

Ausonius, *Par. praef. uers.* 15-18 and Martial VI 28.10*

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In the first section of this paper, the interpretations of Ausonius' passage by Green (1991) and Lolli (1997) are subjected to criticism; the traditional view on *praeter iustum* is reinforced, and further linguistic and poetic aspects of this expression are explored. In the second section, it is investigated how alternative approaches to Ausonius' locus, such as that of Green or Barth's attempted emendation of *iustum* > *nostrum* (1624), are consequential to the comparison of *Par. praef. uers.* 18 with Martial's VI 28.10 as printed by all editors (*qui fles talia, nil fleas uiator*); it is then argued that the traditional text and interpretation of Ausonius' line and a revised text of Martial (either *qui fles, talia nil fleas, uiator*, as punctuated by Salanitro, or *qui fles, tale nihil fleas, uiator*, as I have suggested elsewhere) are mutually consistent and provide philological support for each other (§§ 2-3).

Key words: Ausonius; Martial; textual criticism; funerary poetry; «*quid pro quo* motif»; «normal» and untimely deaths; punctuation.

En la primera sección de este trabajo se someten a crítica las interpretaciones del pasaje de Ausonio propuestas por Green (1991) y Lolli (1997) y se refuerza la interpretación tradicional de *praeter iustum*, al tiempo que se analizan otros aspectos de esta expresión. En § 2 se investiga cómo lecturas alternativas del pasaje de Ausonio, como la defendida por Green o la conjetura de Barth a *iustum* (codd.) > *nostrum* (1624), son consecuentes con el cotejo de Mart. VI 28.10, paralelo citado por esos estudiosos según el texto de todas las ediciones antiguas y modernas (*qui fles talia, nil fleas, uiator*). Se razona que el texto e interpretación tradicionales de Ausonio y un texto repuntuado de Marcial (*qui fles, talia nil fleas, uiator*, según propuesta de Salanitro, 1996 / *qui fles, tale nihil fleas uiator*, según propuesta propia) son mutuamente coherentes y se prestan apoyo filológico recíproco (§§ 2-3).

Palabras clave: Ausonio; Marcial; crítica textual; poesía funeraria; «motivo del *quid pro quo*»; muertes 'normales' y muertes prematuras; puntuación.

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1. *Ausonius, Par. praef. uers. 15-18*

at tu, quicumque es, lector, qui fata meorum 15
 dignaris maestis commemorare elegis,
 inconcussa tuae percurras tempora uitae
 et praeter iustum funera nulla fleas¹.

18 *iustum codd.*: nostrum *Barthius*

But you, my reader, whosoe'er you be, who deign to recall in these sad complaints
 the deaths of those I loved, may you pass your span of life without a shock,
 and never have to mourn a death save in the course of nature.
 (transl. Evelyn–White)

There has been some interesting debate about *iustum* in line 18 of Ausonius' poem. And, as I believe, there is still room for a contribution to this matter. The referential meaning of this adjective in its context will be addressed first while discussing previous interpretations; later below in this section, I will briefly deal with morphosyntactic aspects of *praeter iustum*, as well as with possible semantic complexities of the same construction.

Most modern translations (e.g. Pastorino 1971, p. 403: «non dover mai piangere altro che morti normali»; Dräger 2012, p. 93: «...und mögest –außer ein gerechtfertigtes– keine Leichenbegängnisse beweinen!²) reflect the same basic notion as Élie Vinet's gloss (= *praeter funus senile*)³: that is, 'may you

¹ For Ausonius, the edition followed throughout in this paper is Prete 1978.

² Cf. his note on line 1 *iusto funere* (p. 433): «gemeint sind 'normale' Tode (d. h. im Alter [vgl. 9, 1], als Gegensatz zu *ante tempus*, 'vor der Zeit')», and his note on line 18 *praeter iustum*: «ringkompositorische Aufnahme von 1» (p. 436).

³ Vinet 1590, *ad loc.* (this edition has no proper pagination); cf. Gronovius 1637, p. 338 (citing Ausonius' line): «Natura et pietas iniustas se dant, cum pie quis luget iniustum funus, male iudicantibus fatibus»; Bolt 1766, p. 37 (see nn. 9-10, 13 and 25 in this paper); Evelyn-White 1919, p. 59: «and never have to mourn a death save in the course of nature»; Erasmo 2008, p. 186: «may you pass the span of your life unharmed and may you never mourn a death unless it is natural». For other translations, see nn. 16 and 18 in this paper. In their remarks

never have to weep for untimely deaths in your family'. This interpretation of the concept behind *iustum*, which I will here refer to as 'traditional', is also found in M. Lolli's commentary on *Parentalia*, yet not regarding line 18 of the verse preface but rather a previous occurrence of the same adjective at the beginning of the same poem (lines 1-2): *Nomina carorum iam condita funere iusto / fleta prius lacrimis, nunc memorabo modis*; on this passage, Lolli writes: «I decessi che subentrano al momento devoto, ai quali Ausonio riferisce l'espressione *funus iustum*, si contrappongono a quelli avvenuti *ante tempus*» (1997, p. 52); in my opinion, this interpretation is surely correct, although the parallels adduced by Lolli in support of it seem beside the point, as they do not refer to deaths occurring in the due course of nature, i.e. 'timely deaths', but to the funeral tribute legitimately owed to the departed⁴. On the other hand, in his note on the very line under discussion, Lolli 1997, p. 57 comments:

v. 18 *praeter iustum*: scil. *funus*. La chiusa, che riecheggia nel lessico il distico iniziale, augura al lettore (chiamato in causa al v. 15) di no disperarsi di una morte che non sia per lui quella prevista, ma ad atteggiarsi piuttosto come fece Giulio Ausonio nell'imminenza della sua dipartita: *inter maerentes, sed non ego maestus, amicos / dispositis iacui funeris arbitriis* (*Epic.* 59-60).

on this passage, Consolino 1977, p. 110, Gärtner 2006, pp. 88-90 do not concern themselves with the question here discussed.

