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THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE POET AUSONIUS

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In the past, several Roman historical and literary persons appearing in literary (as contrasted to epigraphical) sources have had their names reproduced erroneously by early modern and later scholars. Titus Labienus, for instance, known especially as having been the lieutenant of Caesar during the Gallic war, was for a long time, perhaps until the 19th century, commonly known as "Titus Attius Labienus", apparently because *Labienus* was not considered suitable as the family name of a Roman¹ and also because it was thought that a Roman should have had three names. One wonders, therefore, what seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars thought about such persons as *Marcus Antonius*, *Sextus Pompeius*, *Aulus Vitellius*, etc., for whom a "third" name, i.e. a cognomen, is nowhere attested and who, of course, did not have one.

Sextus Propertius, the Augustan poet, was long known as "Sextus Aurelius Propertius",² the reason for this having been that in some manuscripts

* Thanks are due to two anonymous referees.

¹ There is an interesting discussion of this in M. De Chambort's "Dissertation sur Titus Labienus", in *Mémoires de littérature tirés des registres de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, Tome 10 (1736) 98–110 (available on the Internet through Google Books). De Chambort observes on p. 100 that Sigonius had established the fact that "les noms de toutes les familles Romaines estoient terminez en *ius* & non en *us*", and accordingly, "Cette réflexion a fait, que Paul Manuce ... a découvert que *Titus Labienus* se nommoit *Atius*, & qu'il estoit de la Maison *Atia* ou *Attia*, & il l'appelle toujours *Titus Attius Labienus*." On p. 101, De Chambort observes that there was at least one scholar who was of another opinion: "Ces raisons n'avoient pas empêché Fulvius Ursinus ... de les négliger, & de soutenir que notre Titus Labienus estoit sorti d'une famille ... qu'il nomme *Labiena*"; but "cette erreur a esté corrigée par Charles Patin dans la nouvelle édition qu'il a donnée du Recueil de Fulvius Ursinus".

² Thus, e.g., in *Corpus omnium veterum poetarum latinorum cum eorundem italica versione. Tomus vigesimus secundus, Continet Sexti Aurelii Propertii carmina* (Mediolani in Regia Curia 1743);

the poet is referred to as "Propertius Aurelius Nauta" (one wonders what had happened to *Nauta* and why the order of the names *Propertius* and *Aurelius* was changed).³

However, in serious scholarship, these persons have been referred to for a long time by their correct names T. Labienus and Sex. Propertius,⁴ and perhaps the day will be not too far off when even Gaius Maecenas, son of Lucius (Maecenas) and from the tribe *Pomptina*, will be called *C. Maecenas* rather than "*C. Cilnius Maecenas*" even by those scholars (or museum officials)⁵ who still refuse to see Tacitus' *Cilnius Maecenas*, contradicted by all other sources, as a mistake of sorts.⁶

But there still remains Ausonius, perhaps best known as a poet, but also someone who had a successful career within the imperial administration and consul in AD 379. The final part of the poet's name is always given as *Magnus Ausonius*, but there appears to be no agreement on what preceded, as his first

Sextus Aurelius Propertius, *Werke übersetzt von J. H. Voss* (Braunschweig 1830); Sextus Aurelius Propertius, *Elegien im Versmaß der Urschrift übersetzt ... von Dr. W.A.B. Herzberg* (Stuttgart 1838); A. Simonetti, *La città natale di Sesto Aur. Properzio* (Spoleto 1908; referred to by Schanz & Hosius, see n. 3). Cf. below n. 4.

³ For "Propertius Aurelius Nauta" see, e.g., M. Schanz & C. Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* II (1935) 194.

⁴ "Sextus Aurelius Propertius" still has a life of its own on the Internet, of course, and a Google search produces many results. Note, e.g., "Sextus Aurelius Propertius (deutsch Properz; * ca. 48 v. Chr.; † 15 v. Chr.)", in the beginning of the article on Propertius in the German Wikipedia.

