

The *Other* Nicknames of American Greek-Letter Organizations

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Greek sororities and fraternities in the United States have not one nickname, but two—the second being a sexually-embellished version of the first. These latter, “dirty” nicknames have been created within a narrowly-defined set of sociocultural and linguistic rules, and, beyond revealing the usual adolescent preoccupation with sex, serve at least one important psycho-social function in the Greek socialization process, to bind together members of a particular secondary group.

In 1992 I published an article in *Names* in which I discussed the nicknames of American Greek-letter organizations commonly known as sororities (for females) and fraternities (for males).¹ In that essay I established a basic taxonomy of classification for those nicknames, examined their morphological formation, and illustrated how they serve important psycho-social functions for both the members (“Greeks”) and non-members (“non-Greeks”) of such associations. In the final paragraph of that article (186), I remarked:

I have intended this study to be exploratory, not definitive; certainly Greek-letter nicknames in the United States may define other roles, serve other functions, and, indeed, contain numerous other aspects than those discussed here. During the course of my research, for example, I discovered that the shortened nicknames often serve as starting points for other derived forms that are much more sexually suggestive or explicit (such as when *Tri-delt* yields *Try Me*, or *D G* produces *Dick Grabber*). These kinds of nicknames are uniformly used only by members of other Greek-letter societies—in fact, the nicknames seem to be unknown outside the Greek system—but do they serve any purpose or reflect any social meaning beyond the usual adolescent preoccupation with sex? This question and others like it will have to serve as the focus of the next study of Greek-letter nicknames in the United States.

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In this essay I will address further the kind of secondary nickname that I explored only briefly in the paragraph cited above. Following the pattern established in my earlier article, I will first explain my rationale and methods, then discuss the creation of these "other" nicknames, and finally discuss the psycho-social function that the names serve.

Rationale and Methods

I must be clear from the outset about one aspect of this study: because the kinds of nicknames I will be discussing are sexual in nature, they may surprise or shock some readers and may offend a few others. Lest there be any doubt, however, my goal here is not to probe voyeuristically at "the usual adolescent preoccupation with sex;" indeed, though that opportunity will present itself, my interest is purely onomastic. I have discovered that, like their nonsexual counterparts, the dirty nicknames of Greek organizations reflect the social reality of their users. Thus I will proceed unapologetically, trusting that even the most modest reader will find the strength to endure.

My initial discovery of the dirty Greek nicknames was serendipitous: I happened to be discussing my research with a student in my office one day when, in response to my telling her that I was just completing some work on Greek nicknames, she said, "Oh, you mean like *Dick Grabber*?" I was nonplussed—but, after regaining my composure, I told the student that was not at all what I had meant. Then, on questioning her, I learned that yes, she was a Greek; yes, she knew all about the first sort of nicknames, with which I had been preoccupied the previous months; and yes, she also knew about these *other* nicknames—*Dick Grabber*, *Try Me*, *Cock Destroyer*, *Game o' Phi* and the like.

Thus began the present research. To be consistent, I focused on the same organizations that I had used in the initial study: 57 general men's fraternities, all active members of the National Interfraternity Conference; 26 general women's sororities, all active members of the National Panhellenic Conference;² and eight historically African American fraternities and sororities, all members of the National Panhellenic Council. These societies exclude all inactive, honorary, professional, recognition, and strictly service groups, but they are the social organizations found on most college and university campuses in the United States, and they are the same groups with which I established rather close ties in my initial research.

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This last point is especially important in dealing with Greek organizations. As I pointed out in my first essay (175), only 37 of the fraternities and sororities that I had targeted for study have chapters at Kansas State University; to gain information regarding the nicknames of the remaining 54, I usually had to query their various national headquarters. Unfortunately, Greeks have received so much negative publicity at the hands of journalists and other writers that the vast majority of representatives at the national level are extremely suspicious of telephone interviewers. As I began the research for the present essay, I therefore felt heartened that I had established the requisite trust between investigator and informants: whereas the first round of collecting information had been extremely difficult, I anticipated the second to be embarrassingly easy.

Only rarely have I been so thoroughly mistaken. As it happens, gleaning information about Greek nicknames is, as they say, one thing; gleaning information about *dirty* Greek nicknames, however, is quite another. I was lied to, ignored, cursed, and hung up on—all, apparently, because some well-intentioned individuals were trying to protect the integrity of their associations and the people who belong to them. Even a large number of my in-person interviews, done with students at Kansas State University, proved unrewarding. The simple truth is that not many Greeks, be they active members or alumni, are willing to discuss the dirty nicknames of their organizations; indeed, I am now certain that many of these people, perhaps even a majority, are unaware that such nicknames exist. And while I do not mean to belabor my difficulties in collecting data, the reasons for the nescience on the part of some Greeks and the intense secretiveness of others, I learned later, become obvious when one knows what the nicknames are and what functions they serve within the Greek subculture. But these are points to which I shall return later.