⁴ Auson., *Par.* XXX 11 *annua ... iusta*; Cic., *Prou.* XLV *casum illum meum funus esse rei publicae, sed funus iustum et indictum*; Lucan., IX 54 *ostenditque rogum non iusti flamma sepulchri; 233-235 perierunt tempora uitae: / mors eat in tutum, iustas sibi nostra senectus / prospiciat flammis*; Stat., *Theb.* IX 564 *iustos dum reddimus ignes*. At any rate, this meaning is compatible with the other (see n. 3); Ausonius may be playing on both; see §1.2. Brief attention should be paid to *Par.* XXX 11 *annua nunc maestis ferimus tibi iusta querellis* (cited by Lolli; see above in this note and n. 22). On account of *ferimus*, it may be wondered whether Ausonius is playing upon an ancient pseudo-etymology of *feralia* as recorded by Ovid at *Fast.* II 569: *hanc, quia iusta ferunt, dixere Feralia lucem* (notice this poet's willingness to ignore the original prosody of *Fēralia* in order to provide a match with *fēro*). While Dolansky 2011, pp. 143-144, n. 68. connects *Par.* XXX 11 with this Ovidian passage, she does not take notice of *ferimus* or of its possible etymological hint in this context; for echoes of Ovid's *Fasti* in the poetry of Ausonius, see Green 1977, pp. 443, 444, 449; for Ausonius' interest in etymological word-play, see Nugent 1990, p. 36; Pappas 2016, p. 33. For Latin and Greek parallels of *iustus* in connection with 'timely, natural deaths', see § 1.2 and n. 9.

Lolli's translation runs along similar lines: «... tu posse percorrere senza turbamento gli attimi della tua esistenza senza dover piangere nessuna morte che non sia per te quella prescritta» (1997, p. 51; see n. 6). In other words: according to this scholar, *praeter iustum* points to the *funus* of the *lector* himself, with the poet wishing him not to expect in his lifetime (*tempora uitae*) any funeral experience beyond that of his own death.

Far from being original, this interpretation (comparison with *Epic.* 59 included: see § 1.1) continues down a path pioneered by R. H. P. Green⁵:

praeter iustum: based on Mart. 6.28.10 *qui fles talia, nil fleas, uiator*, but with extra point. The meaning is not, as generally understood, 'normal deaths' – which might be both numerous and distressing– but the reader's own. The concept of witnessing one's own funeral or death is of course not flippant as it is in Sen. *Apocol.* 12, nor is there a hint of a belief in awareness of this world after death, which is rare in these poems. If the point is pressed, one can mourn or otherwise react to one's own death in anticipation, as A.'s father did (*Epiced.* 59), albeit without sorrow.

In his commentary on Ausonius' oeuvre, P. Dräger has taken particular notice of Green's thesis, though summarily rejecting it as «[n]icht nachvollziehbar»⁶; *pace* Green and Lolli, I concur. Several points can be made in corroboration of Dräger's verdict:

1.1. In regard to *Epic.* 59-60 *inter maerentes, sed non ego maestus, amicos / dispositis iacui funeris arbitriis*, cited by Lolli as well as Green, this alleged parallel may be thought ultimately to militate against the very interpretation it is invoked to validate, namely that *iustum* points to the reader's own death as witnessed by him- / herself. Green seems to acknowledge that the *lector*, as opposed to Ausonius' father, would thus be meant by implication to react «with sorrow» to his / her own death in anticipation. But if anything, Ausonius would have urged the *lector* to act precisely as his own father did –i.e., to not yield to sadness in the face of death, cf. *non ego maestus*–; entreating

⁵ Green 1991, p. 302. Although Lolli 1997, p. 57 does not quote Green in his note on line 18, he acknowledges his general debt to Green's work elsewhere in his commentary on *Parentalia*.

⁶ Dräger 2012, p. 436; Lolli's rendering of *praeter iustum* in line 18 («nessuna morte che non sia per te quella prescritta»), as opposed to his gloss on *iusto funere* in line 1: «I decessi che subentrano al momento devuto»; see above) is assessed by Dräger in no more flattering terms («besonders abschreckend»: p. 433).

him to do exactly the opposite seems beneath the dignity of both the reader and the author himself. Lolli avoids this problem by observing that the *lector* is actually exhorted to behave as Iulius Antonius did «nell' imminenza della sua dipartita». I honestly wonder how this meaning can possibly be attached to the line under discussion if the construction at play is *praeter iustum* (*funus*; which is probably not, cf. § 1.4), meaning the reader's death: *fleas* still expresses an injunction to weep (as it happens, *praeter iustum ... fleas* may indeed be understood simultaneously as an equivalent of *plus iusto ... fleas*, thus expressing an injunction not to weep beyond due measure, but this possibility is not contemplated in Lolli's commentary; see § 1.4).

1.2. In his note on *Par.* IX 1-2, Green writes in regards with *iusto funere*: «this here denotes a natural death after a full life, and not, as usual, burial rites: cf. *Par.*, *praef.* B. I 18». I here give the whole passage including the two following lines for context⁷:

Hactenus ut caros, ita iusto funere fletos
 functa piis cecinit nenia nostra modis.
 nunc dolor atque cruces nec contrectabile fulmen,
 coniugis ereptae mors memoranda mihi.

That the expression in question does carry the meaning ascribed to it by Green is confirmed by the antithesis *hactenus ... iusto funere / nunc ... coniugi ereptae*⁸. However, two nuances may be introduced:

– While it is true that *iustus* frequently denotes funerary tributes (see n. 4), the same adjective and synonymous expressions are employed just as often in references to 'natural deaths after a full life'. This usage reflects a cliché of common thought that also recurs in sepulchral contexts dealing with untimely deaths: namely, that a *mors immatura* subverts the law of life and is therefore inherently unnatural and 'unfair'⁹, whereas a death in due time is

⁷ As noted by Green 1991, p. 313; cf. Evelyn-White 1919, p. 71: «Those who, though dear, were mourned but in the course of nature».

⁸ For Sabina's premature death, cf. *Par.* IX 25 *septenos quater impletura Decembres*.

⁹ Bolt 1766, pp. 36-38 got the point rightly (see next note); among other parallels, he compared Auson., *Epit.* VII, and XXXIV. Cf. Martín Valls 1971, pp. 425-429, lines 1-3 (as in the ensuing examples, I respect the original orthography of this text as printed by their editors) *hordine si iusto placuisset currere fatis, / hic non debuit mori an(norum) XX, / set potius ante pater et mater debuerunt esse sepulti; CLE 1001.3-4 quod quaeritis, id repetitum*

in accordance with the *iustus ordo* of things. As in *Par.* IX 1 *iusto funere* and line 1 of the verse preface (*condita funere iusto*; see above with n. 4), this meaning of the adjective must be present also in the discussed line 18¹⁰; with Green and Holli's interpretation, the latter line would absurdly imply that, aside from one's own death, any other kind of *funus* is *iniustum* (cf. § 1.3).

