rendering of the tag from the *Homeric Hymns* suggests a poet who respects those very values of *fides* and *pietas* which he considers so profoundly violated by Alfenus, Lesbia, and Theseus.[9] Thus *memor,* besides being superior in rhythm and sense to *meo,* links, by contrast, the inner theme of *immemor mens* to the outer frame. It also, in a very modest way, tends to confirm the view held by many readers that poem 64, while ostensibly dealing with mythological themes, is deeply imbued with feelings that reflect the poet's own experiences.[10]

The corruption is an easy one. A scribe confronted with "*mēoruos*" would readily have read the words as "*meo uos,*" particularly with *ego* nearby. If *memor* is the correct reading here, the corruption has an important bearing on the manuscript tradition of Catullus. The lost Veronensis (*V*) has been variously dated from the sixth to the thirteenth century, with more recent scholars favoring the later dating.[11] Now, if, as the readings of *O, R,* and *G* indicate, *V* had *meo* here, the correct reading *mēor* has to be attributed to *V*'s exemplar. Since contraction of intervocalic "*m*" is very rare before 1050,[12] it would appear that not only *V* but even *V*'s exemplar was written after this date.

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9. Ariadne's indictment of Theseus in lines 133–35 ("perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu? / sicine discedens neglecto numine divum, / immemor a! devota domum periuria portas?") is remarkably similar in thought and language to the reproaches Catullus levels against Alfenus and Lesbia in poems 30 and 76.

10. For an influential but rather extreme view of the autobiographical element in Catullus 64, see M. Putnam, "The Art of Catullus 64," *HSCP* 65 (1961): 165–205.

11. See D. F. Thomson, *Catullus: A Critical Edition* (Chapel Hill, 1978), pp. 9–11 and R. W. Hunt et al., *The Survival of Ancient Literature* (Oxford, 1975), p. 80; cf. L. D. Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 43–45.

12. D. Bains, *A Supplement to Notae Latinae* (Cambridge, 1936), p. 57.

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PROPERTIUS' HOROSCOPE: A SUGGESTED BIRTHDATE

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nec si rationem siderum ignorat poetas intelleget
Quintilian 1.4.4

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I. THE PROBLEM

Convincing evidence for the date of Propertius' birth has not been adduced. Informed guesses range from 57 B.C. to 47 B.C. (L. A. MacKay presciently made it as late as 41 B.C.).[1] The evidence consists of inferences drawn from three passages: Ovid *Tristia* 4.10.45–54, mentioning the four elegists Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovidius; Propertius 4.1.127–32, describing land confiscations 41/0

1. Th. Birt, "Die Fünfzahl und die Properzchronologie," *RhM* 70 (1915): 253–314, esp. 307–9 (he cannot have been born after 55 B.C., most likely is 57/6 B.C.); H. Mersmann, *Quaestiones Propertianae. Quo Tempore Propertius natus sit* (Münster, 1931), pp. 5–26 (48/7 B.C.); H. E. Butler and E. A. Barber, *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford, 1933; repr. Hildesheim–New York, 1969), pp. xix–xx, xxv–xxviii (54–48 B.C.); P. J. Enk, *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum Liber I (Monobiblos)* (Leiden, 1946), pp. 5–6, 16–19 (47 B.C.); R. Helm, "Sex. Propertius (2)," *RE* 23 (1957): 758–60; W. A. Camps, *Propertius Elegies Book I* (Cambridge, 1961) pp. 6–7; L. A. MacKay, "Umbrian Rimbaud," *G&R* 17 (1970): 177–83; and

B.C.; and Propertius 3.9.57, where Propertius appears as a *iuvenis*. These passages are combined with otherwise determined dates of publication of his four books, including a *terminus post quem* of 28 B.C. for Book 1. While the testimony of Ovid *Tristia* 4.10.45–54 *could* be taken to mean that Propertius was born before Ovid (born 20 March 43 B.C.),[2] the order need not be that of birth or chronological at all. The other inferences are similarly uncertain, and the lack of consensus is disappointing. But there is evidence in his natal horoscope in 4.1 that may settle Propertius' birthdate within two months.

