2008

Servius and the Homeric Scholia

Joseph Farrell

University of Pennsylvania, jfarrell@sas.upenn.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.upenn.edu/classics_papers

Part of the Classics Commons

Recommended Citation (OVERRIDE)


This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. https://repository.upenn.edu/classics_papers/148
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.
Abstract
When we speak of Servius' commentary on the works of Vergil, we understand that the name of Servius, which we use mainly for convenience, cloaks in apparent unity a work that is notable for its diversity and heterogeneity. This remark pertains not only to the existence of two Servian commentaries, the one written by Servius himself in the fifth century and the one compiled several centuries afterwards and eventually published by Pierre Daniel, but also to the diverse prior sources on which both these commentaries are based. It is well known that much of the material in these commentaries is tralatician. Except in a few specific cases, however, we cannot name either the proximate or the ultimate source of any given contribution, nor can we claim to understand fully the general principles that Servius followed in compiling his work. In this paper I will review some of those cases in which we can say with certainty or with reasonable probability how some specific passages in Servius took their current form, and will attempt to clarify what these instances can tell us about Servius' working methods in general. In order to keep this essay within manageable limits, I will confine my examination to passages in which the Servian commentaries show a strong affinity with the exegetical tradition of Homer.

Disciplines
Arts and Humanities | Classics
Servius and the Homeric Scholia

When we speak of Servius' commentary on the works of Vergil, we understand that the name of Servius, which we use mainly for convenience, cloaks in apparent unity a work that is notable for its diversity and heterogeneity. This remark pertains not only to the existence of two Servian commentaries, the one written by Servius himself in the fifth century and the one compiled several centuries afterwards and eventually published by Pierre Daniel, but also to the diverse prior sources on which both these commentaries are based. It is well known that much of the material in these commentaries is tralatician. Except in a few specific cases, however, we cannot name either the proximate or the ultimate source of any given contribution, nor can we claim to understand fully the general principles that Servius followed in compiling his work (1). In this paper I will review some of those cases in which we can say with certainty or with reasonable probability how some specific passages in Servius took their current form, and will attempt to clarify what these instances can tell us about Servius' working methods in general. In order to keep this essay within manageable limits, I will confine my examination to passages in which the Servian commentaries show a strong affinity with the exegetical tradition of Homer (2).

I begin with an observation made by Gino Funaioli:

«Gli scoliasti virgiliani...si riattaccano per via diretta a quei di Teocrito, di Nicandro, di Arato, di Licofrone, e, per l'Eneide, agli omerici» (3).

(1) On Servius' working methods in general see NAUMANN (1975); Goold (1970). Goold in particular demonstrates that Servius routinely concealed the attribution of material that he found in his proximate source, which is generally agreed to be Donatus' commentary. This information is frequently restored by DServ., but it is not clear that it was Donatus' purpose to cite the ultimate or original source of a given comment, as opposed to his immediate informant.

(2) My purpose, as will be seen, is not to identify new parallels between the Servian commentaries and the Homeric scholia, but rather to spell out and to examine the implications of those parallels that have been identified by others.

(3) Funaioli (1930) p. 234.
This statement contains two premises that deserve further consideration. First, one would like to know more about this connection between the Vergilian scholiasts and the Greeks. The connection is "direct" according to Funaioli, but what exactly does this mean? Presumably that Vergilian commentators had before them as they worked scholia on various Greek authors very similar to the ones that have come down to us, perhaps as marginal commentaries, perhaps as independent works of line-by-line exegesis similar in form to the commentaries of Servius. The second premise is that, whereas the Vergilian scholia as a whole derive from Greek commentaries on a wide range of authors, exegesis of the Aeneid depends especially upon Homeric commentaries. Neither these premises nor their further implications have ever been fully examined. The purpose of my contribution will be to consider some of the possibilities.