– It is difficult to see why, in the contexts of *praef. uers.* 1 and IX 1, *iusto funere* may not point, in addition to 'natural deaths', to the funeral offerings and ceremonies justly owed to the departed (see n. 4); as a matter of fact, in *condita funere iusto* the verb in participial form is commonly used in references to burials¹¹. Both ideas seem perfectly compatible in these two

/ apstulit iniustus creditor ante diem; 1060.1-2 *Condidit hic miseri mater duo funera pa[rtus]* / *Ossaque non iustis intulit exequiis*; 2127.5-6 *si semper iusto decurr[eret ordine fatum]*, / *ossa forent matris ia[m tumulata prius]*; *ThL* VII 1, col. 719.35ff.; for the use of *aequum*, *fas* / *par est*, *deceat* or *debeuit*, cf. some of the previous examples and *CLE* 93.2 *nec licitum est misera sorte me ut aequum fuit / meis referre lacrimulam parentibus*; 167 *Quot par parenti fue[r]at facere filius*, / *mors immatura fe[cit] mater faceret filio*; 173 *quod parenti facere debeuit filia*, / *id immature filiae fecit pater*; 176 *Oppia Calasiane mater feci filiae meae*, / *quod aequum fuerat hoc faceret mihi*; 376.3-4 *fas erat ut potius natus pia funera nobis / penderet*; 456.5 *aequius is[te] lapis compecteret ossa paterna*; 473.1 *patribus ablatus inique*; 556.2; 819 *Debeuit hic ante miseros sepelire parentes*; 882.2 *aequius iste lapis patris super ossibus esset*; 1156.1 *Aequius hunc fuerat titulum me ponere matri*; *Cic.*, *Lael.* XV *fuerat aequius, ut prius introieram, sic prius exire de uita*; cf. *SEG* XXX 266.7-8 *εἰ γὰρ ἦν θέμις / ἰσθῆσκον γονῆ]ες, οἱ νέοι δ' ἔθαπτ[ον ἄν; E., Supp.* 174-175 *ἀλλ' ὡς νεκροὺς θάψωσιν, ἄς αὐτὰς ἐχρῆν / κείνων ταφείσας χερσὶν ὠραίων τυχεῖν*; Lier 1903, pp. 457-458; Tolman 1910, pp. 30-32; Lattimore 1962, p. 187: «one of the most common [sc. modes of lamentation for those who died young] is the lament that a parent is forced to bury a child who *should* by rights have buried him» (emphasis mine). Associated with this notion of 'injustice' is the idea that the ἄωρος is deprived of the share of life legitimately apportioned to him by nature: cf. the expressions *suum diem obire*, *sua morte*, used for non-premature or non-violent deaths and see Vrugt-Lentz 1962, p. 68. See further in nn. 10 and 12.

¹⁰ Cf. Bolt 1766, p. 37: «Dein uouet, ut nulla nisi eorum funera, qui euntibus ordine fatis moriuntur, flet; unde iusta dicuntur talia funera. Vide Gronou. ad Stat. V. Silu. III. Cap. 49, p. 337 et seq. et sic Ausonius ipse Carm. IX Parent. *Hactenus ut caros, ita iusto funere fletos, / functa piis cecinit nenia nostra modis*. Iusto funere fletos patrem, matrem, auunculos, aliosque maiores natu». Cf. *Epit.* VII 5 *sed iustius ille superstes*; XXXIV 3-6 (quoted by Bolt 1766, pp. 37-38; see previous note); *Ecl.* IV 1-2 *Ter binos deciesque nouem super exit in annos / iusta senescentum quos implet uita uirorum*.

¹¹ Cf. Auson., *Epit.* V 1; VI 1; XIV 2, etc.; *CLE* 699.2 *tuosq. in hoc loco in pace condidit artus*; 1466.1 *haec est quam coniux condidit atque [pater]*; 1992.4 *quem ipse condidi terra*; see Colafrancesco and Massaro 1986, pp. 144-145; *ThL* IV, cols. 150.84-151.57; *OLD* s.u. 4.

passages, and Ausonius may conceivably be playing on both. On the contrary, a reference to funeral tributes seems out of place in *et praeter iustum, funera nulla fleas*; however, a double entendre of a different sort is perhaps achieved as well by means of the same adjective (see § 1.3).

1.3. Green's understanding that *iustum* refers to the reader's (presumably natural, timely) death seems to be based on *inconcussa percurras tempora uitae*, with the given that encounters with 'regular' deaths are both frequent and distressing in their own right. This explanation results in certain difficulties. First, younger *lectores* of line 18 would thus be expected not to ever have to mourn deaths of elder relatives, e. g. their parents; this is a strange thing to even suggest in a book called *Parentalia*. To press the point further: in order to be able to fulfill the poet's alleged wish, the same readers would be required to die before their parents (cf. n. 34). Since this is one of the defining traits of a *mors immatura*, this interpretation involves, rather shockingly, that the poet would have chosen to call *iustum* an event which, in accordance with the logic and the rhetoric of funerary discourse, would be ultimately *iniustum* (see § 1.2). Again, the fair order of things and the natural span of a lifetime are ideas connoted by the adjective in *praef. uers.* 18; in line 17, *inconcussa ... percurras tempora uitae* underpins the point, as it expresses the poet's hope that readers go through their lives «unshaken» by the cataclysm of a *mors immatura* in their families¹².