Ultimately, I located eleven willing informants at Kansas State University—all former students with whom I had developed an excellent rapport—and, through their knowledge as well as their ties to students at various other colleges and universities throughout the United States, I was able to collect the data necessary to complete this study. I must stress, however, that the dirty nicknames discussed here may not be the only ones that exist, for the specific results of the linguistic inventiveness that underlies the nicknames may vary from one region (or even

one school) to another.³ On the other hand, I am certain that the general linguistic patterns illustrated in the formation of the nicknames, as well as the psycho-social reason the nicknames exist, are consistent throughout the United States.⁴

The Creation of the Dirty Nicknames

Ideally, here I would like to explore both when and how dirty Greek nicknames were formed. The first part of this question, however, must remain a mystery. Some of my informants' parents have confirmed that they, as Greeks, used the dirty nicknames in the mid-1950s, but the evidence for usage prior to that is far too thin to be reliable.⁵ Regarding *how* these nicknames were formed, however, I can offer answers on three distinctly different levels. First, the Greeks who coined them were obviously bound by their own informal set of rules governing such facets of the nicknames as which organizations should have them, whether any theme should link all the nicknames together, and so forth. Second, of course the creation of the nicknames was constrained by the formal structure of the English language: only certain morphological, phonological, and orthographic combinations were possible, and the ones that were actually chosen can be arranged into a simple taxonomy. Finally, working within whatever other constraints were present, the makers of dirty Greek nicknames possessed an undeniable linguistic wit. Each of these levels of creativity deserves closer attention.

The dirty nicknames listed in Appendix 1 share certain nonlinguistic features, and, as was true of the nonsexual nicknames I studied previously, these features can be described by a set of rules.⁶ Consider the following:

Rule 1: every sorority and fraternity shall have one and only one dirty nickname.

In my earlier article, I noted that eleven of the 91 Greek organizations studied do not have nonsexual nicknames (176, 194). Such is not the case, however, regarding their dirty counterparts, almost certainly because the latter are always sexual (see rule 4) and are probably bestowed by other fraternities and sororities (see n. 6).⁷ I also noted that nine of the organizations have *multiple* nonsexual nicknames (175); that is, such groups are defined by two or even three different nicknames (for example, Alpha Xi Delta is known as *Alpha Xi*, *A Z D*, and *Fuzzy*); but

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again, this is not true of the dirty nicknames, which are limited to one per sorority or fraternity.

Rule 2: whenever possible, the etymon of each dirty nickname shall be its nonsexual counterpart.

A comparison of each dirty nickname with its corresponding full name and nonsexual analog (see Appendix 1) will show that in all but eleven cases, the etyma of the dirty nicknames are not the original names of the Greek organizations, but their nonsexual nicknames; the eleven exceptions are those fraternities and sororities that have no nonsexual nicknames. *All Go Down*, for example, is based not on *Alpha Gamma Delta* but on *A G D*; similarly, *Try Some* is based not on *Sigma Sigma Sigma* but on *Tri-sig*; and *Smegma K* is based not on *Sigma Kappa* but on *Sigma K*. The sorority *Phi Mu*, however, which has no nonsexual nickname, yields *Fuck Me*, just as the fraternity *Farmhouse* yields *Fuckhouse*.⁸

Rule 3: every dirty nickname shall be either sexually explicit or sexually suggestive.

Again, this rule reflects the typical adolescent preoccupation with sex and sexuality (note that many dirty words have nothing whatsoever to do with sex, but that all the dirty nicknames do). And because some readers may doubt that the meaning of at least a few of those nicknames actually does center on sex—*All Done and Gone*, *Better*, *Capper*, and *Lamb Killer*, for example, or even *Try Some*, *Fine Mood*, or *Say O*—I will make it clear that my informants were unanimous in believing that all such nicknames should be understood only as sexually suggestive. (I will return to this point below).

Rule 4: no two Greek organizations shall have the same dirty nickname.

In my original essay on Greek nicknames, I noted that such duplication was always avoided “if referential confusion is likely to result” (180); that is, identical nonsexual nicknames occur only if differences of gender and/or race can be used to distinguish the various memberships from one another. With dirty nicknames, however, no such onomastic overlapping exists. This is not to claim that the same words are not used repeatedly in different nicknames (they are), but no two complete nicknames are identical. Thus, for example, *dick* occurs in five nick-

names, *ass* in six and *smeg* or *smegma* in 13, but each of those nicknames is unique because of differences in other of their elements.

