by the accusative article *ton,* the name becomes [dʒɛlɛ'pis]; that is, [,tontzɛlɛ'pi]>[,todzɛlɛ'pi]>[,todʒɛlɛ'pi]. Thus, when phonetically respelled, and given its American pronunciation, this name becomes *Jelepes,* or *Jelepis* [dʒɛ'lɛpəs]. Similarly, the Greek [tz], is written as a *g* by analogy with American

combinations in which the "soft" *g* is pronounced. Thus, *Tzortzakis* is shortened and becomes *George* ['dʒordʒ], in an attempt to equate the Greek [tz], with the American phoneme [dʒ].

The Greek *ts* combination is pronounced variously [ts] and [tʃ] depending upon the dialectical area from which the speaker comes. Therefore, in its representation in English it is sometimes written *ts* and sometimes *ch.* It is possible, however, that this difference in spelling of the same phoneme is the result of an attempt to approximate the American phoneme [tʃ], and has nothing to do with dialectical differences. Whatever the case may be, it is interesting to note that the name *Tsiliakos* [tsi'ljakos] is written in English with a *ts* while the name *Tsirakes* [tsi'rakis] is written *Chirakis.*

Although the Greek χ is usually transliterated *ch,* its similarity, though it is relatively weaker, to the [h] of spoken American-English has produced some names which have substituted the letter *h* for the Greek [χ] sound. Thus, Χάρλας becomes *Harlas* and Χόνδρος becomes *Hondros.*

When the Greek *ps* is transliterated, the *p* is rarely pronounced. Realizing this, some people with names like *Psoras* ['psoras], have begun to eliminate the superfluous *p,* their names resulting in the phonetic respelling like *Soras,* and, (with the dropping of the final *s*) *Sora.*

The Greek diphthongs αυ, and ευ, before a vowel or before β, γ, δ, λ, μ, ν, and ρ, are pronounced [av] and [ɛv] respectively; in all other cases like [af] and [ɛf]. Although these diphthongs are transliterated *au* and *eu,* in the process of name changing among American-Greeks they are often represented according to their phonetic values. Thus, the name *Augeres,* [av'jɛris] becomes *Avgeris,* and *Euangelou* [ɛva'ŋɛlu] by omitting the initial and terminal vowels, becomes *Vangel. Eustatheios* [ɛfs'taθis], on the other hand, becomes *Efstathious,* and *Eleutherios* [ɛlɛf'θɛrios] becomes *Elefthe-rios.*

The literal representation of the Greek digraphs is not infrequently abandoned in favor of representing them by their nearest phonemic analogue in English. As we have seen, popular approximations of the Greek sound [i] are the American [I] and the diphthong [Ii]. Thus, we often find the Greek ι, η, υ each represented simply by *i* without differentiation, between them. The *e*

is often substituted for the digraph οι; for example, *Oikonomides,* [ikono'miðis], becomes *Economides.* Otherwise the [i] sound is approximated by analogy with the *e* in *be, ee* in *see, ea* in *east,* and *i* in *machine,* each chosen at random by the particular individual who is in the process of Americanizing his name, unless he has consciously attempted to follow a standardized system of transliteration.

In addition to translation, transliteration, and phonetic respelling (and often in conjunction with them) an important method of changing Greek names to shorter, more euphonious Anglo-American equivalents is what is variously known as, clipping, abbreviation, or shortening. The processes involved in the shortening of Greek names are analogous to the processes of phonetic change in that they involve the omission, addition, or transposition of terminal, medial, and initial letters, or component parts, of the original form of a name. Philologists and linguists apply the terms *apocope, paragoge, aphaeresis, prosthesis, syncope, epenthesis* and *metathesis* to similar changes which are observable in the development of linguistic phonology.[2]

Similar, and related to the phonetic process of apocope which, for our purposes, may be defined as the cutting off of one or more letters from the *end* of a word, is the kind of terminal clipping which is observable in the metamorphosis of Greek names into names which will fit the spoken and written efficiency of American-English.