The idea of a general link between the exegetical activities of Greek and Roman scholiasts is unobjectionable. That is to say, it is easy to believe that the Vergilian scholiasts got their information largely from the same sources that informed the Greek scholia - from the same lexica, indices, manuals, and other "aides de recherche". In fact, it would be difficult to imagine a different situation. However, with the expression "per via diretta", Funaioli evidently asserts the existence of a much closer connection than this, as if the Latin scholiasts had taken their notes not only from the same sources used by the Greeks, but from the very commentaries that they wrote. This is an interesting thesis, and there are strong indications that it could be valid. But the exegetical material that we find in Servius is heterogeneous, and traces of the methods by which he (and his predecessors) compiled the commentary that goes by his name, suggest that diverse principles were at work.

The idea of a "via diretta" from the Greek scholia to the commentary of Servius was firmly endorsed by Eduard Fraenkel. Citing Funaioli in his famous review of the "Harvard Servius", Fraenkel makes clearer what his predecessor had in mind (4). With regard to a Servian note on the word Pergama (Aen. 1, 466), Fraenkel points out that Servius distinguishes between toponyms that Vergil often uses indifferently. In this passage, the ecphrasis of the scenes on the Temple of Juno, Vergil speaks of the combatants as bellantes Pergama circum. Servius points out that this is a

figure of speech, since *Pergama* properly denotes the citadel, whereas the scenes being described are of battles that took place over a wider area:

Serv. in Aen. 1, 466 *pergama circum* abuses; non enim circa Pergama, hoc est arcem, sed circa Troiam bella geregantur.

Fraenkel then adduces an earlier passage in which Servius mentions *Pergama* and cites Aeschylus as a source for its extended meaning:

Serv. in Aen. 1, 95 *moenibus altis* propter Pergama, quae altissima fuerunt, ex quibus omnia alta aedificia ‘pergama’ uocantur, sicut Aeschylus dicit.

But for the source-critic, the citation of Aeschylus is misleading, as Fraenkel shows; for the two Servian notes taken together reproduce almost word for word a scholium on *Iliad* 4, 508, a fuller version of which exists in Eustathius as well (5).

Σ ΑΒΔ in II. 4, 508 Περγάμου ἐκκατιδών ἐν τῇ ἄχροπόλεως προσχών Ὄμηρος δὲ μόνον τὴν τής Ἰλίου ἄχροπολίν Περγαμον καλεῖ, οἱ δὲ νεώτεροι πάσας τὰς ἄχροπόλεις. Ἠστέον δὲ ὅτι οἱ παλαιοὶ κτίζοντες τὰς πόλεις ἐν τοῖς υψηλοτέροις τόποις τὰς ἄχροπόλεις ἐποίουν διὰ τὸ ἐκεῖσε προσφευγόντες ἀπὸ τῶν κοιλοτέρων τόπων τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας ἐν τοῖς κατακλυσμοῖς.

Eustathius 503 in II. 1, 507-508 Ὅτι Ὅμηρος μὲν μόνον τὴν τής Ἰλίου ἄχροπολίν Περγαμον ὁνομάζει θηλυκός, οἱ δὲ νεώτεροι πάσας τὰς ἄχροπόλεις οὕτω καλοῦν, οι καὶ οὐδετέρως ‘τὰ πέργαμα’ φασιν, ὡς καὶ Αἰοχύλος Προμηθεί.

This parallel is the first in a series of comments that, according to Fraenkel, have been transferred from Homeric commentaries into the tradition of Vergilian exegesis. There are obvious differences among the four passages that Fraenkel cites. In the fullest version of the note, which is also the latest witness, Eustathius is concerned with two points: first with the figure of speech by which Homer’s name for the Trojan acropolis came to be applied to all citadels, and second with the fact that in Homer uses only the feminine singular form Περγαμος while later poets use the neuter plural form τὰ πέργαμα. Eustathius cites Aeschylus as an authority for the second point. The *Iliad* scholia mention only the first aspect of Homeric usage, as does Servius, although he also cites Aeschylus as an

authority even though he does not make the same point about the gender of *Pergama*. So there is a certain amount of looseness in the way that the three commentators use the common source on which they all putatively drew; but the texts that we have are close enough to support the idea that there was a common source. After listing several such examples, Fraenkel cites with approval the opinion of Funaioli with which I began; and he then states his own view about Funaioli’s “via diretta” in quite specific terms, suggesting that many of his examples seem to have been translated directly from a Greek commentary similar “even in minute details” to that of Eustathius (6).