Rules such as these, though useful at one level in helping us to understand how the dirty nicknames were created, have their limitations; while they reveal some of the motives and concerns of the Greek subculture, they do nothing to help us understand the linguistic patterns that result from the process of creation. As noted earlier, such patterns are constrained by the usual orthographic, phonological, and morphological rules of English, but within those general boundaries it is useful to recognize which specific mechanisms have applied, and with what relative frequency. We thereby establish a taxonomy of dirty Greek nickname formation (an analogous discussion for nonsexual Greek nicknames occurs in the original essay [175-78]; cf. also Leslie and Skipper 1990).⁹

The second rule above establishes that the etymon of each dirty Greek nickname is, if possible, its nonsexual analog (if no nonsexual analog exists, then the etymon will be the full Greek name). With this point of origin thus established, the answers to three simple questions will define the general categories that serve as the core of our taxonomy, a summary of which appears in appendix 2:

1. Has the etymon been alphabetistically expanded?
2. If not, has the etymon been phonologically reinterpreted?
3. If not, has the etymon been orthographically reinterpreted?

The answer to one of these questions must be yes, since rule 1 above notes that every sorority and fraternity has a dirty nickname.

Twenty-two of the nicknames I have collected—nearly one-quarter of the total—are alphabetistic expansions. Twelve of these involve simple expansion, such as when *A G D* becomes *All Go Down*, *A O Pi* yields *Ass O' Pi*, *A T O* produces *All Tuckered Out*, and *S D T* generates *So Damn Tight*. For six of the nicknames, however, this expansion is accompanied by a reordering of elements; thus *A E Phi* turns into *Eat A Phi*, *S T G* begets *Good To Suck*, and *A Chi R* underlies *Chi's Require Ass*. And four others demand the addition of function words: *A D G*, *A K A*, *A S T*, and *Z T A* become, respectively, *All Done and Gone*, *All Kinds of Ass*, *ASs and Tits*, and *Z (The) Tits and Ass*.¹⁰

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Two-thirds of Greeks' dirty nicknames have been formed through phonological reinterpretation—by phonemic substitution, addition, or deletion (or some combination of these processes), whereby the sounds of the clean nickname yielded to the sounds of the dirty one.¹¹ When *Figi* produces *Feely*, for example, phonemic substitution has occurred, as it has also in *Say O* (from *Chi O*), *Try Some* (from *Tri-sig*), and five other creations. But phonemic addition is responsible for *Cap an Alpha* (from *Kappa Alpha*), *D (The) Fine E* (from *D Phi E*), *Piker* (from *Pike*), *Try Our Angle* (from *Triangle*), and *Fine Mood* (from *Phi Mu*), and four other dirty nicknames. And a combination of phonemic substitution and addition underlie the formation of 32 nicknames (more than occur in any other rubric), including *All Fuck Chi* (from *Alpha Chi*), *They ate 'em* (from *Theta*), *Smegma K* (from *Sigma K*), *Smeg Pi* (from *Sig Pi*), and *InEpt* (from *Tau Ep*). Phonemic deletion alone is not responsible for the creation of any dirty Greek nicknames, but it and substitution in combination have produced eight, including *Iffy* (from *Chi Phi*), *Eat a Phi* (from *Theta Phi*), and *Oh My* (from *Omega*). Similarly, deletion and addition have worked together to form *Pub (/pub/) Fuzz* (from *Fuzzy*) and *Fine ASs* (from *Phi Sig*); and deletion, addition, and substitution are together responsible for *Lamb Killer* (from *Lambda Chi*).

Finally, orthographic reinterpretation—a change in spelling with no corresponding change in pronunciation—underlies 10 of the dirty nicknames. In one instance, that reinterpretation is accompanied by a reordering of elements; thus *Psi U* becomes *You Sigh*. In the other nine nicknames, however, no such reordering has occurred, and we therefore have the following homophonic pairs: *Chi Psi/Chi Sigh*, *Delta Psi/Delta Sigh*, *Kappa(s)¹²/Cap Us*, *Kappa Delt/Cap a Delt*, *Kappa Sig/Cap a Sig*, *Phi Psi/Phi Sigh*, *Phi Kap/Phi Cap*, *Pi Kap/Pi Cap*, and *Zeta Psi/Zeta (or Zetas) Sigh*.

The patterns that I have discussed thus far—both those grounded in the Greek subculture and those existing within more formal linguistic parameters—describe only a part of the creation process. Also present is the kind of witty wordplay that one might expect of educated adolescents. Each of the orthographic reinterpretations, for example, has resulted in paranomasia at its best. Similarly, four dirty nicknames—*Z (The) BesT*, *Z (The) Tits and Ass*, *D (The) Fine E*, and *Ze (They) Eata*—must be spoken with stereotypical European pronunciations for their full meanings to be conveyed (the creators of the last of these three

must be forgiven for mixing French and Italian accents). And the kind of vocalic inversion that occurs between the first two elements as *A D Pi* transforms into *Eat A Pi* (that is, as [edipaɪ] becomes [idepaɪ]) bespeaks true wit. Granted, some of the nicknames seem a bit crude (as when *Sammy*, *D Z*, and *Farmhouse* yield, respectively, *Suck Me*, *Diseased*, and *Fuckhouse*), others are nearly impossible to understand (*Say O* and *Piker*, for example, and perhaps also *PeaL It*, *Oh My*, and especially *Lamb Killer*¹³), and, as noted earlier, some of the dirty words are repeated again and again. But the overall wordplay involved here can only be described as cleverly inventive.