Perhaps the most prominent example of apocope, as we have defined it, is the large number of Greek names whose first constituent element is the honorific prefix *papa-(s)* (priest), and whose second component part has been "lost in the shuffle" of cognominal simplification. H. L. Mencken has ascribed the popularity of the name *Pappas* in this country, at least partially, to the fact that the Greek priests were the spiritual leaders of their enslaved countrymen during the prolonged Turkish occupation, and that they were subsequently subject to the greatest respect.[3]

As has been pointed out earlier,[4] the noun *papas,* with the *s* dropped, was prefixed to the given-name of the priest in question as a title of respect. Presumably this was prior to the time when surnames began to be used as a permanent onomastic custom, if we

are to judge by the large number of people in this country (and in Greece) whose patronymics indicate descent from a priest.

After the innovation of surnames, at which time people began to assign to their neighbors nicknames that were to assume a lasting permanence, it stands to reason that the relatively elevated social and cultural position of the clergy would make any kind of association with them a fact to be taken notice of, and therefore, a factor to be reckoned with in any attempt at describing the relatives of the highly esteemed *papa.*

In pre-cognominal days, probably the best compliment a man could be paid was to be reminded that one knew that his father, or his uncle, was a priest. Thus to that combination of honorific and proper noun which identified a man as a priest, were added one or a number of patronymic and diminutive suffixes to indicate that someone was a lineal descendant of the original priest. And, as the priests multiplied, so did the number of people whose names began with *papa.*

It was only natural that, when the tide of immigration broke, a certain proportion of the Greeks coming to America should be descendants of priests; furthermore, those who were not, were at least aware of the honorable nature of a name like *Pappas,* even though it were a mere *component* of a truly noble, polysyllabic Greek name (and a transliteration at that!). This, then, partially explains why there are so many Pappas's listed in the telephone directory of Columbus, Ohio, and so many people whose original names were nearly as long as *Papatriantafyllopoulos.*

There are many Greek-Americans, however, for whom the arbitrary adoption of *Pappas* did not seem satisfactory from the standpoint of maintaining one's individuality and retaining one's identity. However unwilling they were to adopt an abbreviated form of someone else's name, these Greeks nevertheless realized the importance of brevity in their own.

As we have seen, some Greek names were already relatively short and were incorporated into the roster of "American" names by simple transliteration and phonetic respelling or both; others were sufficiently amenable to translation into English equivalents that were reasonably acceptable to American language habits. But, for names that did not fall into the above categories, something had to

be done. It was at this point that the principle of apocope began to operate, and, Mr. *Anastopoulos* became Mr. *Anast;* Mr. *Leontsines,* became Mr. *Leon;* Mr. *Tsirakopoulos,* (originally formed by dropping the inflectional ending of *Tsirakis,* replacing it by the compositional vowel *o* and adding the patronymic suffix *-poulos*) became, with the assistance of phonetic respelling, Mr. *Chirakis;* Mr. *Angelides* became Mr. *Angel;* Mr. *Alexopoulos* became Mr. *Alex;* Mr. *Athanasoules* became Mr. *Athan;* Mr. *Bagianopoulos* became (partly through phonetic respelling) Mr. *Vayian;* Mr. *Balabanes* became Mr. *Balaban;* Mr. *Mpozines* (with the aid of phonetic respelling) became Mr. *Bozin;* Mr. *Soteropoulos* (with the aid of respelling by analogy with "American" forms) became Mr. *Sauter;* Mr. *Tournikiotis* (by the ommission of the *u*) became Mr. *Tornik;* and, Mr. *Palkouras,* became Mr. *Paul* (by phonetic respelling of *Pal*).

The next observable principle in the clipping of Greek names in America is what may be called aphaeresis, or the subtracting of a letter or letters from the beginning of a word. By examining this process we come to another Greek surname that is very popular among the Greeks of America. The name *Poulos,* or its commonly respelled forms *Polis, Poles,* had early reached such a high currency among the names of Greeks who first came to this country, as to prompt Mr. Sotirios S. Lontos to state that, ". . . the *Pappases* and *Pouloses* have naturally become the Smiths and Browns of American Greeks."[5]

The popularity of the patronymic suffix *-poulos* is well known. Considering the widespread use of this suffix, it is not surprising that, within the group of people who were psychologically inclined to shorten their names by shaving them down to their last component parts, there should be a considerable number of *Pouloses.*

Indeed, the systematic and logical uniformity in the construction of the Greek language is attested to by the history of *Pappas* and *Poulos* in America. That so many far-flung, and psychologically different speakers of a language should almost simultaneously have chosen the same general methods of decomposing that language to suit their diverse, and sometimes antithetical purposes, is proof-positive of the influence of language upon the thought processes of its users.