⁵ I am here thinking of the archaeological museum of Arezzo (i.e., Arretium, where Maecenas came from), which calls itself *Museo Archeologico Nazionale Gaio Cilnio Mecenate* (<http://www.museostataliarezzo.it/museo-archeologico-gaio-cilnio>).

⁶ For the correct name of Maecenas, *C. Maecenas L. f. Pom(p)tina*, see *CIL* VI 21771 = *ILS* 7848; and his freedmen all have the item *C. Maecenas* (and not "*C. Cilnius*") preceding their cognomina (e.g., *C. Maecenas Maecenatis ipsius l(i)bertus Lysias*, *CIL* X 2687). That *Maecenas* was Augustus' equestrian friend's family name was already established in the 19th century (see *PIR*¹ M 30). For an explanation of *Cilnius* (the manuscript in fact reads "*Cillinium*") in Tacitus 6, 11, see, e.g., *PIR*² M 37, where it is suggested that Maecenas may have been a descendant of the Cilnii from Arretium through his mother. The nomenclature "*Cilnius Maecenas*" has now for no clear reason been revived by R. Duncan-Jones, *Power and Privilege in Roman Society* (2016) 99 with n. 66; according to Duncan-Jones, the man in *ILS* 7848 is someone else. However, the fact, not commented upon by Duncan-Jones, that the freedmen of Augustus' friend have the nomen *Maecenas* in any case settles the question.

name is variably referred to as either *Decimus* or *Decimius*. Naturally, one may say that the exact form of the name is not necessarily of any great interest, and that is surely why some scholars dismiss the whole question by saying that the name was either *Decimus* or *Decimius*.⁷ There is, moreover, the possibility, favoured by many scholars, of using just the abbreviation *D.*, which could be said to be the abbreviation either of *Decimus* or of *Decimius* (but which is, of course, in normal usage the abbreviation only of *Decimus*, not of *Decimius*). Calling the poet "*D. Magnus Ausonius*" in fact seems a popular solution to the question,⁸ also by those scholars who say that the name may perhaps have been *Decimius* rather than *Decimus*.⁹ But then there are also scholars who spell out the whole name. Unless I am not mistaken, those with a philological background tend to use the form *Decimus* (sometimes implying this form by referring to the poet in the genitive as *Decimi Magni Ausonii*, with the genitive ending in *-ii* applied only to *Ausonius*),¹⁰ whereas historians perhaps more often seem to use the form

⁷ E. g., J. Gruber, *D. Magnus Ausonius, "Mosella"* (2013, 39) introduces the poet as "Decimus (oder Decimius) Magnus Ausonius"; in n. 39 the author admits that Coşkun's book (cf. below) has made Decimius seem more "wahrscheinlich".

⁸ Note, e.g., "D. Magnus Ausonius Burdigalensis" *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae, Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum, ex quibus exempla afferuntur. Editio altera* (MXM) 33.

⁹ E. g. W.-L. Liebermann, in R. Herzog (ed.), *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike V. Die lateinische Literatur von 284 bis 374 n. Chr.* (1989) p. 268 § 554, in the section "D. Magnus Ausonius". In n. 1, it is said that the name should be *Decimius*, not *Decimus*, with a reference to *PLRE* 1, 140, but also to R. P. H. Green, *BICS* 25 (1978) 26 with n. 32 (on p. 27), where, however, Ausonius is said to have been called *Decimus* (p. 26) "[o]r Decimius" (p. 27 n. 32). In the *Neue Pauly* the poet is introduced by the same author as "Ausonius, Decimus Magnus".