Astrology was pandemic in Roman intellectual life and letters in the Late Republic and the Augustan Age.[3] From the first century B.C., astrology appeared often as a literary topos.[4] Nevertheless, only three Greek and two Latin horoscopes are known for dates B.C.,[5] to which we may add three or four Latin: that of Augustus,[6] that cast by Nigidius Figulus,[7] that of Rome cast for Varro by L. Tarutius,[8] and that given by Propertius. All were cast by professional astrologers for clients (even the polymath Varro consulted a professional), and were computed not observed—always standard practice.

II. THE HOROSCOPE

Propertius (4.1) poetically records the horoscope cast by his Babylonian astrologer, Horos, the son of Orops:

> felicesque Iovis stellas Martisque rapaces
>   et grave Saturni sidus in omne caput,
> quid moveant Pisces animosaque signa Leonis   85
>   lotus et Hesperia quid Capricornus aqua.

83 rapacis (cap- *F*) *O corr.*   85 moneant *LDVI*
86 qui *N*

M. Hubbard, *Propertius* (London, 1974), pp. vii–viii, 42–44. MacKay alone has sensed that Propertius was but a lad, and makes him no more than 16 on the basis of literary inference alone.

2. Cf. W. Kraus, "P. Ovidius Naso (3)," *RE* 18 (1942): 1912.

3. Authoritative are A. Bouché-Leclerq, *L'Astrologie Grecque* (1899; reprint ed., Aalen, 1979), pp. 546–54; E. Riess, "The Influence of Astrology on Life and Literature at Rome," *CW* 27 (1933): 73–78; and F. H. Cramer, *Astrology in Roman Law and Politics,* Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 37 (1954), pp. 17–18 on texts, 58–92 (esp. 63, 66–67) on astrology in Rome at this period. See also G. Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore–London, 1985), pp. 309–21; M. P. Nilsson, "Astrologie. Hellenistische Zeit" and "Astrologie. Römische Zeit," in *Geschicte der Griechischen Religion*[3], vol. 2 (Munich, 1971), pp. 268–81, and 486–507, and *Greek Piety* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 110–15 (a reference I owe to Wm. M. Calder III); and W. Gundel and H. G. Gundel, "Astrologoumena: Die Astrologische Literatur in der Antike und ihre Geschichte," *Sudhoff's Archiv* S. 6 (Wiesbaden, 1966).

4. Diod. Sic. 2.30–31, Lucr. 5.509–768 (in opposition), Verg. *G.* 2.336–42, Hor. *Carm.* 1.11.2, 2.8.10–12, 2.17.17–22, *Epod.* 1.6.3, 1.12.16–19 (and see D. R. Dicks, "Astrology and Astronomy in Horace," *Hermes* 91 [1963]: 60–73), Vitr. 9.6.2, Prop. 2.27.1–4, 4.1.71–150, and [Ovid] *Ibis* 209–16.

5. See O. Neugebauer and H. B. van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes,* Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 48 (1959), pp. 14–17 (# –61, –9, –3) and 76–78 (#L –71, L –42): horoscopes are numbered by their date, where 1 B.C. = 0, 2 B.C. = –1, etc. (The horoscope L –71 was computed no earlier than 22 B.C.: p. 78.) Over a dozen Babylonian horoscopes are known for dates B.C., as early as 410 B.C.: see Neugebauer and van Hoesen, pp. 161–62.

6. Though often referred to only the sign Capricorn is ever given. Good recent discussion by P. Brind'amour, *Le Calendrier Romain: Recherches Chronologiques,* Coll. d'Etudes Anciennes de l'Univ. d'Ottawa, vol. 2 (Ottawa, 1983), pp. 62–76 (a reference I owe to Peter Bicknell).

7. R. J. Getty, "The Astrology of P. Nigidius Figulus (Lucan I, 649–65)," *CQ* 35 (1941): 17–22.

8. See A. T. Grafton and N. M. Swerdlow, "The Horoscope of the Foundation of Rome," *CP* 81 (1986): 148–53, which repeats their earlier discussion in "Technical Chronology and Astrological History in Varro, Censorinus and Others," *CQ* 35 (1985): 454–65; cf. also Brind'amour, *Le Calendrier,* pp. 240–49.