However, it is not to be understood that everyone whose name contained the prefix *papa-* or the suffix *-poulos* chose to keep that particular element of his name to use as his new name. Nor were *Pappas* and *Poulos* the only names which were obtained through the processes of apocope and aphaeresis. The latter process is clearly illustrated in the name *Mones* which was devised by subtracting the prefix *papa-* from *Pappamones,* thus sacrificing the more popular element for a relatively unfamiliar one. Similarly, when *Mauromates* loses its first constituent element, *-Mates* is left; by transliterating *i* for *e* and adding a *t* to preserve the "short" quality of the vowel, the name finally becomes Mattis ['mætəs].

Besides what we have chosen to designate as apocope and aphaeresis, Greek names in America have been shortened by the process of syncope; that is, by removing a letter or letters from the middle of the original form of the name. Thus, the central part of *Adamantides,* (*-antide-*) is removed to produce *Adams;* the element *-asopoul-* is removed from *Anastasopoulos* to produce *Anastos;* the middle letters *-ade-* are taken from *Alexiades,* to give us *Alexis;* the *-kouki-* element is subtracted from *Gerokoukis* to result in *Geros; Dionysopoulos* loses the middle element *-poulo-* and becomes, by various transliteration, *Deonesos; Zarafonites,* minus *-fonite-,* equals *Zaras;* similarly, *Saridakis* without *-daki-* becomes *Saris; Stamatakos,* without *-tako-,* becomes *Stamas;* and *Tsacopoulos,* without *-opou-,* becomes (with the aid of phonetic respelling) *Chacos.*

For the purposes of classification we have been using the phonological terms aphaeresis, apocope, and syncope to describe the processes by which polysyllabic Greek names have been clipped in order to fit American linguistic patterns. The correlative opposites of these terms may also be defined in such a way as to illustrate certain processes in letter-change which are analogous to those of sound-change. For example, if we define prosthesis as the adding of one or more letters to the *beginning* of a name, epenthesis as the insertion of a letter or letters in the *middle* of a name, and paragoge as the adding of one or more letters to the *end* of a name, we may further classify the processes observable in the metamorphosis of Greek names into American-English.

We have seen that the tendency in changing Greek names has

been one of abbreviation. Therefore, it becomes obvious that these last three processes must operate in collaboration with the three previously discussed, since the latter processes are the ones which are concerned with the *subtraction* of component elements. Furthermore, since the tendency is toward abbreviation, we can only rarely expect to find the principle of prosthesis. However, many examples of Greek names can be found, which have been changed by combinations of the rest of these two sets of principles, and, the varieties of combinations are many.

For example, the name *Schooley* is the result of the combination of apocope and paragoge. The original form of the name, *Skoularinas,* was first abbreviated by cutting off the last part (*-arinas*), and the ending *-ley* was added, thus giving us *Skouley*. Then, by analogy with the English word *school* [skul] and consequent phonetic respelling, the Greek spelling *Skou-* [sku-] was changed to *Schoo-,* thus giving us the final form of the name, *Schooley*. Similarly, the name *Tsoumas,* was changed by cutting off the final *s,* (apocope), and adding *n,* (paragoge). This made the name *Tsouman,* which, by phonetic respelling, became *Chooman;* this name has changed even more in its pronunciation, for by analogy with the [ʃ] in *chauffeur,* it is now pronounced ['ʃuUmən].

Another example of the combination of apocope and paragoge is the name *Karmiris,* whose last part (*-iris*) is removed, and *-man* added, giving *Karman*. By various transliteration, Karman then becomes *Carman*.

A combination of apocope and syncope may be seen in the name *Polymenakos*. The suffix *-akos* is first removed, leaving *Polymen-* which by syncope, loses its middle *y,* thus leaving *Polmen*.

The combination of epenthesis and syncope is illustrated when one *s* is removed from the middle of *Kossyfas* and a *t* is inserted, leaving *Kotsyfas*. But, this particular phenomenon is probably the result of a phonetic respelling; the Greek vulgate pronunciation of the name, which comes from *kossyfi* ('black-bird'), results in the recording of the intrusive *t* in the Americanization of the name. This name is an excellent example of the actual operation of *phonetic* epenthesis and illustrates the fact that, although it may be acceptable for purposes of classification and scientific study, a sharp and permanent distinction between *graphic* and *phonetic* changes

cannot be made (since writing is really but a means of recording sound).