¹⁰ For a selection of scholars referring to the poet as *Decimus*, see A. Coşkun, *Die gens Ausoniana an der Macht. Untersuchungen zu Decimius Magnus Ausonius und seiner Familie* (Prosopographica et Genealogica Vol. 8, Oxford 2002) 182f. n. 234 (note that M. Heinzlmann, "Gallische Prosopographie 260–527", in *Francia* 10 (1982) 531–718 – a journal not available to me – is said to reject explicitly on p. 590 the form *Decimius*). Add, e.g., S. Prete, *Decimi Magni Ausonii Burdigalensis opera* (BT 1978), with the nominative *Decimus* used on p. LXV; R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language* (1988) 247; R. P. H. Green, *Decimi Magni Ausonii opera* (OCT 1999); N. Rücker, *Ausonius an Paulinus von Nola: Textgeschichte und literarische Form der Briefgedichte 21 und 22 des Decimus Magnus Ausonius* (*Hypomnemata* 190, 2012); P. Dräger, in his three volumes of *Decimus Magnus Ausonius. Sämtliche Werke* (2011, 2012, 2015); E. Cazzuffi, *Decimi Magni Ausonii Ludus septem sapientum. Introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento* (*Spudasmata* 160, 2014, in the title); J. Hernández Lobato, *Gnomon* 88 (2016) 124 (in a review of Cazzuffi).

Decimius.¹¹ However, even some historians, whom one would expect to have a firmer grasp of Roman names than pure philologists, have favoured *Decimus*.¹² Seeing that even Coşkun (above n. 10), a historian who uses the form *Decimius* in the title of his book and elsewhere, refers to the form *Decimius* as being the correct one only "in aller Wahrscheinlichkeit" (above n. 11), I think that the question of Ausonius' first name needs to be settled once and for all and this I what I aim to do in what follows.

Let us start with a look at the evidence for *Decimus* on the one hand, and for *Decimius* on the other. The evidence for *Decimus*, such as it is, consists of the full name of Ausonius appearing in some manuscripts at the beginning of the *Mosella* and at that of the *Caesares* and in some other places,¹³ this full name being in each case rendered in the genitive as *Decimi Magni Ausonii*. The evidence for *Decimius* is on the other hand based on the fact that in the nomenclature of Ausonius' son the name is rendered as *Decimius* and moreover on the fact that (as I hope to show in this paper) *Decimius Magnus Ausonius* is the only plausible form of the name.

¹¹ See Coşkun (above n. 10), *ibid.* (a more correct reference to D. Nellen's book would be p. 57–9 no. 10). Add, e.g., J. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court (A.D. 364–425)* (1975) 431 (in the index); J. Fitz, *L'administration des provinces pannoniennes sous le Bas-Empire romain* (Collection Latomus 181, 1983) p. 43 (Coşkun mistakenly says that Fitz used the form *Decimus*); T. Schmidt, H-Soz-Kult 21.02.2006. (<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2006-1-118.pdf>), in a review of Coşkun's book. Coşkun himself uses the form *Decimius* but refers (on p. 182) to this form as being the correct one only "in aller Wahrscheinlichkeit". *Decimius* is (of course) the only form used in the *PLRE* entry (vol. I p. 140f. Ausonius no. 7).

¹² Thus, e.g., of those mentioned by Coşkun (above n. 10), we have O. Seeck in his edition of Symmachus (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiqui* 6,1, 1883) p. LXXVI (in the stemma Ausoniorum) and K. F. Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (148) 150. Add (surprisingly) L. Pietri & M. Heijmans, *Prosopographie de la Gaule Chrétienne (314–614)*, vol. I (2013) 287.

¹³ For details, see the edition of S. Prete p. 170 (*Mosella*) and 202 (*Caesares*), the manuscripts in these cases being the S. Gallensis 899 and the Bruxellensis 5370. *Decimi* is also found at the beginning of the *Versus Paschales* in the Harleianus 2613 (see Prete p. 82) and at that of the *Genethliacus ad Ausonium nepotem* in the Parisinus Latinus 8500 (see Prete p. 70), which is notable as this manuscript at other places has *Decii* (see Prete p. 82, 193, 201). *Decii* or *Decius* are also found in some other manuscripts registered by Prete on p. 82 and 913. For the form of Ausonius' first name cf. also, e.g., the edition of C. (= K.) Schenkl, *D. Magni Ausonii opuscula* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiqui* 5, 2, 1883) p. V.