The lines caused difficulty already for Scaliger, and are often relocated.[9] But the relocation does not alter the horoscope, so long as the two couplets are kept together.

Ancient horoscopes give the positions of the planets within various signs, but the choice of the limits of the signs (referred to as the "norm") varied.[10] The modern norm is that of Hipparchos, in which Leo = 120° to 150° for example (0° is defined as the Spring Equinox). Horoscopes of the first century B.C. to first century A.D. seem to use *either* one of the two Mesopotamian norms (a −8° or a −10° offset from the Hipparchian norm, so that Leo = 112° to 142° or 110° to 140° respectively), *or* the Eudoxian norm (a −15° offset). Varro (*Rust.* 1.28, written ca. 37 B.C.)[11] indicates that Romans typically used the −8° norm,[12] and Propertius emphasizes the Babylonian origin of his astrologer (4.1.77). Thus Horos must have used the Babylonian norm of a −8° offset.

Since Propertius lists three planets in no natural order, and then lists three signs in no natural order, I would argue that he means us to take the planets as paired with the signs in corresponding order. Making use of standard tables of planetary positions to determine the date,[13] we have:[14]

<div style="text-align:center">

Saturn in Capricorn
Jupiter in Pisces
Mars in Leo
(−8° norm)
4 May–24 June 43 B.C. (Julian)

</div>

In the context of an astrological poem containing a horoscope, the significance of a further sign mentioned separately must also be astrological. When Propertius records the warning of his astrologer in line 150 (*octipedis Cancri terga sinistra*

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9. The list of scholars who prefer to move the two couplets to other, sometimes separate, parts of the poem is long; I cite a few representative examples: J. J. Scaliger, *Catulli, Tibulli, Properti Nova Editio,* part 3: *Castigationes* (Antwerp, 1582; *NUC* 100:209 NC 0233434), p. 216, reads *stellae* and transposes the quatrain to after 108 where he interprets the nominatives as in apposition to *via.* A. E. Housman, *JPh* 16 (1888): 13 = *The Collected Papers of A. E. Housman,* vol. 1, ed. J. Diggle and F. D. R. Goodyear (Cambridge, 1972), p. 37, places 85–86 only after 108. Those who relocate the lines do so on grounds of grammar not content, based on the difficulty of construing the lines in their tralaticious position, and, for Butler and Barber, *Elegies,* the problem inheres in the joining of 81–82 to 83–86. K. Lachmann's text, *Sex. Aurelii Propertii Carmina* (1816; reprint ed., Hildesheim–New York, 1973), suggests the same: line 82 is printed without a stop at the end and lines 83–86, with majuscule initial, are separated by a space from the preceding. Even when excised the lines are admitted to be Propertian: C. Becker, "Horos Redselig? (Zu Properz IV, 1)," *WS* 79 (1966): 442–51, esp. 447: "Lässt man . . . die Verse 81–88 einmal beiseite, so schliessen sich 80 und 89 fugenlos aneinander an" and 450: "Dann aber bleibt nur eine Erklärung übrig: die Versreihe [d.h. 81–88] muss aus dem Konzept des Dichters stammen; sie besteht aus früheren Fassungen, die der Herausgeber im Manuskript vorfand und nicht beseitigen mochte."

10. Neugebauer and van Hoesen, *Horoscopes,* pp. 15–16.

11. Recent discussion of date by J. Heurgon, *Varron Economie Rurale* 1 (Paris 1978), pp. xxi–xxvi; Varro states *Rust.* 1.1 *Annus enim octogesimus admonet me . . .*

12. Cf. Fr. Cumont, *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans* (1912; reprint ed., New York, 1960), p. 24.

13. B. Tuckermann, *Planetary, Lunar and Solar Positions 601 B.C. to A.D. 1 at five-day and ten-day intervals,* Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 56 (1962), p. 312.