The Psycho-social Function of the Dirty Nicknames

The basic question underlying this section is, how and by whom are dirty Greek nicknames used? The easiest answers, of course, are also the most obvious. First, they are used by Greeks—and exclusively so, we may suppose, since all the non-Greeks I have queried seem oblivious to the nicknames' existence.¹⁴ Second, that usage evidently has nothing to do with verbal economy, since the dirty nicknames are usually as long or longer than their nonsexual counterparts (see Appendix 1, and cf. Barrett 1978). And finally, since the nicknames are slang derivations of other nicknames (themselves slang derivations of the full, formal Greek names), they must function at some level, as all slang does, to bind their users together and separate them from non-users of the nicknames (cf. Skipper 186). Such observations, however, tell only a part of the story.

In my previous essay, I noted that when a student joins a Greek organization, a dual process of socialization begins—into the Greek subculture, and especially into the specific Greek-letter society he or she joined (183-84; cf. Murray 1992b). This process can be likened to traveling to the center of a spiral-shaped path: newcomers to the Greek subculture and to any organization within it begin on the outer edges; students with progressively greater amounts of seniority, who have been socialized further both as Greeks and as members of their respective fraternities and sororities, are proportionately closer to the center, which represents full socialization. Now, however, I must modify that earlier analysis, for while it was correct as far as it went, it did not go far enough: Greek socialization does not have two components, but at least three and perhaps more.

The "birds of a feather" theory of socialization does not stop at the level of the individual sorority or fraternity. It is true that students who become Greeks are socialized into the Greek subculture; it is also true

that those same students are socialized into one or another Greek organization (what modern sociology calls a "primary group;" see, for example, Popenoe 1974, 160-66). But within each of those organizations, subgroups ("secondary groups") develop according to students' specific interests—sports, for example, or scholarship, or even particular fields of study such as education and engineering; and socialization occurs into one or more of these subgroups as well. In other words, just as Greeks feel a common bond that separates them from non-Greeks, and the members of any particular fraternity or sorority feel a common bond that separates them from the members of other Greek societies, so also do the athletes (or scholars, or education majors, etc.) of any given society feel a common bond that separates them from the people in that society with other interests (cf. Bernard 1968-69; Dorian 1990; and Holland 1990).

These observations were first made by some of my Greek informants, who also pointed out that one of the subgroups in every fraternity and sorority consists of students who are a bit "wilder" than their Greek brothers and sisters. It is the people in this secondary group, especially, who take the more social aspects of Greek membership to extremes. Interestingly, and perhaps not incidentally, these are the very people who seem to be the most frequent users of dirty Greek nicknames.

I use the phrase *seem to be* advisedly, for the evidence on which I base this observation comes secondhand, from several of my informants. After discussing with these students the nature of sororities' and fraternities' secondary groups, I then asked each if she or he could pinpoint whether the dirty Greek nicknames were used more often by any particular members of these groups. Of eleven responses, five were noncommittal, and were followed by promises to "listen around the [sorority or fraternity] house;"¹⁵ the other six, however, independently confirmed that the dirty nicknames are largely the bailiwick of those Greeks described above as "wilder" than most other Greeks. I submit that such usage serves as part of the binding force—and, *ipso facto*, as part of the socialization process—that holds this particular secondary group together and helps keep its members distinct from the members of other Greek subgroups (cf. Lerman 1967, who showed that a strong correlation exists between shared adolescent social values and shared adolescent argot).¹⁶

A new question arises, however. If it is true that the method by which Greeks are socialized into their secondary groups is similar to

how they are socialized into the Greek subculture and into individual fraternities and sororities, and if it is true, as I have argued, that dirty nickname usage plays a role in that socialization, then does the pattern of dirty nickname usage within the “wilder” secondary groups mirror that process of socialization? In other words, does the frequency of dirty nickname usage for any given Greek increase in proportion to the length of time he or she has been a member of the “wilder” subgroup? In my original article, I discussed precisely this phenomenon with regard to nonsexual Greek nicknames, and was able to show that their usage *does* generally parallel a Greek’s longevity in his or her organization (see Murray 1992a, 183-84, and especially table 2). Anything less than a similar correlation here would seem to weaken the theoretical underpinnings of all that I have argued to this point.