The full name of Ausonius' son was *Decimius Hilarianus Hesperius*, but he is sometimes referred to simply as *Decimius Hesperius* (see *PLRE I Hesperius* 2). He held several high offices, of which the proconsulate of Africa in AD 376–377 is of interest in this context, as he is mentioned in several inscriptions set up during the proconsulate. In many of these, the names are in the genitive, as the names of fourth-century African governors tend to be, as they are often mentioned in formulations of the type *proconsulatu* + genitive, but there are at least two inscriptions in which the names are in the nominative or in the dative and in which the proconsul's first name, or at least the end of it, has been preserved:

- *CIL VIII 17519 = ILAG. I 257* (Calama): [*Deci*]m*ius Hesperius*;
- *IRT 526* (Lepcis Magna) *Decimio Esperio*.¹⁴

One author in favour of "*Decimus*" says that the son's name is "[t]he only evidence for '*Decimius*'",¹⁵ but to me this evidence seems pretty decisive. It does not seem a good idea to assume that the father of for example a *Marcus* (say, *Marcus Philippus*, the stepfather of the future emperor Augustus) could in fact have been not a *Marcus* but a *Marcus* (*Marcus Philippus senior* thus becoming *Marcus Philippus*), or that the correct form of the name of the father of a man called *Tullius* could have been *Tullus* (as in the nomenclature of the king).

As for the genitive *Decimi Magni Ausonii* in the manuscripts, this can in my view hardly be regarded as evidence at all, for it is absolutely normal to find both genitives in *-ii* and genitives in *-i* applied to names and words ending in the nominative in *-ius* in medieval manuscripts.¹⁶ But if there is a significance in *Decimi* appearing with the ending *-i* and *Ausonii* appearing with ending *-ii*, this can be explained by assuming that the manuscripts reproduce the name in a form going back to late Antiquity. In this period the normal genitive of family

¹⁴ A. Saastamoinen, *The Phraseology of Latin Building Inscriptions in Roman North Africa* (2010) 514 no. 765 cites an inscription from Vaga with the proconsul appearing in the nominative as *Decimius Hilarianus H[esper]rius*. The inscription is there said to be identical with *CIL VIII 14398*, but in this inscription, the proconsul is referred to in the genitive, not in the nominative. Perhaps we are dealing with a misunderstanding here.

¹⁵ Kaster (above n. 10) 247.

¹⁶ I am grateful to my colleague Anneli Luhtala for this information. Coşkun (above n.10) 183 n. 235 also points out that the form of the genitive is not of any significance.

names of the type *Decimius* was *-i*, whereas the normal genitive of *signa* (cf. below) such as *Ausonius* or (as in the case of the son) *Hesperius* seems to have been preferably *-ii*. That is why we observe the name of the proconsul mentioned above being rendered in the genitive as *Decimi Hilariani Hesperii* in the inscription from Thugga, *CIL VIII 26568* = M. Khanoussi & L. Maurin (eds.), *Dougga. Fragments d'histoire. Choix d'inscriptions latines éditées, traduites et commentées* (2000) no. 43. Similarly, the *signa* of two fourth-century senatorial Turcii appear at the beginning of their inscriptions as *Asterii* (genitive), whereas the father and grandfather of these men are referred to in the genitive in the same inscriptions as *L. Turci Aproniani* and *L. Turci Secundi*.¹⁷ The *signa* of fourth- and fifth-century senators in H. Dessau's *ILS* are almost invariably given the genitive ending *-ii*.¹⁸ That *signa* were thought of as needing to be furnished with the genitive ending *-ii* rather than with the ending *-i* is also very clearly illustrated by the fact that especially in Lepcis Magna, but also elsewhere, even names ending not in *-ius* but *-us* could be furnished with the genitive ending *-ii* if put at the beginning of an inscription in the position of *signa*, as, e.g., in *IRT 475, Flavianii; ... Nicomacho Flaviano* etc.¹⁹

I referred above to the names *Ausonius* and *Hesperius* as *signa* which is in fact not entirely correct, as we are, to be more precise, dealing with names which in the origin were *signa* but were not necessarily thought of as such in the fourth century. Both *Ausonius* – if we accept that his first name was *Decimius* – and his son have, in addition to many other fourth-century persons (cf. below), a name which consists of (in this order) a nomen ending in *-ius*, a cognomen ending in *-us*, and a third name ending (again) in *-ius*: *Decimius Magnus Ausonius, Decimius Hilarianus Hesperius*. I have tried to describe the development of this

¹⁷ *ILS* 1229. 1230 = *CIL VI 1768* (the same phenomenon in the inscription of the same senator 1769). 1772.