14. An equally valid astrological date is 31 Aug.–20 Oct. 102 B.C., but that is absurd as Propertius' birthdate and it is most unlikely that any Latin horoscope would have such an early date. The earliest known Greek horoscope is 62 B.C., #L −61 (see Neugebauer and van Hoesen, *Horoscopes,* p. 78: # L −71 was computed in 22 B.C.).

time), what is he telling us? Boll long ago suggested that Cancer is Propertius' *Horoscopus,* his rising sign, i.e., the sign rising over the local horizon at the time of birth:[15] this is the usual significance of an uninhabited sign. Manilius 3.203–509 emphasizes the importance of the *Horoscopus* for making predictions, as does the most important astrological tome before Manilius, Nechepso-Petosiris frags. 4, 5, and 19.[16] The *Horoscopus,* given the month of birth, determines the time of day to within two hours, with some adjustment necessary for latitude of birthplace. For the May–June date calculated above, the Sun must have been in Taurus or Gemini, so Propertius was born between the first and fourth hour of the Roman day. On the other hand, it may be that Cancer is Propertius' Moon sign, since the natural ruler of Cancer is Luna,[17] and the warning in 150 concerns Cynthia (cf. lines 140–49), who herself is compared to the moon.[18] Thus Propertius may intend to suggest that "Cynthia (i.e., Luna) in Cancro." If so, we may narrow the birth date to 10–12 May or 6–8 June.

The date is more likely natal than that of his conception, since conception horoscopes are far rarer.[19] The horoscope is readable (i.e., a date can be computed from it) and there is no unambiguous evidence of invented horoscopes, even *exempli gratia,* in antiquity.[20] The readability speaks for itself, and the burden of proof rests on those who might wish to controvert. It is important to reemphasize that Propertius did not generate the horoscope himself: he must have consulted a professional (who appears under the name of Horos).

III. THE YOUNG POET[21]

Enk's favored birthdate of 47 B.C. would make Propertius as young as 19 on the publication of Book 1; Helm remarks: "jünger kann man ihn unmöglich vermuten."[22] Yet that is precisely what the date calculated above does. There are essentially three possibilities: Propertius was born in 43 B.C. and published *Cynthia*

15. Fr. Boll at A. Dieterich, "Die Widmungselegie des letzten Buches des Propertius," *RhM* 55 (1900): 191–221, esp. 218–19, and Boll, "Zu Properz IV, 1," *Arch. für Religionswissenschaft* 10 (1907): 157–58, followed by W. Nethercut, "The Astrological Significance of Propertius 4.1.150: a reexamination of *sinistra,*" *WS* 83 (1970): 110–17.

16. Ed. E. Riess, *Nechepsonis et Petosiridis Fragmenta Magica,* vol. 1 (diss. Bonn, 1890), vol. 2 = *Philologus* S. 6 (1891/3): 325–94. Cf. also frags. 13.30–40, 16.8–18, 18.6–12, 20.33–43, 21.5–9. See also Serapion at *CCAG* 1.101 and 5.1.179; Serapion is first century B.C.: A. W. Klotz and W. Kroll, "Serapion (4)," *RE* 2A (1921): 1666–67. For modern comment on the *Horoscopus,* see G. P. Goold, *Manilius Astronomica* (Cambridge–London, 1977), pp. lxviii–lxxvii.

17. See Goold, *Manilius,* pp. xxxviii–li; A. E. Housman, *Manilius*², vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1937), pp. v–xxxi; C. Darmstadt, *De Nechepsonis-Petosoridis Isagoge Quaestiones Selectae* (Leipzig, 1916), pp. 14–31; or Bouché-Leclerq, *L'Astrologie,* pp. 149–79, for this sort of information.

18. Nethercut, "Propertius 4.1.150," pp. 114–15.

19. The only examples of which I am aware are those of Romulus (above, n. 8) and possibly of Augustus (above, n. 6), though in the latter case the natural interpretation of Suet. *Aug.* 94 is that Nigidius Figulus computed the horoscope of Augustus' birth time.

20. Compare Neugebauer and van Hoesen, *Horoscopes,* p. 180, on the few cases of erroneous deviation of planetary positions in horoscopes from modern computed values: "[There are] cases where the ancient text is entirely wrong [but] the number of such gross deviations is surprisingly small." Compare Neugebauer and van Hoesen, *Horoscopes,* pp. 132–35 (#L 401): "it seems not impossible that we have here an artificially made up example of positions"—there are no parallels cited.