The interrelationship between written and spoken linguistic processes can also be illustrated by the principle of metathesis. For our purposes, this may be defined as the transposition of two letters in a given name. In the name *Alatsatianos* we have an example of the combination of that principle and the principle of syncope. By the removal of the middle element *-tia-* from *Alatsatianos,* the shortened form *Alatsanos* results. When the *s* and *t* are transposed, the final product becomes *Alastanos.* We cannot know whether Mr. *Alastanos* knew anything about the phonological principle of metathesis or not; in fact we rather doubt that he did. But whether his name was accidentally changed by graphic transposition of the letter, or with the deliberate intent of facilitating pronunciation, the classification of this phenomenon as an example of metathesis is still justifiable.

Phonetic, though not graphic, metathesis, can be seen in the name *Vradelis.* Though in the written form the *v* precedes the *r,* the American pronunciation of the name is [vɛr'dɛləs]. Eventually, the written name will probably come to correspond with its pronunciation, again illustrating the interrelationship between written and spoken linguistic processes.

As we have seen, a large variety of combinations of these processes is possible. An example of the "quadrilateral" operation of aphaeresis, apocope, syncope, and epenthesis is seen in the Americanization of the name *Lampropoulos.* The first part *Lampro-* and the last part *-os* are removed, leaving *-poul-.* Then, by analogy with the common name *Paul,* the *o* is removed (syncope) and *a* is added (epenthesis).

Another such multiple operation is illustrated in the change of the name *Filiopoulos.* The compositional *-o-* is removed by syncope, leaving *Fili-* and *-poulos.* The *-oulos* is then removed by apocope, leaving *-p-* which is then attached to *Phili-* by paragoge, giving us *Filip.* The letter *l* is then inserted in the middle (epenthesis) and the *F* is changed to *Ph* (by phonetic respelling or various transliteration), resulting in the name *Phillip;* to the end of that is added the letter *s* (paragoge) to produce the surname *Phillips.*

As we have said, the classification of the processes of literal

change by the use of phonological terminology is but an arbitrary device used for the purpose of scientific analysis and study. And, it would seem that with the increase of the number of processes which can be found to have combined in the formation of a name, there would be a proportionate increase in the arbitrary nature of the system.

Furthermore, names like *Tsatsarones* and *Houhoules,* which are changed to *Tsaronis* and *Hoolis,* respectively (with the aid of phonetic respelling and various transliteration), can be classified as examples of either of two processes: aphaeresis or syncope. But, the change in these names can also be ascribed to the principle of *haplology,*[6] which describes linguistic situations in which the repetition of phonemes or sequences is avoided. However, changes by haplology are very different from those which are explainable by theories of sound-change.

Indeed, it would be difficult to prove that all the changes in the names which we have analyzed according to our system were the result of actual phonetic change, or that any *conscious* effort was actually exerted by the people whose names we have been discussing to arrive at a suitable name for themselves. For example, Mr. *Phillips* may have picked this name out by analogy with the common English name *Phillips,* without noticing any phonetic similarity between that name and *Filiopoulos;* similarly, Mr. *Lampropoulos* may have picked Paul because of its popularity among Americans, rather than by clipping his Greek name off at both ends and changing the vowels of the remainder.

But, from the standpoint of pronunciation, a definite indication of premeditated intent in the addition, omission, and transposition of letters exists. The practice of inserting extra letters in the *middle* (epenthesis) of Greek names that have already been through the preliminary phases of transliteration and abbreviation (through aphaeresis, apocope and syncope), appears to have been motivated by rational preliminary considerations. For example, the extra *p* in *Pappas* was probably added by someone who was aware that, in the English language, the length of a vowel is affected by the number of consonants following it; and, that person was interested in preserving a low, lax quality in the *a.* Although the vowel sound in the American pronunciation of Pappas may at one time have

been the low, lax [ɑ], in the abrasions of everyday speech and with the passage of time, the *a* in *Pappas* has been raised to the low front [æ] sound, thus giving us ['pæpəs]. Similarly, the extra *t* in *Mattis* (from *Mauromates*) was inserted for a purpose. Whoever first decided to make the change must have realized that with only one *t* the name would probably have been pronounced ['meItəs].