Fraenkel’s position is crystal clear, but it is worth trying understand its implications more fully. Let us imagine Servius, or some earlier commentator on the *Aeneid*, at work. He encounters the word *Pergama* where it first occurs in book 1. He decides that the word requires some comment, and he chooses to look for one in the scholia to Homer. How to find a suitable note? There did not exist, to my knowledge, analytical indices of the Homeric scholia; and without such assistance, it would have been rather difficult to find just the piece of information that one needed. I would like to know, for example, the route by which the note on *Pergama* at *Il. 4*, 508 could have presented itself to the Roman commentator just at the moment when he was writing a comment on the same word at *Aen. 1*, 466— or, still more, at *Aen. 1*, 95, where the word *Pergama* does not even occur. To put the question in more general terms, how would Servius have been able to find a suitable note to any specific Vergilian passage among the plethora of diverse exegeses that comprise the Homeric scholia?

There have been various answers to this question. I would have supposed that similarities of the type just discussed might indicate that both Servius and the Greek scholiasts had used the same research tools—in this case, let us say, a dictionary of place names. This assumption, it turns

(6) “The reader who has examined my last few sections will be struck by the fact that the text of Servius reads as if it were a (sometimes simplified) translation of Eustathius. That is to say, the Roman commentator had before him a commentary which often, though not always, agreed even in minute details with the commentary used by Eustathius” (Fraenkel (1949) p. 153). Note however that the conclusion that Fraenkel draws from this observation has to do with vindicating the reliability of Eustathius as a witness to earlier Homeric scholarship and with asserting Servius’ importance in the same terms (“Servius enables us in a considerable number of instances to form an idea of what the ancestors of our Homeric scholia were like in the first centuries of our era. In this regard his importance is second only to that of the papyri”, p. 153).
out, has been made independently by Aristoula Georgiadou in a revealing examination of the relationship between Eustathius and Servius (7). On the basis of M. Van der Valk’s study of Eustathius’ sources, and in view of the obvious similarities between Eustathius and Servius, Georgiadou reasonably suggests that Apollonius Sophista’s *Lexicon Homericum* may have been the common source (8). But the opinion shared by Fraenkel and Funaioli is different. They were evidently convinced that Servius used the actual scholia that have survived to our own day or else others that were essentially the same. There is a third possibility as well. Fraenkel concluded his compilation of parallel passages by saying that he had done “very little in comparison with what could be done and ought to be done, but it is enough to make it certain that here an exceedingly promising field is waiting for its harvester” (9). In 1965 Martin Mühmelt, following this clue, produced a more extensive and systematic study of these correspondences (10). In this work Mühmelt states his belief that the exegetical material found in the pages of Servius derives ultimately and without doubt from the scholia themselves, and not in general from manuals, lexica, or other research works (11). However, Mühmelt also holds that the similarities between Servius and the Greek scholiasts derive not from research in the writings of the Greek commentators conducted expressly for the purpose of writing a commentary on Vergil, but rather from material that Servius himself had learned from his own teachers when he was a student, the same material that he later taught to his own students while plying his trade as a *grammaticus* (12). According to Mühmelt, it is not so much a matter of looking for material in other people’s books, but rather of benefitting from work already accomplished throughout years of collecting and organizing the contributions of others. The explanation of the difference between “Pergama” and “Troy” or “Illium”, for instance, will have been learned years before the work on the *Aeneid*, and Servius will

(10) Mühmelt (1965). Mühmelt discusses the notes concerning Pergama on p. 5.
have recalled it from his own memory to illuminate any passage of any poem that seemed to require such a note (13).