21. I am indebted to Wm. M. Calder III for encouraging and informative discussions on this section and many references.

22. "Propertius (2)," col. 759. MacKay, "Umbrian Rimbaud," p. 180, rightly does make him younger.

about 28 B.C. at about age 15; Propertius was born in 43 B.C. but *Cynthia* was published later than 28 B.C.;[23] or third, Propertius in ca. 16 B.C. created a fictional younger persona.[24]

If the horoscope is accepted as biographical, then Propertius was born in 43 B.C., and the possibility that *Cynthia* was published later than 28 B.C. must be considered. The evidence for the dates of Propertius' books is not strong and only *termini post quos* are obtained.[25] In the last two books there are only three datable references: 4.1.127–30 refers to the land confiscations of 41/0 B.C.; 4.11.65–66 refers to the consulate of P. Cornelius Scipio of 16 B.C.; and 3.18 refers to the death of Marcellus in 23 B.C. Three of the five references in the first two books also provide *termini post quos:*[26] 2.34.91–92 indicates that Gallus is lately (*modo*) dead (27/6 B.C.); 2.31 refers to the dedication of the Portico of Apollo (the adjoining temple was dedicated 28 B.C. according to Dio Cass. 53.1.3); and 1.22 refers to the death of a relative in the Perusine war (40 B.C.).

The two most secure points are in 1.6.19–20 and 2.10.15–16. In 1.6.19–20 a reference is seen to L. Volcacius Tullus, cos. 33 B.C., identified as the uncle of Propertius' friend and addressee Tullus.[27] But the reference is agreed to be to his proconsulate, of which the date is unknown. In the latter, Propertius writes that India and Arabia may yet be conquered by Augustus.[28] The title "Augustus" gives a date of 27 B.C. or later. The poem has been dated precisely to 25 B.C. on the basis of a report of an Indian embassy to him while in Spain (Oros. 6.21.19; Dio Cass. 53.25) and the failure of the only attested Arabian expedition in 24 B.C. (Strab. 16.4.22–24 with Dio Cass. 53.29). But there is nothing to prove that the couplet refers to these events, and the submission of remote lands, especially India and Arabia, was a commonplace since Alexander had failed to conquer them. Therefore it is not impossible that Propertius began publishing a few years later than has usually been assumed. But even were we to set the date (rather arbitrarily) to 25 B.C., Propertius is still surprisingly young on first publication.

The problem of the historicity of apparently biographical details in Propertius' verse arises. M. Lefkowitz has recently reminded us to beware the use of verse as biography,[29] if the pervasive subtle irony of Propertius' verse had not long since

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23. I am indebted to H. Jacobson for encouraging me to consider this possibility.

24. I am indebted to R. Kaster for suggesting this possibility.

25. Butler and Barber, *Elegies*, pp. xxv–xxviii; Camps, *Elegies Book I*, pp. 6–7 and ad locc.; Hubbard, *Propertius*, pp. 42–44.

26. In addition 2.7 is adduced; it refers to a repealed marriage law, but which? That in Suet. *Aug.* 34 is undated, the *lex Iulia* of 18 B.C. is rejected as too late: above, n. 25. Hubbard, *Propertius*, p. 43, adds to these 2.1.25–36 referring to Octavian's triumphs of 29 B.C., "mockingly countered" by Hor. *Carm.* 2.12.1–12 of 23 B.C. (the latter date is itself inferential). If true this would fix Book 2 to 29–23 B.C., but A. Kiessling and R. Heinze, *Q. Horatius Flaccus: "Oden" und "Epoden"*[10] (Berlin, 1960), pp. 207–8 ad loc., note as a reminiscence only the commonplace Hor. *Carm.* 2.12.11 *ducta per vias colla*, cf. Prop. 2.1.33–34 "regum auratis circumdata colla catenis / Actaique in sacra currere rostra via." Mersmann, *Quaestiones Propertianae*, pp. 18–21, unconvincingly refers 1.21 and 1.22 to 28/7 B.C. based on the political situation and Propertius' attitude towards it which these elegies seem to reflect.