Two of my eleven informants, themselves members of the “wilder” secondary groups in their respective Greek-letter societies, agreed to collect data relevant to the question I have just posed. Jennifer and Ryan each tape-recorded at least 20 hours of free-conversation between the members of their subgroups, then assisted me in tallying how many dirty nicknames each of the participants used per hour. All of each subgroup’s members were present during all the conversations, and everyone was fully aware of the tape recorder’s presence (though none except Jennifer and Michael knew its exact purpose). The averaged results of Jennifer’s and Ryan’s research are shown in table 1, where we see a clear correlation between a Greek’s frequency of dirty nickname usage and the length of time he or she has been a member of a “wilder” secondary group. The numbers in table 1 are not statistically significant (there are more than five times in 100 that they could have occurred purely by chance), but they do suggest that dirty Greek nicknames play a vital role in the socialization of members into “wilder” secondary groups.¹⁷

Table 1. Dirty Nickname Usage as a Function of Membership Longevity

Length of Membership in Organization	Dirty Greek Nicknames Used per Hour
Less than One Year	3.1
One Year to Two Years	4.8
Two to Three Years	6.2
Three to Four Years	8.9

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The tape recordings that produced these data yielded one other interesting fact: it is exceedingly rare for a Greek to refer to his or her own organization or co-members by their dirty nickname; in fact, more than 95 percent of all dirty nickname usages refer to *other* fraternities or sororities or their members. Nor is this lack of self-referentiality merely a function of conversational discourse: Greeks *do* talk about their own organizations, and they *do* talk about their Greek co-members in those organizations, but they consistently use either the groups' full names, their nonsexual nicknames, or some other means of reference (such as pronouns or, when referring to people, given names or surnames). This is an interesting fact, but what does it mean? Do speakers *consciously* avoid their own fraternity's or sorority's dirty nickname? If so, why? Is the avoidance related to the unflattering nature of many of the nicknames?¹⁸ Neither I nor my informants can offer intelligent answers to these questions.¹⁹

Conclusion

I have intended this essay to be a companion to my earlier article on Greek nicknames—"the rest of the story," as it were. We now know, for example, that Greek-letter organizations in the United States have not one nickname but two; and that while one is simply a shortened form of the fuller name, the other is a sexually-embellished version of the first. We also know that both nicknames are rule-governed creations, and that the linguistic characteristics of those creations can be easily classified by using a relatively small number of formal categories. Finally, we know that each nickname plays an important psycho-social role in the Greek socialization process, symbolizing a kind of shared intimacy among its users: the nonsexual nicknames help to bind the entire subculture together, as well as the members of individual sororities and fraternities; the dirty nicknames, on the other hand, help to bind together just one particular secondary group.

Yet the kinds of questions raised at the end of the previous section suggest that "the rest of the story" is too strong a phrase; that what I have actually provided is *part* of the rest of the story. Other questions remain unanswered. Are there still other kinds of Greek nicknames, for example, besides the two I have discussed? If so, what are they, how are they formed, and what functions do they serve? Who created the dirty (or even the nonsexual) nicknames, and when, and have those nicknames

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changed as they have passed from one generation to the next? Are the dirty nicknames as homogeneous throughout the United States as my inquiries have indicated? The explanations offered earlier (see n. 14) notwithstanding, why are non-Greeks oblivious to the dirty nicknames' existence? Do the dirty nicknames serve purposes not related to socialization? And on and on the questions continue.

As with my earlier essay, then, the territory I have charted here should be viewed as one section of an intriguing onomastic puzzle, other sections of which have yet to be put into place (and, perchance, even determined). In any case, I trust that I have shown some of the importance associated with Greek nicknames and their study, and perhaps also provided some starting points for future research. The nicknames comprise an interesting aspect of American culture, and bear watching in the future.

Appendix 1

Fraternities in National Interfraternity Conference (n = 57)

Name	Nickname	Dirty Nickname
Acacia	[none]	Ass Kisser
Alpha Chi Rho	A Chi R	Chi's Require Ass
Alpha Delta Gamma	A D G	All Done and Gone
Alpha Delta Phi	A D/Alpha Delt	All Dick
Alpha Epsilon Pi	A E Pi	Eat A Pi
Alpha Gamma Rho	A G R	Ass Go 'Round
Alpha Gamma Sigma	Ag Sig/Alpha Sig	Ag Smeg
Alpha Kappa Lambda	A K L	A K's Lick
Alpha Phi Delta	Alpha Phi	All for Phi
Alpha Sigma Phi	Alpha Sigma	Alpha Smegma
Alpha Tau Omega	A T O	All Tuckered Out
Beta Sigma Psi	Beta Sig	Beta Smeg
Beta Theta Pi	Beta	Better
Chi Phi	[none]	Iffy
Chi Psi	[none]	Chi Sigh
Delta Chi	D Chi	Chi Dick
Delta Kappa Epsilon	Delta Kappa	Delta Capper
Delta Phi	[none]	Dick High
Delta Psi	[none]	Delta Sigh
Delta Sigma Phi	Delta Sig	Delta Smeg

