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THE NAME ΔΡΙ(Λ)ΟΜΥΣ (OCLAUD. II.293.10)


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In the latest issue of *Chronique d’Egypte* Roger Bagnall, while discussing two linguistic problems which arise in recently published ostraca from Mons Claudianus, refers in passing to a hitherto unattested name which occurs in a letter from Nilion to Petearoeris. The name is Δριλλόμος: λέγει δὲ Δριλλόμος ὡτὶ κτλ. (*OClaud.* II.293.10). Tempted to assume that this name represented an anagrammatism of the better known Δριμύλος, Bagnall rightly changed his mind when he learned of the appearance of the genitive Δριλλόμουτος on an as yet unpublished ostracon from the same provenance. There is more to be said about this bizarre name or nickname. 

Δριλλόμος or Δριλλόμους belongs to a sometimes misunderstood category of compound which was convincingly elucidated in a masterly discussion by the late and greatly lamented Olivier Masson. It consists of a combination of the names of two animals, in this case δρ›λλο! and μύ! (as we shall see, each of these is attested as an anthroponym in its own right). Masson’s examples of this type of compound, to which the most eminent grammarian who has discussed the matter in recent years is unwilling to grant the title ‘dvandva’ are Ἁρκολόν, Ἁρκόλυκο/Ἀρκολόκικα, and Λυκόλέον. Pointing out that Latte was mistaken in denying that such a compound ever played a part in the formation of Greek proper names, Masson goes on to draw attention to similar nominal compounds in the lexicon. Some of the substantives combining animal names are almost as exotic as Δρι(λ)λόμος, for example χναλάπτης and ἵππαλεκτρων.

While the meaning of the second half of Δρι(λ)λόμος is in no doubt once one realises that we are confronted by a compound consisting of two names taken from the natural world, the first part re-

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3 Bagnall describes the name as ‘otherwise inexplicable’. Δριμύλος is also attested outside the Ptolemaic papyri. See *LGPN* IIA for an Athenian example and IIIA for one which is probably from Messene.
4 See Bagnall, 343 n. 7.
9 See Dunbar on Arist. *Birds* 1294–95: this is a nickname applied to a known individual: ‘the nickname more probably applies to his character, as a combination of loud, aggressive Goose (χάης) and cunning Fox (ἄλκις . . .) than to his appearance’. Another apparent example of such a nickname is doubted by Masson (173 n. 14 = 619 n. 14: ‘L’existence de γρυπ-άλας “griffon-renard” (LSJ) chez Hippocrate *Epid.* V [i. e. Hipp. *Epid.* 6.8.29], 354 Littre, pour un surnom à Thasos, est incertaine, car il existe aussi le composé γρυπ-άλας “renard qui fait son trou”, attesté chez Phrynichos (Com. *Adesp.* 1170 [PCG 665]), cf. Taillardart, *Images* § 414’). I am inclined to accept the paradosis, although I would admit that it is not easy to explain the connotations of γρυπ-.
10 Aesch. fr. 134; see Radt ad loc. 
11 For Μύκ (Μυκόκος) as a proper name see F. Bechtel, *Die einstämmigen männlichen Personennamen des Griechischen, die aus Spitznamen hervorgegangen sind*, Göttingen, 1898, 62–63, the entries in Pauly s. v. Mys (two of these are names of slaves of Epicurus), L. Robert, Hellenica VIII, 33–34 and id. *Etudes Déliennes (BCH* suppl. 1, Athens, 1973), 439.