1.4. A brief, further word about the grammar and semantics of *praeter iustum* may be in order. The traditional interpretation of this sequence is correct, as far as semantics is concerned, but perhaps not in regard to morphology. As seen above, the adjective is generally understood as pairing

¹² Cf. Evelyn-White's translation (quoted above): «without a shock»; cf. Auson., *Epit.* XXXIV *iam que diu monumenta uacant sitque ista querella / longior et ueniat ordine quisque suo, / nascendi qui lege datus, placidumque per aeuum / condatur, natu qui prior, ille prior* (compare *placidum aeuum* and *inconcussa tempora*; for parallels of *ordine suo, nascendi lege*, see n. 9); Stat., *Silu.* V 1.142 *florebant hilares inconcussique penates* (in an epicedion on the death of Priscilla, the wife of «young» Abascantus: cf. line 10 *laudati iuuenis rarissima coniunx*); for a different interpretation of Ausonius' *inconcussa ... tempora*, see Lolli 1997, p. 56. As reminded above, a *mors immatura* represents a «dislocation of the natural and proper order of life» (Lattimore 1962, p. 187); for the expression *ordine turbato* in connection to this epitaphic theme, see Hernández Pérez 2001, p. 5; cf. n. 9 in this paper.

with elliptical *funus* (cf. line 1 *funere iusto*; *Par.* IX 1 *iusto funere*)¹³. This can hardly be the construction at play here, keeping in mind that the reader is supposed to eventually mourn more than one death of elder relatives and that, accordingly, *praeter iusta* would be expected instead (cf. again Pastorino 1971, p. 403: «non dover mai piangere altro che morti normali»). I believe we are dealing with the singular neuter, nominalized form of the adjective. With *praeter* meaning ‘aside from’, ‘out of line with’ or even ‘against’¹⁴ (sc. ‘what is in accordance with the law of life’), this construction may here have the same referential meaning as hypothetical *praeter iusta funera*, but its more abstract, generic quality perhaps provides a touch of euphemistic obliqueness (it is the mortality of the readers’ relatives that is thereby conceded). This grammatical analysis is preferable for another reason. *Lucr.* IV 1241 *et liquido praeter iustum tenuique uicissim* is the only instance previously recorded of this construction in literary texts; it is explained as a variation on the idiom *plus iusto*: ‘beyond what is right’ (Brown 1987, p. 347), i.e. ‘beyond due measure’. It may well be thought that Ausonius is following Lucretius’ lead¹⁵; in fact, some translators –though very rarely, to my knowledge– understand *praeter iustum* in this mode¹⁶. Nonetheless, just as *iusto funere* in line 1 allows for an amphibological reading –‘fair death’ / ‘funeral tribute’; see n. 4 and § 1.2–, it may be suggested that *et praeter iustum funera nulla fleas* encloses another double entendre: i.e., in addition to the topos that non-premature deaths are ‘fair’ deaths (as in the traditional interpretation), this line may also simultaneously pick up a common epitaphic theme, defined by J. Gómez Pallarès as «el [tópico] de pedir que no se derrame ni una lágrima más de lo imprescindible»¹⁷. One may thus wonder whether the poet

¹³ Cf. Vinet 1590 ad loc: «*praeter funus senile*»; Green 1991, p. 302; Lolli 1997, p. 57 (see further in n. 3); Bolt 1766, p. 17 (see n. 10); Dräger 2012, p. 436.

¹⁴ For *praeter* = *contra* in similar contexts, cf. Plaut. *Bacch.* 418 *praeter aequom ne quid delinquat*; Ter. *Hec.* 226 *praeter aequum atque aetatem meam* (Eugraph. 223 *contra quam iustum esset*); *ThLL* X 2, col. 998.2-22; *OLD* s.u. 3.

¹⁵ Mention of this passage from Lucretius is absent from all commentaries on *Parentalia* known to me. For echoes from Lucretius in the poetry of Ausonius, cf. u.g. *Epigr.* LII 2, LXXVII 1-2 (Kay 2001, p. 20). *Epit.* XI 3; *Ecl.* IV 5; cf. Green 1991, pp. 370, 374, 440-441 (see further on p. 779).

¹⁶ Cf. Peltari 2014, p. 68: «And weep at no funerals beyond what is right»; see n. 18.

¹⁷ Gómez Pallarès 1992, p. 215, and n. 24. Cf. also *CLE* 389.6 [*nec mea plus i*]usto sit mors tibi [*causa doloris*], and contrast 337.4 (an epitaph of a *puer*) at mihi plus misero quam

uelox ingenio, decore felix.
 Bis senis modo messibus peractis
 uix unum puer adplicabat annum.
 Qui fles talia, nil fleas, uiator²¹. 10

10 Qui fles talia, nil *plerique codd. et consensus edd.* Qui fles, talia nil *Salanitro 1996*

Melior's well-known freedman, at whose passing all Rome sorrowed, brief darling of his dear patron, Glaucias lies buried beneath this marble sepulchre beside the Flaminian Way; pure in manners, unblemished in modesty, nimble of wit, fortunate in good looks. The boy was scarce adding a single year to twelve harvests just completed. Passer-by who weep for such a tale, may you have nothing to weep for. (transl. Shackleton Bailey)

As with funerary inscriptions, comparison with this epigram –itself a literary epitaph– is an obvious strategy to follow here as well. Green's succinct observation on this poetic model of Ausonius' line (see above § 1) leaves room for elaboration²², and a literary dependence between the two passages may be argued in favor of. This view is not founded merely on the fact that Ausonius was an assiduous reader of the poet from Bilbilis; furthermore, Ausonius' epigram LXII, an epitaph on a prematurely departed youth called Glaucias, may be decisive evidence that this poet had been profitably exposed to the influence of Martial's VI 28 as well as of VI 29, both dealing with the premature death of a *puer* also called Glaucias²³. While Lolli includes no mention of Martial's

²¹ For Martial, the edition used in this paper is Shackleton Bailey 1990; the translation below is from Shackleton Bailey 1993, p. 20.

²² Perhaps not only in view of the similarity between the sequences *nil fleas* and *funera nulla fleas*, both placed in the clausal positions of their respective poems; as in Martial's epigram, though in a metaphorical sense, the *lector* in Ausonius' passage is a *uiator* too (sc. of life: *percurras tempora uitae*; cf. Lattimore 1962, p. 169; Hernández Pérez 2001, pp. 93-94); for more similarities, see § 2 and 3 in this paper. Before Ausonius, the Latin sequence *annua ... iusta* (*Par.* XXX 11; see n. 4) is recorded only in one of Martial's epitaphs for Erotion (X 61.4 *manibus exiguis annua iusta dato*). For Martial's influence on Ausonius', see u.g. Green 1977, pp. 445, 447; Kay 2001, pp. 19-20.

²³ See Kay 2001, pp. 178-179; cf. Green 1991, p. 400. On VI 29, see Salanitro 1996, pp. 13-15. The death of the *puer* Glaucias was poetically lamented also by Statius (*Silu.* II 1); see Asso 2010.