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Delta Tau Delta	Delt	Dick
Delta Upsilon	D U	Dicks United
Farmhouse	[none]	Fuckhouse
Kappa Alpha Order	Kappa Order	Kap-it Order
Kappa Alpha Society	Kappa Alpha	Kap an Alpha
Kappa Delta Rho	K D R/Kappa Delt	Kap a Delt
Kappa Sigma	Kappa Sig	Kap a Sig
Lambda Chi Alpha	Lambda Chi	Lamb Killer
Phi Delta Theta	Phi Delt	Fine Dick
Phi Gamma Delta	Figi	Feely
Phi Kappa Psi	Phi Psi	Phi Sigh
Phi Kappa Sigma	Phi Sig	Phi Smeg
Phi Kappa Tau	Phi Tau	Fine Tau
Phi Kappa Theta	Phi Kap	Phi Cap
Phi Lambda Chi	Phi Chi	Fucky
Phi Mu Delta	Phi Mu D	Fine Mood
Phi Sigma Kappa	Phi Kap	Fine Cap
Pi Kappa Alpha	Pike	Piker
Pi Kappa Phi	Pi Kap	Pi Cap
Pi Lambda Phi	Pi L	Peal It
Psi Upsilon	Psi U	You Sigh
Sigma Alpha Epsilon	S A E	Sit And Eat
Sigma Alpha Mu	Sammy	Suck Me
Sigma Chi	Sig Chi	Smeg Chi
Sigma Nu	Sig Nu	Smeg Nu
Sigma Phi Epsilon	Sig Ep	Smeg Ep
Sigma Phi Society	Sigma Phi	Smegma Phi
Sigma Pi	Sig Pi	Smeg Pi
Sigma Tau Gamma	S T G	Good To Suck
Tau Epsilon Phi	Tau Ep	InEpt
Tau Kappa Epsilon	Teke	Meek
Theta Chi	[none]	Eat a Chi
Theta Delta Chi	Theta Delta	Eat a Delta
Theta Xi	[none]	Eat a Xi
Triangle	[none]	Try Our Angle
Zeta Beta Tau	Z B T	Z BesT
Zeta Psi	[none]	Zeta(s) Sigh

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Sororities in National Panhellenic Conference (n = 27)

Alpha Chi Omega	Alpha Chi/A Chi O	All Fuck Chi
Alpha Delta Pi	A D Pi	Eat A Pi
Alpha Epsilon Phi	A E Phi	Eat A Phi
Alpha Gamma Delta	Alpha Gam/A G D	All Go Down
Alpha Omicron Pi	A O Pi	Ass O' Pi
Alpha Phi	A Phi	Phi Ass
Alpha Sigma Alpha	Alpha	All for it
Alpha Sigma Tau	Alpha Sig/A S T	Ass and Tits
Alpha Xi Delta	Fuzzy/Alpha Xi/A Xi D	Pub Fuzz
Chi Omega	Chi O	Say O
Delta Delta Delta	Tri-delt	Try Me
Delta Gamma	D G	Dick Grabber
Delta Phi Epsilon	D Phi E	D Fine E
Delta Zeta	D Z	Diseased
Gamma Phi Beta	Gamma Phi	Game o' Phi
Kappa Alpha Theta	Theta	They Ate 'Em
Kappa Delta	K D	Cock Destroyer
Kappa Kappa Gamma	Kappa	Capper
Phi Mu	[none]	Fuck Me
Phi Sigma Sigma	Phi Sig	Fine Ass
Pi Beta Phi	Pi Phi	Pi Fine
Sigma Delta Tau	S D T	So Damn Tight
Sigma Kappa	Sig Kap/Sigma K	Smegma K
Sigma Lambda Gamma	Sigma Gam	Smegma Gam
Sigma Sigma Sigma	Tri-sig	Try Some
Theta Phi Alpha	Theta Phi	Eat a Phi
Zeta Tau Alpha	Zeta/Z T A	Z Tits And Ass

Fraternities/Sororities in National Pan-Hellenic Council (n = 8)

Alpha Kappa Alpha	A K A	All Kinds of Ass
Alpha Phi Alpha	Alpha	All Free
Delta Sigma Theta	Delta	Dildo
Kappa Alpha Psi	Kappa(s)	Cap Us
Omega Psi Phi	Omega	Oh My
Phi Beta Sigma	Sigma	Smegma
Sigma Gamma Rho	Sigma	Smeg Me
Zeta Phi Beta	Zeta	Ze Eata

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Appendix 2

Nicknames of Greek-letter Organizations, by Taxonomic Category (Fraternities on Left; Sororities on Right)