The same considerations that apply to the consonants apply to the epenthesis of vowels. Thus, when the name *Lykas* was transliterated, regardless of which of the Roman equivalents was chosen to represent the first Greek vowel in that name, the final pronunciation might not have approximated the Greek [i] sound to the taste of the name's owner. It might have been written *Likas, Lekas,* or *Lykas,* in which cases it could only have been pronounced ['laIkəs] and ['lIkəs], ['lɛkəs] and ['leIkəs], or ['laIkəs] and ['lIkəs]. But if the vowel combinations *ea,* or *ee,* were inserted, the pronunciation could not help but be ['lIikəs] or ['likəs], which is much closer to the Greek vowel [i]. The same applies to the name *Frimas,* which came to be written *Freemas.*

Judging from the facts observable in the case of epenthesis and the relation of that particular method of adapting the written form of Greek names to American customs, a generalization may be made with respect to the rest of the devices we have discussed. The pronunciation of Greek names in America is directly related to the structural methods which were used to transform them from Greek to American, and, in turn, the pronunciation of American English (in the particular locality in which the names were changed) had a direct and pronounced influence upon the methods which were chosen to effect that change.

The majority of the names mentioned may be classified according to at least one of the processes of Greek name-change which have thus far been delineated. Yet, there are some names which defy classification. How a man by the name of *Zikopoulos* came to adopt a name like *Marion,* or *Tsitzikos* came to be *Murton,* and

Taularides came to be *Curtis,* is a question the answer to which can only be conjectured. The only possible way to arrive at a reasonably accurate understanding of the psychological processes which impelled these people to make such a radical change in the original form of their fathers' names, is to contact them each personally; but even then the results may prove disappointing.

Oftentimes, the true reasons behind the adoption of disparate surnames is hidden in the past, and members of the younger generations have not been interested enough in traditions to have inquired into the origin of the family name. Occasionally, however, one is fortunate enough to meet a person with firsthand knowledge on the subject of his name. The result is that the inquisitor is then deluged with interesting information which casts brilliant light upon social and cultural conditions, and their influence upon the lives of the human beings who lived in them.

People like the Greeks of America, whose surnames have been recently adapted to meet the demands of their particular social environment have, of necessity, had to adapt themselves along with their names. The names of such people, then, may be used as a mirror of the culture in which they have lived; a mirror which, by the nature of social and personal interaction, will also reflect human nature and conduct.

In the list of names which was compiled for this study, two surnames *Brown* are to be found. But, looking at their Greek equivalents, we see that one *Brown* belongs to the family of *Kalantzopoulos,* the other to the family of *Oikonomedes,* indicating that they are in no way related. On the other hand, we notice that there are three surnames *Kalantzopoulos,* but that the American equivalent of each of these is different. One *Kalantzopoulos* is now a *Polis,* the other a *Manos,* and the third a *Brown.*

Whether or not these particular three people are relatives is not ascertained, but this illustration indicates the type of situation that has arisen, and continues to arise within many Greek families. Greek society is basically a patriarchal society possessing the concomitants of hegemony in the father, preference of elder sons, and the hierarchy of age. A premium is placed upon obedience and the adherence to custom and tradition. It is not surprising then, that the younger generation should meet with vigorous opposition in

the event of any suggested departure from established precedent. And, the question whether to retain or discard the family name has always been a source of disharmony among respective members of a family.

Discordant attitudes as to whether patronymics should be retained or altered can also be a source of disharmony among the various members of a community. Greeks who frown upon the Americanization of family names, ridicule others who have changed theirs. This attitude has, no doubt, helped to retard the processes of name-change among the Greeks.

Although there is a gradual tendency towards simplification, there are still many difficult Greek surnames which have remained, essentially, unchanged. This reluctance on the part of some American-Greeks to alter their patronymics is the result of their reverence of custom and tradition, and shows a tendency to resist cultural change.

The degree to which the Greeks of this country have allowed their names to be changed, often indicates the degree to which they, in turn, have allowed themselves to become "assimilated" to American life. The change of Greek surnames shows a relatively static adherence to the customs and traditions of the "homeland," and reflects the old world element which can still be found in the cultural and psychological make-up of the American-Greek.

However, the Greek of America is not utterly inflexible; nor has he remained completely immune to the dynamic operation of social forces. Some willingness among the Greek people to conform to the demands of their cultural environment can be seen in the ease and rapidity with which Greek given-names have been Americanized; and, the Americanization of these names seems to be taking place more rapidly among members of the first and second generation.