¹⁸ *ILS* 1224a, 1224b, 1224c (in the case of this particular senator note also *AE* 1977, 198), 1225, 1238, 1240, 1256, 1257, 126, 1281, 1282 (the instances with the ending *-i* are 1226, 1239). Also, e.g., in *CIL VI 1675. 1706. 1778*.

¹⁹ Also, e.g., *IRT* 562. 563 (*Nili ... Nilo*), 565 (*Nepotianii ... Nepotiano*), 571, 574, 575. Elsewhere: *CIL VI 1722* (Rome, *Honoratianii ... Honoratiano*); *AE* 1968, 115 (Puteoli, *Aemilianii ... Aemiliano*). Cf. on this phenomenon A. Chastagnol, in A. Donati (ed.), *La terza età dell'epigrafia* (1988) 40; A. Cameron, *ZPE* 108 (1995) 256f.

type of nomenclature in an earlier study;²⁰ in order to illustrate Ausonius' names it will suffice to offer a summary of my observations made there.

From the mid-second century AD onwards one observes the appearance of additional names known as *signa*, that is names usually ending in *-ius* not identical with any of the "official" names of a person and used, it appears, in a different way. From the correspondence of Fronto, writing in the middle of the second century, one can see that at least in this period *signa* – if a person had one – could be used in addressing friends or colleagues.²¹ A little later, in about the Severan period, *signa* also start to appear in inscriptions, thus clearly gaining a more prominent role as a part of the nomenclature of a person. The most common way of indicating a *signum* in an inscription in which a person is mentioned in the dative is to put it in the genitive²² at the beginning of an inscription as, e.g., in *CIL VI 1507* cf. *AE 1998, 149* (Rome), *Aconti; / L. Ranio Optato c(larissimo) v(iro), co(n)s(uli) etc.*²³

This habit of adding the *signum*, but presenting it detached from the other names becomes more common during the third century, and in the fourth century a significant number of the inscriptions in honour of senators begin with the *signum*.²⁴ But in the very same period one observes *signa* being integrated into

²⁰ O. Salomies, "Réflexions sur le développement de l'onomastique de l'aristocratie romaine du Bas-Empire", in C. Badel & C. Settapani (eds.), *Les Stratégies familiales dans l'Antiquité tardive, Actes du Colloque des 5–7 févr. 2009 de l'USR 710 du CNRS* (Paris 2012) 8ff. For a comprehensive study of *signa* (referred to as "club names" on p. 43), *supernomina* and other names of this type, see I. Kajanto, *Supernomina: A Study in Latin Epigraphy* (1966).

²¹ See Fronto p. 188 v.d.H., where Fronto starts a letter to Cornelius Repentinus with *Cornelio Repentino Fronto salutem*, but goes on to address the man as *frater Contuccius (fecisti, frater Contucci etc.)*; in another letter (p. 174 v.d.H.), Claudius Iulianus is addressed as *mi Naucelli carissime*. For a letter of the same period attested epigraphically, see *CIL VI 32398a = ILS 8380* (of AD 155), which starts with *Velius Fidus Iubentio Celso collegae suo salutem* but where Fidus, a pontifex, goes on to address his colleague Celsus as *Desideri frater*. We thus have instances of three *signa*: *Contuccius* (Repentinus), *Naucellius* (Iulianus) and *Desiderius* (Celsus).

²² In some cases one could also think of a vocative, but the fourth-century instances of *signa* ending in *-ii* (above n. 18) and other evidence (cf. Kajanto [above n. 20] 66f.) indicate that normally the genitive is meant at least in inscriptions honouring senators and equestrians.