VI 28.10 in his note on Ausonius' passage, Green is not alone in citing this line as motivation for an alternative response to the question at hand. C. von Barth had preceded him (1624, p. 1298), but his aim was not merely explanatory; this time, Martial was used as backing for a textual emendation of *iustum*, the reading recorded in all manuscripts of Ausonius:

... non plane ἀλόγως *nostrum* hariolatus sum. Vouet enim praeter ista funera Lector nulla uti fleat. Cūm *praeter iustum*, nescio quid iniusti inferat. Licet enim quae ordine mortalitatis non turbato funera flentur 'justa' dici possunt, tamen flenda ea vovere habet aliquid absonum. Et multa praeterea in hoc libro funera flentur, quae iuste ea ratione flentur. Par omnino conjecturae sententia in veteri Epidoti tapho a nobis laudato. Et apud Martialem lib. VI Epigram. xxviii qui fles talia, nil fleas viator.

Despite the vagueness in Barth's objections against *iustum* (*nescio quid iniusti; habet aliquid absonum*), *nostrum* enjoyed the support of J. Fleury (1730, p. 103):

Et praeter iustum] uel plus quam par aequumque est, uel ut Vinetus explicat, 'praeter senile funus'. Sed mihi ualde placet conjectura Barthii qui reponit praeter nostrum, hoc est, nostrorum, ut sit sensus: tu, qui pio cum dolore sensu legis in his Elegis fata meorum, percurras utinam vitam imperturbatam, neque necesse habeas ulla alia funera flere, quam haec meorum parentum, quae nunc legis: quod mire conuenit cum hoc Martialis Epitaphio Glaucae, l. vi, Epig. xxviii, 'Qui fles talia, nil fleas, uiator'²⁴.

On the contrary, this reading was rejected by H. Bolt in a compelling defense of the traditional interpretation²⁵; in most modern editions, Barth's conjecture and Fleury's endorsement of it are deservedly ignored²⁶. However, these

²⁴ Barth's conjecture and argument are quoted by Tollius 1671, p. 109; Valpy 1823, pp. 945-946 (I thank Juan Gil for granting me access to his copies of these books).

²⁵ His tone is sarcastic: «Barth conicit *et praeter nostrum funera nulla fleas*. Sibique hac coniectura placet» (Bolt 1766, p. 36); see nn. 10 and 22.

²⁶ E.g. in those of Schenkl 1883, Prete 1978, Lolli 1997, Green 1999; Combeaud 2010; Dräger 2012; but not in Green 1991, pp. 26 and 302: «Barth's *nostrum* would introduce an unexpected, and weaker, sentiment, not to be justified by the personal reference in the introduction to the *Professores*». In addition to my previous remarks on Ausonius' line, my further argument for the traditional interpretation of the meaning of *iustum* (see below in this

views –beyond their obvious historical interest– are notable as examples of the relevance which Martial's passage has attained in the discussion of Ausonius'; to a certain extent, it may be said that the described philological vicissitudes undergone by *praeter iustum* (including Green's interpretation and, as a development of it, also Lolli's: see § 1) are consequential to comparison with Martial's VI 28.10. As I will attempt to demonstrate, comparing both passages may have further consequences for the discussion of each, albeit in an entirely different direction. For the pursuit of this aim, it will be prerequisite to acknowledge further philological complexities in the matter. As it happens, Martial's line is, in its turn, not exempt from controversy either; to my mind, there are reasons to believe that the text of the final line of VI 28 should not be printed as quoted by Green, Barth or Fleury –or, in fact, as read by all modern editors of Martial. I deal with this issue at due length in a forthcoming contribution; here I will briefly summarize the argument there developed²⁷.

A rendering of the so-called «*quid pro quo* motif» –according to Lattimore's designation²⁸– may be identified in Martial's epitaph for the *puer* Glaucias, regardless of how we choose to place a critical comma in line 10 (*qui fles talia, nil fleas, uiator* / *qui fles, talia nil fleas, uiator*): while in the relative clause the speaker addresses a sympathetic *uiator*, in the main clause he wishes the addressee a blessing in return for his sympathy. Depending on how we choose to punctuate line 10, the blessing invoked upon the *uiator* will differ accordingly. In the text followed by all editors (*qui fles talia, nil fleas, uiator*), the grieving speaker may be thought to wish that compassionate readers be exempt, *stricto sensu*, from all kinds of grief (*nil*): 'passer-by who weep for such a fate (sc. Glaucias' death'), may you have nothing to weep for'²⁹; M. Salanitro's reading (*qui fles, talia nil fleas, uiator*) agrees

section and § 3) may be also understood, obviously, as impugning any editorial attempt to alter this word.

²⁷ López-Cañete, forthcoming; I there address the discussion on the reading *ni fles talia, nil fleas, uiator*, here omitted as irrelevant to our object.

²⁸ Lattimore 1962, pp. 118-126; 232-237; Hernández Pérez 2001, pp. 229-238.

²⁹ Cf. e.g. Colleson 1739, p. 291: «O uiator qui luges casum eiusmodi, nihil lugeas deinceps. Hoc est, o uiator qui mortem huius pueri defles, opto nihil habeas deflendum, id est, felix esto» (see nn. 35); Lemaire 1825, p. 132; cf. Schmooch 1911, p. 15: «Ad mortem grauem expositam clausula additur qua uiator admonetur, ut acerbam sortem defleat, eique *omnia bona optantur*» (my emphasis); Schmooch, *ibid.*: «nil (= nullam calamitatem)»; Grewing 1997, pp. 220-221.

with a more balanced arrangement between the two parties, as it is immunity from *mortes immaturae* that is wished in return for compassion towards a *mors immatura*: ‘passer-by who weep, may you not have to weep at all for anything like this’³⁰. To my mind, both Latin texts are disputable on different accounts³¹. A key to the question is the potential ambivalence of *talis* in this context. The two alternative punctuations exemplify this property of the pronoun: 1) *talia* may refer to Glaucias’ death with an emphasis on its tragic quality, as in the traditional text (= *qui fles tam miserum casum*); 2) *talia* may function as a proper correlative pronoun and refer to the eventual occurrence of a similar death in the wayfarer’s family, as in Salanitro’s text (= *talia qualia Melior flet nil fleas*)³². But, in the case of the vulgate text, it is not only the entire line which allows for two readings; by virtue of the referential uncertainty in *talia*, the relative clause itself can be read in two different ways. The one subscribed to by most scholars (see above) gives good sense³³, especially if we take the main clause (‘may you have nothing to weep for’)

³⁰ This is a case, as Quintilian would have put it, of amphibology *per conlocationem*, that is, *ubi dubium est, quid quo referri oporteat* (*Inst.* VII 9.7); cf. Pl., *Prt.* 345d-346e; Arist., *Rh.* 1407b.