Greek given-names are changed according to, what seem to be, established standards. Speaking with reference to the first Greek immigrants, Mr. Sotirios S. Lontos suggests that they have come by their American first-names as follows:

> . . . *Panagiotis* . . . is advised that henceforth he will be called *Pete, Demetrios* becomes *Jim, Basil* is changed into *Bill, Haralampos* into *Harry, Stavros* into *Steve,* and *Christos* into *Crist.* If his name is *Constantine* he has the choice of

either *Gus* or *Charles,* and as a rule he gives preference to the first as nearer in sound to his original name. *Demosthenes* is usually abbreviated into *Demos.* That was too plebeian a name, however, for a certain proprietor of an aristocratic candy shop, who very effectively gave his name the noble form of *De Moss.* Finally, while anybody called *Michael* may retain this name for American usage, among his countrymen here he will be known as *Mackis,* which is the Greek version of *Mike.*

It is interesting to note that not only *Panagiotes,* but *Panteles* and *Petros* as well, become Pete. Also, in Columbus, the name *Constantinos,* in addition to *Gust* or *Gus,* and *Charles,* often become *Deno* or *Dino* (by dropping the final *-s,* aphaeresis, and phonetic respelling); the name *Dean* for *Constantinos* has become very popular among the members of the second generation.

The results of social pressure can be even more easily seen in the feminine given-names of American-Greeks. Being more sensitive than the men, Greek women have consequently been more willing to have their names conform to the accepted norms of American society. This is particularly true among the *children* of the early immigrants, whose mothers seem to have been anxious to transform their daughters' Greek given-names into American-sounding equivalents.

We have seen that the names of the Greeks in America (in particular, those of the Greeks in Columbus, Ohio) can be used as a criterion from which to judge the degree to which their owners have adjusted to cultural change. Changes in surnames are of a relatively conservative nature. Greek surnames which show little or no change, can be viewed as the final vestige of European influence upon their bearers.

On the other hand, the general tendency in given-names, is toward conformity; they reflect the gradual substitution of American cultural habits for those of the "old country." And, of this latter class, the female names seem to indicate the course which all Greek names will eventually take, as the Greeks in America move toward complete cultural assimilation. The rate of name-change, according to the facts established by this study, is directly proportional to the rate of cultural change among those citizens of America whose names show that they are descendants of Greeks who, in turn, were themselves of Greek descent.

NOTES

[1] Carrol N. Brown (ed.), *English-Greek, Greek-English Dictionary of the National Herald;* D. C. Divry (ed.), *Divry's New English-Greek and Greek-English Handy Dictionary.*

These dictionaries advise Greeks to transliterate their names by writing them with Roman letters, thus giving them the form of Latin names. They are further advised to pronounce the names with the English sounds of the letters and the Latin rule for the place of the accent (i.e. two-syllabled words accent the penult; polysyllables accent the penult, if long, otherwise the antepenult).

[2] See Sophocles, *A Romaic Grammar;* also see Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar,* Leonard Bloomfield, *Language* and Louis H. Gray, *Foundations of Language.*

[3] See H. L. Mencken, *The American Language,* p. 486, f.n. 2.

[4] Note the large number of names with the prefix *papa-(s).*

[5] "American Greek," *American Speech,* Vol. I, No. 6, March, 1926, p. 308; H. L. Mencken, *The American Language,* p. 485.

[6] Leonard Bloomfield, on p. 391 of his *Language,* tells us: "When a phoneme or group of phonemes recurs within a word, one occurrence, together with the intervening sounds, may be dropped: this change is known as *haplology.*"

At Punta Gorda, Brit. Honduras, the padre had told us of the passion of the Caribs for a multiplicity of names. One of the women, after giving her child three or four, pointed to me and told the padre to add mine. I am not very strict, but I did not care to assume wantonly the obligations of a godfather. Stopping the ceremony, I begged the padre to get me released with the best grace he could and he promised to do so. But it was an excessively hot day, the room was crowded, the doors choked up, and by this time the padre . . . was in a profuse perspiration and somewhat confused. I thought myself clear until a few moments later a child was passed along for me to take in my arms . . . Still I most ungallantly avoided receiving the baby. On going away, however, the woman intercepted me and, thrusting forward the infant, called me *compadre,* so that without knowing it I became godfather to a Carib child . . . I can only hope that in due season it will multiply the name and make it respectable among the Caribs. JOHN L. STEPHENS, *Incidents of Travel in Central America . . . 1841,* p. 21.