I will return to Mühmelt’s hypothesis, which, if we assume that Servius had a good enough memory or system of note-taking, has the potential to explain how any given note could have found its way from any source to its current position in Servius’ commentary. But let me now turn to the second of Funaioli’s premises, which will prove to be not unrelated to the first. Recall that Funaioli assumes the existence of a particular connection between the Homeric scholia and those on the Aeneid. The idea of such a link seems natural in light of the many, many features that the poems share. But at the same time, much of the material that has been adduced, whether by Funaioli, Fraenkel, Mühmelt, or anyone else, to illustrate the relationship between Servius and the Greek exegetical tradition, consists mainly of personal names, place names, and other items of the same type – that is, with things that do not depend for their significance on any specific context. This being the case, it is not so obvious that a similarity at the level of narrative, such as indisputably does exist between the Aeneid and the Homeric poems, ought to produce parallel comments in the exegetical tradition. One can imagine a relationship between the Greek and Latin commentators with respect to a shared world of mythological lore, for instance, or of geographical learning, inasmuch as such aspects could be important for any poem at all (14). But Funaioli nevertheless posits a special relationship between the scholia on the Homeric epics and ancient exegesis of the Aeneid. He evidently means that there was something rather special about this relationship, in comparison to what he assumes about the others. His supposition seems to be that the Homeric

(13) “Wo immer mehrere Testimonia für eine Stelle vorhanden sind, braucht nicht ein Bestimmtes die eingesehene Quelle zu sein; vielmehr kann sie die gelehrte Grammatiker alle, teilweise sicher seit seiner Schulzeit, und die Notiz fertigte er aus dem Gedächtnis” (MÜHMELT (1965) p. 135).

(14) Thus Mühmelt’s monograph includes chapters on “Sacherklärung”, “Allgemeine Geographie”, “Worterklärungen, Glossen, Etymologien”, “Götternamen und -beinamen”, “Mythographica”, “Astronomische Scholien und Sternsagen”, and “Grammatische und stilistische Bemerkungen”. The majority of the material considered under these headings is not context-specific but is capable of moving freely among commentaries on any number of poems, specialized handbooks, and other forms of scholarship. The amount of material that is susceptible of such classification supports Mühmelt’s conclusion (MÜHMELT (1965) p. 135) that “In sich bilden die Scholien, lateinische und griechische, eine weitgehend einheitliche Überlieferungsmasse”.
scholia contain information that is particularly appropriate to interpreting the *Aeneid* – a hypothesis that is worth investigating.

It was again Fraenkel who gave evidence that Funaioli was right (15). Citing a correspondence between two notes concerning Hector, Fraenkel observes that the Roman commentator saw that the Vergilian passage (*Aen*. 2, 278) depends on a Homeric one (*Il.* 22, 401):

Serv. *in Aen*. 2, 278 ...*PLVRIMA MUROS*] quia ut Homerus dicit, in Hectorum extinctum omnes tela iecerunt more maiorum....

DServ *in Aen*. 2, 277 ...*ET CONCRETOS SANGVINE CRINES*] non sine ratione etiam hoc de crinibus dolet Aeneas, quia illis maxime Hector commend-abatur, adeo ut etiam tonsura ab eo nomen acceperit, sicut Graeci poetae docent.


