

OVID, *METAMORPHOSES* 9. 466

Byblis, still unaware of the true nature of her feelings, can no longer bring herself to call Caunus 'brother':

iam dominum appellat, iam nomina sanguinis odit,
Byblida iam mauult quam se uocet ille sororem.
spes tamen obscenas animo demittere non est
ausa suo uigilans.

(*Met.* 9. 466–9)

Bömer, following Haupt-Ehwald, on *dominum*: 'ἐρωτικῶς, "Geliebter", "Ehegatte"'. So too the dictionaries, which include this passage as an example of *dominus* as the equivalent of elegiac *domina* (cf. *TLL* 5. 1915. 39, *OLD* s.v. 4b).¹ But Byblis has not yet recognized what she really hopes for from her brother (468–9) and therefore cannot address him with a term of endearment. In fact, *dominus* is a common and colourless form of address,² which might properly be used in polite speech with members of one's family,³ even a brother (cf. Sen. *Epist.* 104. 1). Byblis unconsciously prefers it to his name, which is how she herself prefers to be called, because of its potential amorous suggestions; but that is not its primary meaning here. The word-play is an as yet unnoticed part of Ovid's subtle characterization of Byblis' struggle with her emotions.

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¹ Among his examples Bömer includes *Met.* 7. 725, where in fact *dominus* refers to the *paterfamilias*.

² Sen. *Epist.* 3. 1 'si proprio illo uerbo quasi publico usus es et sic illum amicum uocasti... quomodo obuio, si nomen non succurrit, "dominos" salutamus'. Cf. *TLL* 5. 1925. 3 ff.

³ *TLL* 5. 1926. 36–82.

ANTHOLOGIA PALATINA, 9. 686

Ἦνορέης δλετῆρα ὑπερφιάλου Βαβυλῶνος
καὶ σέλας ἀκτεάνοιο Δίκης Βασίλειον ὕπαρχον,
ξεῖνε, νόῳ σκίρτησον ἰδὼν ἐφύπερθε πυλάων.
Εὐνομίης ποτὶ χώρον ἀριστογένεθλον ὁδεύεις,
βάρβαρον οὐ τρομέεις, οὐκ ἄρρενας ἄρρενοκοίτας.
Ὅπλα Λάκων, σὺ δὲ τεῖχος ἔχεις βασιλείον ἄγαλμα.

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Lemma B, in textu: εἰς τὴν πύλιν τὴν ἀνατολικὴν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης.

'Rejoice in your heart, O stranger, as you behold above the gates the Prefect Basil, him who destroyed the might of arrogant Babylon and who shines with the splendour of incorruptible Justice. You are proceeding to a place that bears a rich harvest of law and order, where you need fear neither barbarian nor men that share the bed of other males, The Laconian had his arms for protection; you have this statue of Basil.'

There is a long history of muddle in the interpretation of this epigram. The older editors up to and including those of the Budé edition (vol. viii [1974], 264) connected it with the emperor Basil I (867–86), who did defeat the Arabs but at no time bore the title of prefect. This difficulty was noticed by S. Kyriakides, who in 1936 argued that the personage in question was the patrician and parakoimomenos Basil, the natural son of Romanus I Lecapenus, who defeated the Arabs at Samosata in 958, thus relegating the epigram to the second half of the 10th century.¹ For this he was rightly castigated by F. Dölger, who dated the text to the period between the 4th and the 6th century,² while L. Robert placed it in the context of other Late Antique

¹ *Studi biz. e neoellenici*, 5 (1939), 504–5; id. *Ἐπιστ. ἐπετ. Φιλ. Σχολῆς Πανεπ. Θεσσαλονίκης*, 3 (1937–9), 267–79.

² *Byz. Zeitschr.*, 40 (1940), 180–3.