I. Alphabetistic Expansion (22)

A. With no further changes (12)

A D : All Dick

A G R : Ass Go 'Round

A K L : A K's Lick

A T O : All Tuckered Out

D U : Dicks United

S A E : Sit And Eat

Z B T : Z BesT

A G D : All Go Down

A O Pi : Ass O' Pi

D G : Dick Grabber

K D : Cock Destroyer

S D T : So Damn Tight

B. With reordering (6)

A Chi R : Chi's Require Ass

A E Pi : Eat A Pi

D Chi : Chi Dick

S T G : Good To Suck

A E Phi : Eat A Phi

A Phi : Phi Ass

C. With addition of function words (4)

A D G : All Done and Gone

A K A : All Kinds of Ass

A S T : ASs and Tits

Z T A : Z Tits and Ass

II. Phonological Reinterpretation (60)

A. Phoneme Substitution (8)

Figi : Feely

Phi Chi : Fucky

Teke : Meek

A D Pi : Eat A Pi

Chi O : Say O

Delta : Dildo

Gamma Phi : Game o' Phi

Tri-sig : Try Some

B. Phoneme Addition (9)

Kappa Alpha : Cap an Alpha

Phi Tau : Fine Tau

Phi Kap : Fine Cap

Phi Mu : Fine Mood

Pike : Piker

Triangle : Try Our Angle

D Phi E : D Fine E

Pi Phi : Pi Fine

Zeta : Ze Eata

C. Phoneme Substitution and Addition (32)

Acacia : Ass Kisser

Ag Sig : Ag Smeg

Alpha : All Free

Alpha Phi : All for Phi

Alpha Chi : All Fuck Chi

Alpha : All For It

D Z : Diseased

Theta : They Ate 'Em

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Alpha Sigma : Alpha Smegma
Beta Sig : Beta Smeg
Beta : Better
Delta Kappa : Delta Capper
Delta Sig : Delta Smeg
Delt : Dick
Farmhouse : Fuckhouse
Kappa Order : Kap-it Order
Phi Delt : Fine Dick
Phi Sig : Phi Smeg
Pi L : PeaL It
Sammy : Suck Me
Sig Chi : Smeg Chi
Sig Nu : Smeg Nu
Sig Ep : Smeg Ep
Sigma : Smegma
Sigma Phi : Smegma Phi
Sig Pi : Smeg Pi
Tau Ep : InEpt

D. Phoneme Substitution and Deletion (8)

Chi Phi : Iffy
Delta Phi : Dick High
Omega : Oh My
Theta Chi : Eat a Chi
Theta Delta : Eat a Delta
Theta Xi : Eat a Xi

E. Phoneme Addition and Deletion (2)

F. Phoneme Substitution, Addition and Deletion (1)

Lambda Chi : Lamb Killer

III. Orthographic Reinterpretation (10)

A. With no Further Changes (9)

Chi Psi : Chi Sigh
Delta Psi : Delta Sigh
Kappa(s) : Cap Us
Kappa Delt : Cap a Delt
Kappa Sig : Cap a Sig

B. With Reordering (1)

Psi U : You Sigh

Kappa : Capper
Phi Mu : Fuck Me
Sigma : Smeg Me
Sigma K : Smegma K
Sigma Gam : Smegma Gam

Tri-delt : Try Me
Theta Phi : Eat a Phi

Fuzzy : Pub Fuzz
Phi Sig : Fine ASs

Phi Psi : Phi Sigh
Phi Kap : Phi Cap
Pi Kap : Pi Cap
Zeta Psi : Zeta Sigh

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Notes

1. Since this essay is patterned on the previous one, I will need to mention it often. To avoid the many formal citations that would result, I will simply refer to it as “the first essay,” “the former essay,” “the previous essay” or “the original essay.”

2. In my original essay, Sigma Lambda Gamma was incorrectly included in the list of sororities that are members of the National Panhellenic Conference. I regret the error.

3. My informants and I cross-checked our information between schools whenever possible and found no multiple dirty nicknames. Because a significant minority of those nicknames could *not* be checked, however, I must admit the possibility of variation.

4. This comment does not bespeak an unbridled optimism, but rather confidence in the scientific principle that for any given system, individual variation usually occurs only within certain established boundaries. I do not know every word in the English language, for example, but I *do* know that every word conforms to the same basic set of phonological and morphological patterns (if a word begins with three consecutive consonant sounds, the first of those sounds will always be /s/; all so-called regular verbs will form the past tense by adding *-ed*; and so forth). Similarly, though I have not personally met every human being, I can be reasonably certain that most share certain physical and psychological traits. This is not to claim that anomalies can never occur (in words, people, dirty Greek nicknames, or any other system)—of course they can—but to suggest that such anomalies are relatively few and far between.

5. The father of one informant “thought he remembered” that his father had, on one occasion, “obliquely referred to using dirty Greek nicknames when he was in school” in the early 1930s, but I cannot substantiate that memory.

6. As in my original study, I have reduced to rule only those observations that are absolutely true based on the available evidence; other observations that may *seem* to be true, but which cannot be verified, have been omitted. I am tempted to conclude, for example, that Greek organizations did not choose their own dirty nicknames, but that other fraternities and sororities bestowed them as prankish gifts. (This would explain the rather unflattering nature of *Iffy*, *Meek*, *All Free* and several of the other nicknames in my corpus.) But since the origins of these nicknames are lost to history, all the evidence for such a conclusion is purely circumstantial.