Because of this resemblance, Fraenkel believes that it is natural to suppose that Servius got his note precisely from a comment on the analogous passage of Homer. One might say that this reconstruction is so obviously right as to require no further comment. But in reality, the implications of Fraenkel’s idea are rather remarkable. Let us consider: Servius explains a passage in *Aeneid* 2 on the basis of a note on an analogous passage in *Iliad* 22. The note is different from the one on the name *Pergama*, which does not depend on any specific context. The Vergilian passage refers to a precise passage in Homer, i.e. the one that Servius cites to explain it. If we could accept Fraenkel’s understanding of such parallels, it would be very important for anyone wishing to appreciate Servius’ method more fully in the light of Vergil’s method of composition. It is very well known that Vergil analyzed Homer in order to imitate him comprehensively (16). It is also known that his imitative procedures included

(16) This is the general thesis of Knauer (1964). It is not necessary to follow Knauer in every particular to accept the main outlines of his account.
the knowledge and use of Homeric commentaries, with poetic results that can be recognized in the text of the *Aeneid* (*\位居") And we know as well that there are a number of passages in Servius’ commentary that correspond to analogous passages in the Homeric scholia. Can we also suppose that Servius used his awareness of Vergil’s intertextual program as a kind of index to the Homeric scholia – i.e. that he annotated specific passages of the *Aeneid* by turning to the Homeric passages on which the Vergilian ones were modeled, and then consulted the Homeric scholia *ad loc.* in the hope of finding information that would be useful in his own commentary?

If we examine the parallel comments of Servius and the Homeric scholia, we are rewarded with indications that support this hypothesis, some of them rather impressive. But they raise additional questions as well. Specifically, certain parallels cause us to wonder whether Servius was indeed using Vergil’s program of allusion to Homer merely as an index to potentially useful exegetical material, or whether he had some ulterior motive in mind. At the beginning of the *Aeneid,* for instance, Servius asks why Vergil begins the poem with the word *arma*:

*Serv. in Aen. 1, 1 arma] multi uarie disserunt cur ab armis Vergilius coeperit, omnes tamen inania sentire manifestum est, cum eum constet aliunde sumpsisse principium, sicut in praemissa eius uita monstratum est. per ‘arma’ autem bellum significat, et est tropus metonymia.*

Servius’ question is reasonable enough, but it is worthwhile to turn it back on him and ask why Servius begins as he does. The answer is simple, but informative: he does so because the Homeric scholia begin this way. Against the first word of the first book of the Homeric poems we find an observation very similar to the one made by Servius (*\位居"):

*Σ A in II. 1, 1 μὴνιν ἀείδει] ξητοῦσι διὰ τί ἀπὸ τῆς μὴνινος ἡχατο, οὕτως δυσθήμου δύναμας. Διὰ δύο ταῦτα, πρῶτον μὲν, ἵν’ ἐν τοῦ πάθους ἀποκαθαρεύσῃ τὸ τοιοῦτο μόριον τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ προσεκ-\textsuperscript{t}πικωτέρους τούς ἀχροατὰς ἐπὶ τοῦ μεγέθους ποιήσῃ.*

The correspondence is impressive. Can we assume that the Roman commentator’s borrowing of this note is motivated by his awareness of

(18) For this parallel, which Fraenkel evidently did not notice, see Mühlem (1965) p. 116.
Vergil's allusive program in the *Aeneid*? It would be very interesting if this were so. In reality, despite circumstantial indications in its favor (such as the note on the defilement of Hector's corpse that was discussed above), it would be difficult to maintain this hypothesis to the point of absolute conviction. In the case of the two notes on *arma* and *menin*, for instance, Servius gives no indication that he regards the word *arma* as alluding specifically to Homer's *menin*. (I will return to this point in a moment.) It is also true that he adapts his source in a rather strange way. The Greek commentary is concerned with the artistic propriety of the word *menin*, "which is so ill-omened", as the first word of a poem. Servius betrays no such concern. Then the Greek scholiast goes on to justify Homer's choice, once again in artistic terms. Servius instead makes the whole problem go away, stating that the *Aeneid* originally began with the four-line epigram supposedly removed by Varius before the poem was made public "as has been shown in the preceding biography". The result is that, while the Greek commentary begins with a focused discussion of Homer's artistic principles, Servius' beginning seems rather pointless: the question as to why Vergil began his poem with the word *arma* proves to be a red herring. Another way of putting it would be that the note seems over-adequate to its context. As such, it raises the suspicion that Servius had something else in mind besides explaining the significance of the poem's first word.