27. Hubbard, *Propertius*, p. 42, citing K. M. T. Atkinson, "The Governors of the Province Asia in the Reign of Augustus," *Historia* 7 (1958): 300–330, who refers Prop. 1.21 to Gallus the elegist, and R. Hanslik, "L. Volcacius (18) Tullus," *RE* supp. 9 (1962): 1838–39: "Nur möchte ich nicht mit Syme [*JRS* 45 (1955): 159] und Atkinson glauben, dass V. im J. 26/25, sondern dass er in J. 27/26 Prokonsul von Asia gewesen ist."

28. Camps, *Propertius Elegies Book 2* (Cambridge, 1967), ad loc.

29. *Lives of the Poets* (Baltimore, 1981), and earlier K. Lehrs, "Über Wahrheit und Dichtung in der griechischen Literaturgeschichte," *Populäre Aufsätze aus dem Altertum* (Leipzig, 1875), pp. 383–408. Note

elicited hesitation. Two sorts of data must be distinguished. Like any poet Propertius does make reference to *Realien* (buildings in Rome: 2.31 and 4.1.1–38) and to historical events (land confiscations in 41/0 B.C.: 4.1.127–32). On the other hand, he probably invents details, if not the whole matter, of the Cynthia affair.[30] I believe that the horoscope is more likely to fit into the category of *Realien* for two reasons. First, in the context of other historical details (i.e., 4.1.127–32, and the horoscope itself 4.1.83–86, 150), he himself says he began to write poetry soon (*mox*) after *libera sumpta toga* (4.1.131–34), but not precisely how long after (presumably not too long or he would not have used that event as the epoch from which to date his writing). The *toga virilis* was usually assumed at about 15 or 16 years of age,[31] so if he began immediately to write, *Cynthia* could have been ready shortly after 28 B.C. Second, ancient poets did start writing in their teens.[32] According to Suetonius, Vergil *adhuc puer* wrote poetry, and composed the major poems of the "Vergilian Appendix" *cum esset annorum XVI* (Suet. *Vita Verg.* 16).[33] Aristophanes composed plays at age 16 or 17 which were successfully produced.[34] Another witness is the grave stele of Q. Sulpicius Severus who translated Ovid into Greek verse, at age eleven,[35] and *ILS* 5178 records a poet victorious at thirteen. Moreover, music *sensu strictiore* is an artform allied to ancient poetry (which was sung of course), and modern composers include a number of great prodigies: Mozart (at age 5), Paganini (at 8), Schubert (at 13), and Camille Saint-Saëns (at 3).[36]

also the skepticism of A. W. Allen, "Elegy and the Classical Attitude toward Love: Propertius I, 1," *YCIS* 11 (1950): 256, n. 7, and "'Sincerity' and the Roman Elegists," *CP* 45 (1950): 145–53, who shows how in modern critical theory the impression formed by the critic of the sincerity and emotional force of the work of the author leads to a belief in the historicity of any events therein related: poetic illusion gives way to historical necessity. Allen rightly criticizes the baselessness of this assumption: "Propertius is not concerned to tell a story, but rather to impart the quality of an experience," (p. 151). I would compare, say, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," by T. S. Eliot (1917).

30. See M. Rothstein, *Propertius Sextus Elegien* 2² (Berlin, 1924; repr. Dublin–Zürich, 1966; repr. New York, 1979), p. 215, ad 133; Hubbard, *Propertius*, pp. vii–viii.

31. Butler and Barber, *Elegies*, pp. xix–xx; K. J. Marquardt *Das Privatleben der Römer* (Leipzig, 1886), pp. 124–34, with numerous examples; J. Regner, "Tirocinium fori," *RE* 6A.2 (1937): 1452–53; and F. H. Sandbach, "Lucreti Poemata and the Poet's Death," *CR* 54 (1940): 73–74: not a fixed age, varied from 14 to 21 (for Caligula), usually 15 or 16. According to Suet. *Vita Verg.* 6, Vergil assumed the *toga virilis* on his sixteenth birthday (some MSS fifteenth); M. Gelzer, "M. Tullius (29) Cicero," *RE* 7A.1 (1939): 829, indicates that Cicero assumed it on 17 March 90 B.C., thus when he was just two months and two weeks past his sixteenth birthday.