³¹ My objections against the vulgate text have not been anticipated by Salanitro. Actually, this scholar’s explicit objections against *qui fles talia, nil fleas* are, I believe, not decisive: «Cosa può significare infatti “o passeggero, tu che piangi tali doti, non piangere”? È evidente che ci troviamo di fronte ad una aporia testuale che risulta tanto più evidente qualora si tenga conto della tipologia dell’ epigrama. Il nostro è un epigramma celebrativo e chi ha dimestichezza con il metodo compositivo di Marziale sa che nell’ultimo verso deve essere raggiunta la climax nell’esaltazione del personaggio in questione, nel nostro caso del liberto. E ciò emerge solo se poniamo una virgola prima e non dopo *talia* ...» (1996, p. 12, with n. 25); see further on this in López-Cañete (forthcoming).

³² For the first of these meanings (*OLD*, s.u. 1a, 3), cf. *CLE* 58.11 *sibei esse talem ereptam filiam*; 454.9 *o felice patrem, qui non uidit tale dolorem*; 775.3; 1069.4; 1142.9; 1550.12; Plaut., *Capt.* 139 *Ne fle.:: Egone illum non fleam? egone non defleam / talem adolescentem?*). For *talis* = ‘equal in kind’, as in Salanitro’s text (*OLD* 2b; 4), see nn. 36 and 42.

³³ Thus understood, the relative clause may be deemed as containing a variation on the epitaphic «*fle meos casus* motif»: see Latimore 1962, pp. 234-235; Hernández Pérez 2001, pp. 261-262; cf. u.g. the inscription on Valerius Marcellus, from the *ager Saguntinus*, in *CLE* 2069.1 (cf. *CIL* II2 / 14, p. 618): *Vale]rius L(uci) f(ilius) Mar/[cell]us an(norum) XXXIX h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / [lect]or fle casum meum ...*; see Hernández Pérez 2001, p. 261); I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for directing my attention to this fine example, also interesting to our purposes on account of *lector* (cf. Auson., *Par. praef. uers.* 15).

as loosely meaning ‘may you be always happy’³⁴. However, it seems to have passed unnoticed that *qui fles talia, nil fleas, uiator* can also be understood as signifying something plainly awkward and ill-suited: ‘passer-by who are currently mourning (*fles*: present tense) a similar tragedy (*talia*, sc. in your family), may you have nothing to weep for’; to convey such a message to someone presently overwhelmed by personal grief is, I believe, not too different from wishing continued good health to someone with cancer³⁵. It is unlikely that a master of double entendres such as Martial would have conceived –let alone published– such a Latin sequence, in which equivocation results in incongruity. On the other hand, Salanitro’s punctuation removes this difficulty; furthermore, instances of the «*quid pro quo* motif» commonly feature *talis* meaning ‘equal in kind’³⁶, as in *qui fles, talia nil fleas*³⁷. How-

³⁴ Cf. u.g. Colleson 1739, p. 291 *opto nihil habeas deflendum, id est, felix esto* (see nn. 29 and 35); if taken *stricto sensu*, ‘nothing to weep for’, ‘no cause to weep’ may point to all kinds of deaths, i.e., include those of elder relatives, and to be forever exempt even from such bereavements –as with Green’s interpretation of Ausonius’ *praeter iustum*: § 1.3– problematically implies to be dead before one’s parents; cf. Mart., VII 96.6-8 (the speaker is the dead *infans* Urbicus) *da lacrimas tumulo, qui legis ista, meo: / sic ad Lethaeas, nisi Nestore senior; undas / non eat, optabis quem superesse tibi*; XI 61.3-6 *Quisquis eris nostri post me regnator agelli, / manibus exiguis annua iusta dato: / sic lare perpetuo, sic turba sospite solus / flebilis in terra sit lapis iste tua*; as I think, *turba sospite* points to the offspring (cf. *lare perpetuo*) and slaves of the future *regnator agelli*. However, cf. Peek 1955, nr. 1843.14 (a verse inscription on an *ὠκύμορος*): *μη πηοῖς, ὃ ξένε, δακρυχέοις*; Hernández Pérez, 2001, p. 238.

³⁵ *Nota bene*: this is not the same as wishing ‘may you never again etc.’, which would make perfect sense here. It is perhaps significant that Colleson (1739, p. 291; see nn. 29 and 34) felt the need to clarify «*qui lugens casum eiusmodi*» by adding «*qui mortem huius pueri defles*». For ambiguity and semantic unacceptability, cf. Quint., *Inst.* VIII 2.16; Boeth., *Diu.* 889.

³⁶ Salanitro 1996, p. 12 cites as a parallel *CLE* 473.11-12 *Quisque legis, doleas, deuities talia fata*. Compare also the following epitaphs on *mortes immaturae*: *CIL* II 2102 = *CIL* II² / 7.34 *propter quam* (sc. *Septimiam Aduentam defunctam*) *rogamus parentes pietissimi ... sic, ne quis uestrum talem dolorem experiscatur*; *CIL* VI 16567; 27458.7ff. *rogat u(os) ni u[iol]etis, s[i]c nulli uestror(um) conti(n)gat tale(m) dolore(m) experisci, quod nos infelicissi(mi) parent(es) experti sumus*; *CLE* 580.1-2. Other examples of the «*quid pro quo* motif» feature *similis* instead of *talis*, but the logical mechanism is essentially identical: *CLE* 391.6-7 *Hic simili casu qui pendes, commoda uisus / et lacrimas titulo noli moriture negare*; 496.5-7; 980.5 (see n. 42).

³⁷ The resulting absence of an explicit direct object with *qui fles* should trouble us as little as with the trite formula *qui legis* (with no accusative). In each case the verb may be contextually understood as pairing with elliptical *haec, sepulchrum, hunc titulum* or similar

ever, Salanitro's text seems questionable on account of syntax, as it involves the adverbial use of *ni(hi)l* (= *non omnino*)³⁸. This construction, not uncommon in Catullus and other authors, seems to be avoided by Martial³⁹; more importantly, occurrences of *nihil* with an independent subjunctive of command or wish accompanied by a direct object, as in *talia nil fleas*, are very rare in Latin and entirely unparalleled in Martial⁴⁰. Simply replacing *nil* with *ne* or *non*⁴¹ would give us a sounder (and better-sounding) text. As an alternative, I have suggested *qui fleas, tale nihil fleas, uiator*. The sequence *tale nihil / nihil tale* is abundantly documented in Latin authors, among whom Martial himself may be counted⁴². Metrically speaking, the resulting phalaecean seems fully viable⁴³. Lastly –this would apply also in Salanitro's read-

(for intransitive *flere* in sepulchral contexts, cf. *CLE* 507.2 *desine iam flere, poenam non sentio mortem*; contrast 1068.3 *desine, soror, me iam flere*); see further on this in López-Cañete Quiles, forthcoming; for a possible second meaning in *qui fleas*, see n. 44 in this paper.