²³ In *PIR*² R 24, it is suggested that this man could be attributed to the time of Severus or of Caracalla.

²⁴ Cf., e.g., the senatorial inscriptions collected in H. Dessau's *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (above n. 18).

the "normal" nomenclature and thus being presented as part of a person's regular nomenclature in the same case as the other names. One can observe this evolution in the case of the two Betitii Perpetui, father and son, senators in the time of Constantine (*PLRE* I Perpetuus 1 and 2). A bilingual inscription from Rome, set up by the Sicilian βουλαί and people, in honour of the father, begins as follows:

Arzygii; ... Βετίτιο[v] Περπέτουον τὸν λαμπρότατον πάτρωνα κτλ.
(*CIL* VI 31961 = *ILS* 8843 = *IGUR*, 60).

From the wording we have to conclude that we are dealing with a man called Betitius Perpetuus who also had the *signum* *Arzygius*, here rendered in the genitive. But an inscription in honour of this man's son presents this man's name in the following form:

Betitio Perpetuo Arzygio v(iro) c(larissimo) etc. (*CIL* VI 1702 = 31904 = *ILS* 1251); it thus appears that the father's *signum* has now been integrated into the son's nomenclature, having become a second cognomen.

The same phenomenon is illustrated by those cases in which one observes the *signum* being treated sometimes as a *signum* and sometimes as a cognomen, depending on the source, within the nomenclature of the same man. For some instances, note that Ceionius Iulianus (*PLRE* I Iulianus 26) is as pro-consul of Africa in c. 330 addressed as *Kamenii; consularis familiae viro adque a parentibus patrono Ceionio Iuliano* etc. in *CIL* VIII 25525, where *Kamenius* is explicitly identified as a *signum*, but referred to as *Ceionius Iulianus Kamenius* as the urban prefect in 333 by the *Chronographus anni 354* (*MGH* AA IX p. 68). Note also that Q. Flavius Maesius Egnatius Lollianus (*PLRE* I Lollianus 5), consul in 355, is as urban prefect in 342 called *Fl. Lollianus Mavortius* in the same chronicle (*ibid.*), whereas the name *Mavortius* is in all inscriptions of the same man placed in the genitive as a detached *signum* in front of the other names.²⁵ A man known only from epigraphical sources (and already mentioned above), L. Turcius Secundus (*PLRE* I Secundus 6), *corrector* of Flaminia and Picenum in 340/350, is once addressed as *Asterii; L. Turcio Secundo c(larissimo) v(iro)* (*CIL* VI 1772 = *ILS* 1230), but in other inscriptions he is called (*L.*) *Turcius Secundus Asterius*.²⁶ The senator and poet Rufius Festus Avienius (*PLRE* I Festus 12) is called thus in the manuscripts, but an inscription from Bulla Regia from

²⁵ *ILS*, 1224a (*Mavortii; Q. Flavio Maesio Egnatio Lolliano c(larissimo) v(iro) etc.*), 1224b, 1224c, 1225 (some of the names are omitted here), *AE*, 1977, 198-199.

²⁶ *CIL* XI 6218 = *ILS* 706; *CIL* XIV 3582 (= *ILS* 729), 3583; *CIL* VI 1773; 31118.

the time of this man's (not precisely datable) proconsulship of Africa renders his names as follows: *Abienii; ... Postumio Rufio Festo* (*AE* 2002, 1676).

But the most common type of nomenclature in the fourth century is surely that in which a name which must have originally come into existence as a *signum* has already been fully integrated in the complete nomenclature as a second cognomen. For some instances, note, e.g., men such as Clodius Hermogenianus Olybrius consul in 379 and Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius consul in 395 (*PLRE* I Olybrius 3 and 2).²⁷ This type of nomenclature is also attested for some literary men, e.g., Latinius Pacatus Drepanius (*PLRE* I Drepanius).²⁸ Furthermore, it must be stressed that names of exactly this type are attested for a number of persons in the vicinity of Ausonius himself; there is Ausonius' maternal uncle Aemilius Magnus Arborius (*PLRE* I Arborius 4; Coşkun [above n. 10] 128-30; Ausonius' first cognomen seems to have been borrowed from this relative), Ausonius' son, already mentioned above, Decimius Hilarianus Hesperius (*PLRE* I Hesperius 2); and Ausonius' father-in-law, Attusius Lucanus Talisius (*PLRE* I Talisius 2).