Now, as I observed a moment ago, Servius is unaware, or at least shows no interest in, any intertextual relationship between *arma* and *menin*. Therefore we cannot suppose that the similarity between his commentary and the *Iliad* scholium was the product of Vergil's imitation of Homer. But it is possible, I would suggest, that a different intertextual relationship is in evidence. Could it not be that Servius' modeling of his note on the first word of the *Aeneid* upon what a Greek scholiast says about the first word of the *Iliad*, was motivated by a desire on Servius' part to produce a Vergilian commentary that resembled those on Homer? On this hypothesis, Servius will have needed no index of parallel passages in Vergil and Homer to guide his efforts: he will simply have decided to start his *Aeneid* commentary after the same fashion as the Homeric commentary that starts by asking why Homer opened the *Iliad* as he did.

The idea of Servius as himself a crafty intertextualist may seem bold. One must remember, though, that a kind of self-fashioning along the lines of Homeric scholarship had characterized Vergilian exegesis from an early date. As a well-known passage of the *vita* tradition suggestively puts
it, obrectatores Vergilio numquam defuerunt, neque mirum, nam nec Homero quidem (\(^{19}\)). From what the ancient lives have to say, what chiefly irritated the detractors were Vergil’s Homeric pretensions (\(^{20}\)). Thus we hear of treatises, including one extending to eight books, devoted to exposing Vergil’s “thefts” and “parallel passages”; and it is clear from the epigram about Hercules’ club, with which the relevant section of the ancient lives concludes, that it was theft from Homer that was featured in these exposés (\(^{21}\)). But there is also Carvilius Pictor, author of a work entitled Aeneidomastix, which was itself a blatant (if satirical) essay in critical intertextuality. Recognizing that Vergil aimed in the Aeneid to rival Homer himself, Carvilius followed the example of the Cynic philosopher Zoilus of Amphipolis, who wrote several works against Homer, including the colorfully-entitled Homeromastix (\(^{22}\)). Since Carvilius and the other obrectatores seem to have been rebutted by Asconius Pedianus (3-88 CE), we are justified in regarding the history of Homeric exegesis as a force that influenced the development of Vergil scholarship already in its early, formative years (\(^{23}\)). It therefore seems possible that by Servius’ time the tendency of Vergil commentators to model their works along the lines of Homeric commentators was well established. The traces that we find in Servius’ commentary may be features that he inherited, perhaps without realizing it, from his predecessors rather than reflections of his personal ambition to rival Homer’s commentators as Vergil had rivaled Homer.

There will be more to say under this heading. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that the methods by which Servius succeeded in recovering useful material from the Greek exegetical tradition were probably multiple. In general he certainly shared with all Greek scholiasts a number of generic tendencies that do not signal an intention to follow this or

---

\(^{(19)}\) I quote the uita Donatiana 43; for the other uiae see BRUGNOLI-F. STOK (1997) p. 288, s.v. ‘Vergiliii obrectatores.’

\(^{(20)}\) Such at least is the main point of the Donatus paragraph quoted above. It is true that the words nec Homero quidem are followed by remarks on the Antibucolica of Numitorius and by the report of a further jest based on Geo. 1, 299; but the remainder of Donatus’ chapter on obrectatores is concerned mainly with the Aeneid and by implication with Vergil’s rivalry of Homer.

\(^{(21)}\) Vita Donatiana 44.

\(^{(22)}\) About the Aeneidomastix nothing specific is known. On Zoilus see FGrH 71; FRIEDLANDER (1895).