32. A. P. Dorjahn, "On beginning to Write Early," *CJ* 45 (1950): 391–92; and M. Kleiwegt, *Ancient Youth,* Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology 8 (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 123–31.

33. See E. K. Rand, "Young Vergil's Poetry," *HSCP* 30 (1919): 103–85; the Suetonian biography is extant in versions by Donatus and Servius. In addition, Cicero published a verse translation of Aratus' *Phaenomena* as an *adolescens* (*Nat. D.* 2.41 [104]); cf. A. S. Pease, "Were there two versions of Cicero's *Prognostica?*," *CP* 12 (1917): 302–4; and K. Büchner, "Tullius Cicero," coll. 1236–39, on Cicero's "Jugendgedichte." Parallels among modern poets would include Rimbaud published at 16 (adduced by MacKay, "Umbrian Rimbaud," p. 179), or Edgar Allen Poe, who published at 18 a poem composed at 11: T. F. M., "Poe, Edgar Allen," *Dictionary of American Biography* 15 (1935): 19–28.

34. See Dorjahn, "To Write Early," p. 391; and L. Cohn, "Aristophanes (12)," *RE* 2 (1895): 972; and A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 85–86; Σ ad *Ra.* 501 indicates that Aristophanes was μειρακίσκος when his first play (*Banqueters*) was produced for him by Kallistratos, which would make him 16 or 17 (Cohn doubts this, without giving any reason). In addition, Pindar was commissioned to write *Pyth.* 10 at age twenty: cf. Dorjahn and Fr. Schwenn, "Pindaros (2)," *RE* 20.2 (1959): 1617–18: born 518 B.C., *Pyth.* 10 composed in 498 B.C. To gain the commission, it seems he must have already acquired a reputation, hence was a successful teenage poet.

35. *ILS* 5177 = 618 Kaibel = *IG* 14 2012 = 1924 Peek.

36. See the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 1980), a reference I owe to my friend B. Royall: Mozart 12.680–752 (S. Sadie and A. Hicks), Paganini 14.86–91 (B. Schwarz), which

The third possibility, that in ca. 16 B.C. Propertius created a fictional younger *persona,* seems remote. On this hypothesis of an "accurately-conceived fiction," Propertius when writing 4.1 imagined a love-poet born in 43 B.C., then asked an astrologer to cast a real horoscope suitable for this fictional persona. But to a horoscope cast for *no* event we have no parallel. And for such a fictional person we would still be faced with the remaining two choices listed above: if Propertius invented a teenage poet, were his readers not expected to believe that such a person could exist?

IV. CONCLUSION

The calculated date (May–June 43 B.C.) of Propertius' natal horoscope in 4.1.83–86 is an astronomically fixed point in Propertius' chronology.[37] This would make Propertius only 15 on the accepted date of publication of *Cynthia*. While the traditional date (28 B.C.) of publication can be put slightly later (perhaps 25 B.C.), Propertius was in any case a teenager on publication. The other possibility is that the horoscope is a fictitious one for the poet's *persona*. Whether real or fictitious, interpreters should be aware that through the horoscope, and the reference to the *toga virilis,* the poet represents himself as a teenager.[38]

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gives the earliest extant composition as at age 13 (but there were earlier ones, now lost, for which see S. S. Stratton, *Nicolo Paganini: His Life and Work* [New York, 1907; repr. Westport CN, 1971], pp. 7–9), Schubert 16.752–811 (M. J. E. Brown), and Saint-Saëns 16.400–407 (J. Harding and D. M. Fallon).

37. Astronomical points are the foundation of all ancient chronology: see O. Neugebauer, *History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy,* vol. 2 (New York–Berlin, 1975), pp. 1071–73; cf. P. T. Keyser, "Suetonius *Nero* 41.2 and the Date of Heron Mechanicus of Alexandria," *CP* 83 (1988): 218–20, for a parallel case in which an eclipse fixes Heron's date.

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