These examples show on the one hand that names of the type *Decimius Magnus Ausonius* were common precisely in the time of Ausonius and, on the other, how this type had developed. If we assume that Ausonius' first name, i.e. his nomen, was *Decimius*, everything thus falls into place.

On the other hand, a name such as *Decimus Magnus Ausonius* would be unparalleled in contemporary nomenclature.²⁹

²⁷ For some other instances see my article cited in n. 20 above, p. 20f. Within some nomenclatures, the cognomen in *-ius* is collocated between the nomen and the cognomen ending in *-us*; thus, e.g., in the case of Virius Audentius Aemilianus (*PLRE* I Aemilianus 4) and Vettius Agorius Praetextatus (*PLRE* I Praetextatus 1); cf. art. cit. 21.

²⁸ But this man, too, has had to face the misfortune of being sometimes called not *Latinius* but *Latinus*; note, e.g., C. E. V. Nixon, in Id. & B. Saylor Rogers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors. The Panegyrici Latini* (1994) 437, "Latinus (or Latinius) Pacatus Drepanius", cf. n. 9, "The genitive 'Latini' in the manuscript title would seem to admit either"; also C. E. V. Nixon, *Pacatus. Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius* (1987) 3 and n. 1. For "Latinus" see also, e.g., J. Delmulle, *BMC* 2015.12.22.

²⁹ Abbreviated names of Republican patricians and nobles of the type *Publius Lentulus Sura* (= *Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura*) and *Marcus Crassus Frugi* (= *Marcus Licinius Crassus Frugi*) can obviously not be adduced to illustrate **Decimus Magnus Ausonius* in the fourth century.

But if Ausonius had the nomen *Decimius*, why would his father, *praefectus praetorio* of Illyricum in 377, have been called Iulius Ausonius (*PLRE* I Ausonius 5)? Although this question does not affect the establishment of the form of Ausonius' own nomen, I would like to point out that this fact – namely father and son having different nomina – is connected with a marginalisation of sorts of the nomen in Late Antiquity. This manifests itself especially in the scenario, often attested, that children were given nomina which were not identical with those of their fathers and which, then, must have come from other relatives. To mention some examples, the children of Sex. (Claudius) Petronius Probus, consul in 371 (*PLRE* I Probus 5) and himself the son and grandson of Petronii (*CIL* V 3344 = *ILS* 1266), were not Petronii but Anicii and had thus received the nomen of their mother, Probus' wife Anicia Faltonia Proba; and Petronius Probus himself is most remarkably called *Anicianae* (and not *Petronianae*) *domus culmen* in *CIL* VI 1753 = *ILS* 1267. The son of Q. Aurelius Symmachus, the author and consul in 391 (*PLRE* I Symmachus 4), himself the son of L. Aurelius Avianius Symmachus (*PLRE* I 3), was called Q. Fabius Memmius Symmachus (*PLRE* II Symmachus 10), and his brothers may have been not Aurelii but Avianii (*PLRE* I p. 869). As for Ausonius' own family, his brother Avitianus' nomen is not known, but his sisters were called Iulia Dryadia (*PLRE* I Dryadia 3) and Aemilia Melania (*PLRE* I Melania 3); the former had received her father's nomen, the latter her mother Aemilia Aeonias' nomen. Ausonius' father had himself the nomen *Iulius*, but his brother was called Cl(audius) Contem(p)tus (*PLRE* I Contemptus [sic]). This father's parents and grandparents are not known, but it would seem plausible to say that there must have been a Decimius or a Decimia among his ancestors.

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