\(^{(23)}\) Asconius Pedianus libro quem contra obrectatores Vergilii scripsit... (Vita Donatiana 46). For his dates see JER., Chron. 76.
that note in particular (24). It is also true that he preserves information that
we find in different scholia on different authors – whether he gets this
information mainly from memory and experience (as Mühmelt assumes),
from direct consultation of Greek commentaries (as Fraenkel and
Funaioli would have it), or from handbooks (according to Georgiadou) –
and uses this information to illuminate analogous passages of Vergil with-
out any intention of suggesting a relationship either between his own
commentary and his immediate source, or between Vergil and some other
poet. But it does seem possible as well that some portion of the Aeneid
commentary took the form that it did because the author’s research into
Homer’s scholarship was guided by Vergil’s own imitation of Homer;
and I have raised the possibility that the tradition of Vergilian exegesis
modeled itself on Homeric criticism in ways that left their mark on
Servius’ commentary, even where Vergil’s Homer program did not
serve as a specific guide. Both of these last possibilities remain to be
proved, and they may be proved or disproved independently of one
another. But ultimately we cannot regard them as unrelated phenomena.
Vergil’s detractors assumed the posture of Homer’s critics only because
Vergil himself had dared to rival Homer. We should not exclude the pos-
sibility that this dynamic motivated Vergil’s defenders as well, and that it
remained a feature of Vergilian exegesis down to Servius’ time. To state
the situation as pointedly as possible, it may be that some similarities
between Servius’ commentary and the Homeric scholia are the result of a
desire on the part of the Roman commentator to emulate Homer’s critics
in the same way that Vergil had emulated Homer.

In the remainder of this paper, I would like to illustrate some of the
possibilities that I have mentioned with other examples and some discus-
sion. The list of passages that I will present is very far from a complete
survey of the relevant evidence. I will be content if I can suggest some
lines along which future research might progress.

First of all I would like to examine a few passages in which it seems to
me possible that Servius followed Vergil’s lead in selecting material for
his commentary. In such cases, we will be justified if we imagine that
Servius was guided by Vergil’s program of Homeric intertextuality in

(24) In general see Uhl (1998); Kaster (1988). For a particularly clear illustration see
translating and transferring notes from the Homeric scholia into his own commentary on the Aeneid.

In the episode of the Fall of Troy, after the Trojans have gone to sleep, the Greek soldiers descend from their hiding place to take the city. Vergil uses a vivid phrase to represent this act: the horse *fundit armatos*, “pours out men in arms”. Servius’ commentary asserts that this usage is Homeric:

Serv. in Aen. 2, 329 _ fundit armatos_ et ad uelocitatem et ad multitudinem; et sonore, quasi adhuc descendant.

The phrase that Servius cites comes from the passage in *Odyssey* 8 where Demodocus recounts the same story: ἦειδεν δ’ ὦς ἀστυ διέπραθον νῆς Ἀχαιῶν / ἱππόθεν ἐκχύμενοι, κοῖλον λόχον ἐκπολιπόντες (“He sang then how the Achaeans left their hollow/hiding place and streamed from the horse and sacked the city”, 514-515 tr. Lattimore). Checking the T scholia to the *Odyssey* and Eustathius _ad loc._ we find comments analogous to that of Servius:

Σ D in Od. 8, 515 ἐνάργεις ἐποίησε διὰ ταύτην τὴν λέξιν· καταλείποντες γὰρ τὸν κοῖλον λόχον καὶ ἐκχυθέντες κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἐπόθουν αὐτὴν. καὶ ἄλλος μὲν ἄλλαχοι τὴν ὁμήρησαν ὡς ἐπὶ νυκτὸς....

Eust. 1608, 33 in Od. 8, 515 ἐξεῦ ἔδε καὶ σπουδῆς πολλῆς ἐνδείξιν τὸ ἐκχύμενοι, ὡς εἶ καὶ διερφο ποδὶ ἐκδραμεὶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς.