7. That all sororities have dirty nicknames may appear to contradict the longstanding observation (see, for example, Jay 1992, among many others) that women use dirty words less frequently than men. Such is not necessarily the case, however. If my observation that these nicknames were coined by Greeks other than those to whom the nicknames apply (see n. 6) is true, then at least theoretically, all the nicknames could have been created by males (or, for that matter, females; but

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in any case, as I have already explained, the identities of those creators are lost to history).

8. I remarked in my first essay (187, n. 3) that one of the members of the *Names* Editorial Board happened to remember a few nonsexual nicknames different from those that I had collected. I then admitted that my collection might indeed be incomplete, and also allowed as how some of the nicknames could well have changed over the years. It is interesting to note, however, that all of the dirty nicknames in my corpus are traceable to the nonsexual nicknames I recorded in that first essay.

9. As I noted in my first essay (187, n. 5), the categories that follow are not the only ones that I could have used; indeed, very different taxonomies could be established based on speech acts (some of the dirty nicknames are commands, others are invitations, others are proclamations, and so forth), syntax (various kinds of phrases vs. various kinds of clauses), or even levels of dirtiness (obscenity, profanity, vulgarity, *gaucherie*, and the like). That being the case, no special significance should be attached to the divisions I have used, which represent only one interesting method of subdividing my corpus. Moreover, readers familiar with my first essay may notice that although some of the taxonomic divisions used there resemble some of those used in the present study, the parallels are not complete: I have expanded some of the subdivisions, collapsed others, and discarded still others entirely.

10. Here and elsewhere, I have taken the liberty of interpreting the elements of some of the nicknames by adding parenthetical explanations. Readers should be aware, however, that these emendations, while understood, are not actually spoken or written by Greeks using the nicknames.

11. By “phonemic substitution” I mean the replacement of one phoneme by one other. If one phoneme has been replaced by two others, a combination of phonemic substitution and phonemic addition has occurred; and, conversely, if two phonemes have been replaced by one other, a combination of phonemic substitution and phonemic deletion has occurred. Of course, the classification of the nicknames in one or another category is, to some extent, subjective, based on the dialect spoken by the classifier. When *Alpha Phi* becomes *All for Phi*, for example, most people would claim that a combination of substitution (when the initial vowels of *alpha* are replaced by the vowels of *all* and *for*) and addition (when the *r* is added) has occurred; but, of course, someone who does not pronounce the *r* in *for* would say that only substitution is at work. There is no good solution to this problem; I can only note that my own dialect is *r*-ful.

12. Here the parenthetical *s* indicates that for the homophonic pair to exist, *Kappa* must be understood as a plural (which it would be if applied to more than one Greek in that organization).

13. For those readers who may be curious, *Say O* is a reference to fellatio; *Piker* ‘one who does things in a small way’, is an oblique reference to penis size; *PeaL It* captures the similarity in shape between an erect, uncircumcised penis and

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a banana; *Oh My* (with falling intonation on each word) is an example of what a woman might say at the unveiling of a very small penis; and the *lamb of Lamb Killer* refers to a female virgin, with the entire nickname meaning 'one who gladly sacrifices female virgins'.

14. I do not know why non-Greeks are oblivious to the dirty nicknames. One answer, as we shall see, is that the nicknames serve a particular purpose within the Greek subculture—a purpose so specific that even many Greeks are unaware the nicknames exist. A second reason, more obviously, may be that the nicknames are sexual in nature, and thus reflect an intimacy that Greeks simply do not wish to share with non-Greeks. But all of this is merely speculation.

15. Of these five, three eventually returned with observations substantially duplicating those of the other six informants; the other two remained noncommittal.

16. Earlier in this essay I voiced the belief that some Greeks, perhaps even a majority, are unaware that their organizations have dirty nicknames. Here I wish to note that this observation is in keeping with the preceding discussion of secondary groups: anything that helps give such groups their identity would, by definition, be unknown (or not as well known) among other secondary groups. By the way, the notion that many Greeks are unaware of the dirty nicknames originated with my informants, and while I did not believe it initially, I have since verified its truth independently. I cannot say precisely what percentage of Greeks fall into the "unaware" category, but it is substantial.

17. The dirty nicknames were used more frequently by the males than by the females (see n. 7), but not significantly so; and, in any case, the quality of speech analyzed was not large enough to draw any demographic conclusions.

18. The answer to this question cannot be resolved by referring to Jennifer's and Ryan's organizations, since the nickname of each is unflattering.

19. One could hypothesize that the lack of self-referentiality is linked directly to their being used primarily as tools of derogation, but in fact such is not the case. Indeed, Jennifer's and Ryan's recordings make it clear that the nicknames are used no more often to derogate than they are to flatter or to refer to a Greek organization or its members in neutral terms.

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