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* The Name Δρι(λ)λόμος (*OClaud.* II.293.10)
quires elucidation since it contains a word that is still relatively little-known, δρίλος. It is certain that
δρίλος means ‘worm’. Once more we are in debt to Masson who provided a totally convincing account
of its meaning and of its deployment as an anthroponym.\textsuperscript{12} The new supplement to LSJ which
marshals most of the evidence regarding δρίλος is too cautious here. As often elsewhere it adds a
‘perh.’ where none is needed (cf. the entries on ἄνονέμα 2 and φίκτης). That Βρουκός\textsuperscript{13} is the son of
Δρίλος in SEG xxxii.281 establishes the matter beyond doubt. δρίλος also has a transferred meaning,
‘penis’ or ‘phallus’.\textsuperscript{14} An identical inscription on two mosaics of the imperial period from Amphissae
(SEG ii.35 and SEG xxvii. 149a) runs χολή, μή τ(δή) | δρίλον | βο(ή)θει παπά.\textsuperscript{15} It is clear from the
illustration on the mosaic\textsuperscript{16} that the speaker, a pygmy, is anxious about his penis, which is being
threatened by a crane. In its discussion of this usage the supplement to LSJ is less than cautious in
assigning the meaning ‘limp penis’ to τὸ δρίλον in the obscure (and obscene) sub-literary epigram \textit{SH}
975 (= Page, \textit{Further Greek Epigrams} CXLVII), following Lloyd-Jones and Parsons.\textsuperscript{17} It seems
questionable whether a word related to δρίλος could hear this meaning, when one considers that \textit{uerpus}
is glossed by δρίλος\textsuperscript{18} and that the obvious implication of an epigram of Lucilius (AP 11.197) is that
δρίλος is the equivalent of ψαλός (interestingly in view of the attention drawn by Bagnall to the name
Δρίμωλος, this epigram contains word-play involving the contrast between the words δριμύς and
δρίλος). Clearly δρίλος could mean both ‘penis with prepuce retracted’ and, \textit{pars pro toto}, ‘man with
prepuce retracted’ (and presumably by extension ‘lustful’, ‘extremely active sexually’).

It is not immediately obvious why anyone should have been given an appellation so bizarre as
δρι(λ)λόμετος (it is often the case with anthroponyms which are derived from nouns denoting animals
that we are in the dark as to the motivation behind the name\textsuperscript{19}). In discussing Δρίλος Masson points out
that in his native language people are spoken of as ‘wriggling like a worm’.\textsuperscript{20} Μήκος to us might suggest
diffidence, cowardice, or insignificance,\textsuperscript{21} but its primary connotation in Greek seems to be one of sexu-
al voracity\textsuperscript{22} and since, as has been mentioned above, might tentatively suggest that each part of the compound has a sexual meaning and that the nickname is
applied to an extremely lustful person or to someone whose acquaintances deemed to be such.

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\textsuperscript{12} O. Masson, Onomastique et lexique, Noms d’hommes et termes grecs pour “ver”, “sauterelle”, “cigale”, etc., \textit{MH} 43
(1986), 250–57 = \textit{Onomastica Graeca Selecta}, 485–92. δρίλος almost certainly figures in the second half of the Greek name
for crocodile (on this see most recently J. Knobloch, \textit{Gymnasium} 99 (1992), 518 and D. Arnould, \textit{RPh} 70 (1996), 20 n. 1).

and other Invertebrates in Classical Antiquity}, Exeter, 1988, 65: neither of these works mentions the anthroponym.


\textsuperscript{15} Mass (note 12), 254 n. 30 = 489 n. 30 assumes that δρίλος is masculine although it is possible that, as in the Clito-
rius-epigram (see note 17), we are confronted with a neuter.

\textsuperscript{16} See Mass (note 6), 254 = 489.

\textsuperscript{17} I cannot pretend that I understand this curious piece. For recent attempts to interpret it see E. Livrea, \textit{La morte di

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Uerpus} δρίλος καὶ ὁ μέσος δόκτυλος τῆς χειρός (CGL II.206, 49) and δρίλος \textit{uerpus} (uerpus Haupt) (II.280, 62).


\textsuperscript{20} L’image évoqué peut être celle du français familier “se tortiller comme un ver”. Masson (note 12), 255–490. In addi-
tion to French and German proper names based on words for worm he notes similarly coined Greek names, Ρομείς, ῥάμινος, θεφόνιος, Τηρήδων.

\textsuperscript{21} For the last cf. Hor., \textit{AP} 139.

\textsuperscript{22} See Aelian, \textit{NA} 12.10 where Cratinus fr. 58 is quoted and Philemon fr. 65 which contains the proverbial μῆς λευκός.