³⁸ Cf. Grewing's rather summary verdict (1997, p. 221): «nicht überzeugend (mit *nil = non*)»; no explicit mention of Salanitro's punctuation is found in later critical editions or translations of Martial known to me.

³⁹ Martial seems to show only one instance of *ni(hi)l = non*, and in a trite set-phrase at that (XI 29.8 *nil opus est*); see further in López-Cañete, forthcoming.

⁴⁰ The only instances known to me are from Plautine comedy: *Curc.* 384 *nil tu me monueris*; *Mil.* 1007; *Mos.* 526; *Pseud.* 232.

⁴¹ For the latter construction (a solecism, according to Quint., *Inst.* I 5.50), cf. Mart., I *praef.* 2 *non intret*; Kühner and Stegmann 1966, p. 192.

⁴² A similar construction and sentiment can be found in *CLE* 980.5 *nihil [sic] simile aspicias*. For *tale nihil*, cf. Mart., *Spect.* XXI 5 *ausa est tale nihil, siluis dum uixit in altis*; Ou., *Epist.* XVII 233 *Tale nihil timeo*; *Met.* IX 479 *dummodo tale nihil uigilans committere temptem*. For *nihil tale* in contexts of misfortune or affliction, cf. Cic., *Fin.* I 17.55; *Tusc.* II 23.54 *cum ei qui steterit nihil tale euenerit [sc. ut pereat]*; Liu. XXXVII 4.9 *quod nihil tale timerent*; Ou., *Pont.* I 1.41; Sen., *Phoen.* 533-535 *Licet timore facinoris tanti uacem / uideamque iam nil tale, sum infelix tamen / quod paene uidi*; Stat., *Theb.* I 567 *nil tale timenti*; XII 586 (in a wish) *nil tale precentur Athenae*; Tac., *Dial.* XXXVI 5.

⁴³ In the text of VI 28.10, a choriambus such as *tale nihil* involves the least frequent pattern of word-division (namely, a break between words after the fourth syllable) followed by Greek and Latin poets who wrote in phalaeceans, Martial himself among them. However, this represents no serious objection against this textual proposal, as there is evidence that, for Martial, the described pattern was hardly anomalous. Our poet wrote choriambi of this kind: I) more than once within a single epigram, even in consecutive verses; II) in the final line of an epigram, where an infraction of any metrical law would be felt as especially worth avoiding; or III) both I and II simultaneously (see examples and more discussion in López-Cañete, forthcoming).

ing— a sense pause after *fles* is recommendable from a poetical viewpoint, as it arguably enriches the closure of this poem with a possible double entendre, thereby enhancing its epigrammatic quality⁴⁴.

Either by following my proposed text or Salanitro's—provided that we are ready to assent to the construction *talia nil fleas*—, this punctuation has implications for the study of Ausonius' line that are not difficult to see. According to Green, as we saw, the wish expressed by the poet in imitation of Martial excludes all forms of funeral distress for the addressee, with the exception of the latter's own death; it may then be said that Green's interpretation is, to some extent, based on the assumption that the second half of Ausonius' pentameter (*funera nulla fleas*) imitates a verse by Martial in which only *nil* goes with *fleas* while *talia* goes with *qui fleas*: namely, the vulgate text of VI 28.10; as much can be said, for that matter, in regard to Barth's textual conjecture: *et praeter nostrum* (~ *qui fleas talia*, sc. Glaucias' death), *funera nulla fleas* (~ *nil fleas, uiator*). Conversely, a repunctuated version of Martial's line shows more than one similarity with that of Ausonius as we understand it. A symmetrical *quid pro quo* exchange would be at work in both texts: in return for sympathy towards *iusta funera*, readers of Ausonius' are hoped to never grieve *praeter iustum*; in reward for tears shed when passing by Glaucias' tomb, *uiatores* would be meant to never have to weep for a death like that of Glaucias; the events memorialized in each poem are different in kind (it is for dead elder people that Ausonius, unlike Martial, invites our reverence), but in both cases the wish expressed by the speaker would focus equally on warding off a *mors immatura* on the part of the

⁴⁴ Depriving *qui fleas* of an accusative (see n. 37) has the additional advantage of affording a salutary ambiguity. With the text thus printed, the whole wish expressed by the speaker ('passer-by who grieve, may you not have to grieve for anything like this') may be not only read as expressing gratitude for sympathetic *uiatores* («*quid pro quo* motif»), but also as conveying that already mourn-stricken *uiatores* who read Glaucias' epitaph (*fles* would point to their own grief, caused by whatever personal reasons) may feel comforted, in comparison, not to have gone through such an agonizing experience as Glaucias' patron: thus understood, the line would emphasize the unique pitifulness of the *puer*'s death; for the sentiment, cf. CLE 988: *Coniuge si qua caret fratremque miserruma, si qua / flet raptum et natum perdidit a gremio, / hunc titulum aspiciat: funus non quaeret in isto / quo dolet et flebit tot mea damna magis*; CIL III 6155 *uiator; resiste et lege, nihil ultra crudelius h(oc?) m(onumento?) c(ernere?) p(otes?)* (Mommmsen's reconstruction). Being possible as it is only with *qui fleas* (and no accusative), this amphibology would add a welcome touch of cleverness to the closure of Martial's epigram and therewith an additional argument for placing the comma after *fles*.

reader. Also likely significant are the similar ways in which similar meaning is organized and expressed: the subjunctive *fleas* is constructed with a direct object partially expressed by a negative indefinite pronoun *nulla funera / ni(hi)l*, and a comparison is established between those deaths which will hopefully be averted ('no bereavements' / 'nothing?') and the specific mournful events which are referenced in the poem ('in line with this', *tale* or *talia* / 'out of line with *iustum*'; cf. line 1 *nomina carorum iam condita funere iusto*). Lastly, double meanings may be another shared feature (*praeter iustum = iniuste*, sc. *funera iniusta / plus iusto*; *qui fles* = 'you who weep out of sympathy' / 'you who are yourself in mourning'; see n. 44). In other words: if the critical comma is placed after *fles*, the concluding line of VI 28 provides a neat model for a correct reading of *Par. praef. uers.* 18. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that, if the same comma is placed after *talia* instead, the previous set of neat correspondences disappears: contrast 'to weep for nothing at all' (*nil fleas, uiator*), with 'to weep for nothing *praeter iustum*'; in other words: a repunctuated text of VI 28.10 makes for a far better match for Ausonius' line than the vulgate text of Martial's epigram. These are facts, I believe, that are beyond contention; an attempt at establishing their significance will occupy the following, final reflections.

3. *How did Ausonius read Martial's VI 28.10? (by way of conclusion)*

To the best of my knowledge, Ausonius is not mentioned by commentators on VI 28.10, not even by Salanitro in her argument for repunctuating the text of this passage. As noted above (§ 2), Ausonius' epigram LXII is proof of this poet's interest in Martial's epigram on Glaucias, which makes it all the more likely that *Par. praef. uers.* 18 was influenced by the same poetic model. This holds true regardless of how we choose to print the first half of Martial's hendecasyllable: the resemblances between the sequences *nulla funera fleas* and *nil / nihil fleas*, both featuring in funeral poems and in the clausal positions of them, are inescapable and significant (cf. n. 22). What text was available to Ausonius' eyes in the first half of the hendecasyllable, and how he read it, may be two separate questions given our uncertainty concerning the ancient use of punctuation marks⁴⁵. It is contended by some

⁴⁵ On this question, see e.g. Townend 1969; Geymonat 1985; Feeney 2011; Parkes 2016, pp. 9-13; contrast Wingo 1972; Habinek 1985, pp. 42-88.

that in the days of poets like Vergil or Martial «la punteggiatura era completamente omessa nel momento in cui il testo del poeta era dettato ai librarii» (Geymonat, 1985, p. 998), and that «it was up to the individual reader to mark up a text if he wanted to, relying on his own interpretation of what it meant and how it run» (Feeney 2011, pp. 47-58). Likewise, it has been asserted that «there is little evidence before the sixth century that guides to phrasing –punctuation– originated with the author», with St. Jerome being «one of the first Latin writers» who proceeded this way (Parkes 2016, pp. 9; 15)⁴⁶. It is surely true that no regular system of punctuation like those used in our era was operative in editions of books from the time of Martial or Ausonius. However, it is also known that Roman authors had long had graphic marks at their disposal in order to set off clauses and sense units within periods for the sake of clarity. I believe Martial might have felt the need to protect the meaning of VI 28.10 from misunderstanding, and to accordingly use an explicit sign of sense pause after *fles* for disambiguation (perhaps a *uirgula*)⁴⁷; of course, it is anyone's guess if such was the text in the copy of Martial's book VI used by Ausonius around two centuries after its first edition. If so, there would be no need to further discuss how Ausonius' line, as we understand it, was influenced by Martial's. On the other hand, it may be interesting to briefly speculate on how the Gallic poet would have read the sequence *qui fles talia nil fleas uiator*, with no *uirgula* at all⁴⁸: if *Par. praef. uers.* 18, as we understand it, was actually written in imitation of that sequence, then Ausonius may well be thought to have read Martial's text by inserting a sense pause after *fleas*, and not *talia* (i. e., as defended in this paper)⁴⁹. Thus, whether with

⁴⁶ Cf. Wingo 1972; Habinek 1985, pp. 42-88.

⁴⁷ See my discussion in López-Cañete Quiles, forthcoming.

⁴⁸ For the sake of simplicity, we will momentarily set aside the alternative text *tale nihil* (see n. 51).

⁴⁹ Cf. Parkes 2016, p. 10: «If authors supplied punctuation to a text it was as readers not writers». For Ausonius' awareness of the importance of sense pauses in reading, cf. his own advice to his grandson (*Protr.* II 2.47-50): *tu flexu et acumine uocis / innumeros numeros doctis accentibus effer / adfectusque impone legens. distinctio sensum / auget et ignauis dant interualla uigorem*; Ausonius' *distinctio* is translated as «phrasing» by Parkes 2016, p. 10; «'Punctuation' [or perhaps 'phrasing']», according to Cameron 2011, p. 485.

a previously punctuated text or otherwise, it seems clear that such a rendering of VI 28.10 may have made perfect sense to Ausonius⁵⁰.

This is obviously not proof *per se* that Martial actually meant his verse to be read in this fashion. However, there are other reasons for contending that this was the original reading of VI 28.10 (cf. § 2); and conversely, an understanding of *Par. praef. uers.* 18 as an allusion to *mortes immaturae* can be corroborated independently of the way we approach its poetic model (cf. § 1). As a result, it is hopefully not a case of circular reasoning to say that, in view of their mutual consistency (cf. § 2), both positions may be considered as complementary. I am thus inclined to conclude that, in writing *Par. praef. uers.* 18 the way he did, its author echoes the clause distribution of VI 28.10 –and the sentence meaning attached to it– as arguably conceived by its own author. In defying the general consensus on Ausonius' passage, scholars such as Green or Barth have sought support in the traditional text of Martial. The reverse seems a more correct approach, and a more rewarding one at that; it is the editorial revision of Martial's text, in tandem with an adherence to traditional views on Ausonius' *praeter iustum* (concerning text and semantics, not grammar, cf. § 1.4), that may help settle the questions discussed regarding each separate passage⁵¹.

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⁵⁰ At least, as far as clause distribution is concerned (on the syntactic implausibility of *talia nil fleas*, see § 2; cf. nn. 38-40). It is also worth noticing that, even if the reading in Ausonius' copy had been *qui fles talia, nil fleas, uiator*, as in the vulgate text, this author may still be thought to have «edited» the text of Martial, if only for his own personal use.

⁵¹ As for the two textual alternatives here considered, the evidence provided by Ausonius' line is, I believe, not conclusive: the plural in *funera nulla (fleas)* agrees with *talia (nil fleas)*, while *tale nihil fleas* seems more consistent with Martial's usage (see above and nn. 42-43) and is (perhaps) mirrored by the singular neuter *iustum* (on which, see above § 1.4).

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