In this case, it is logical to assume that the similarity between the phrases _fundit equus_ and _hippothen ekkhymenoi_ was noted by some gatherer of Vergilian _furia_, so as to furnish Servius (or one of his predecessors) with an indication of the correspondence at this point between the Vergilian text and that of Homer. In addition, it seems very likely that the Roman commentator, while checking the Greek text, also read the various Greek scholia, where he would have found different notices concerning the _enargeia_ of the Homeric phrase. At this point, it would have been very easy to conclude that the Vergilian passage required a comparable note. In short, it is not unlikely that, in this case, the allusive program of the Aeneid caused the exegetical tradition to develop in such a way that the intertextual relationship between Servius and the Homeric scholia parallels that between Vergil and Homer.

A similar case occurs in the Nisus and Euryalus episode of book 9. In the relevant passage, the two adventurers arm themselves for their
mission. Nisus receives a lion skin from the captain Mnestheus and Aletes exchanges helmets with him. The word for “helmet”, galea, requires no comment: it is absolutely the normal Latin word. But Servius informs us that the helmet that Vergil has in mind is special:

*Aen. 9, 307* GALEAM FIDVS PERMVTAT ALETES] aliae enim sunt explorantum, sicut etiam Homerus ostendit (*).

A comment like this requires some commentary itself. A galea, to repeat, is a perfectly normal helmet. But it is true, as Servius’ note suggests, that this arming episode derives from the Homeric passage where Diomedes and Odysseus arm themselves before their own nocturnal escapade, the “Doloneia”. Servius remarks elsewhere upon the general intertextual relationship between the “Doloneia” and the adventure of Nisus and Euryalus (*). Moreover, certain passages of his commentary prove that his understanding of this relationship extends even to the level of fairly particular details (*). In the case of the word galea, however, there is no reason to cite the text of Homer. The meaning of the word, “helmet”, is perfectly well understood. Servius, though, thinks differently. This helmet is not of the ordinary type, but of the kind used by scouts, “as Homer shows”. Citing Homer here can mean nothing other than that Servius regards the word galea at this particular point as incapable of explanation without reference to the corresponding passage of the *Iliad*, where we find an extraordinary kind of helmet, a true zetema of Homeric exegesis much discussed by the Greek commentators:

Σ AD in *Iliad*. 10, 258, 261 χαταίτυξι] εἴδος περικεφαλαίας, ἀπὸ τοῦ κάτω τετήχθαι καὶ μὴ ἔχειν λόφον, ἀλλὰ κολλήν εἶναι....

In this case, one might say that Servius’ desire (or, once again, the desire of some predecessor) to reproduce his exegetical source drove him to attribute to an absolutely ordinary Latin word the status of a Homeric

(25) I follow Ramires (1996a) p. 60 in accepting aliae, the reading of the majority of mss., instead of galeae, which is found as a superlinear correction in the ninth-c. Tridentinus Lat. W. 72 and printed by Thilo. But the choice has no bearing on my argument.


hapax legomenon. In doing so, the Roman commentator also wanted to find within the allusion of Vergil’s galea to Homer’s kataitux a much stranger and more specific meaning than we are able to accept (28). Finally, and this is a very interesting point, the basic assumption that underpins this entire note is that Vergil cannot be understood, at least in this passage, without reference both to Homer and to the Homeric scho- lia (29).

In these brief examples, it is very obvious that the Roman commentator wrote with an awareness of Vergil’s allusive program and used this awareness as an index to the exegesis of the Homeric passages involved. His knowledge of the Homeric scholia influenced his own commentary in two different ways. In the first case, he virtually translated a Greek note on a Homeric phrase that was virtually translated by Vergil. In the second, he noted that a Latin word that is anything other than unusual could not be understood without reference to a very rare word in the corresponding passage of Homer; and to explain the meaning of the word in its Vergilian context, he paraphrased the Greek commentary. These instances illustrate the (in my view) strong possibility that Servius’ commentary in its intertextuality with the Homeric scholia, mirrors, perhaps deliberately, the intertextual relationship between Vergil and Homer.

Apart from such intertextually-motivated correspondences, there are also some passages in which one could, and perhaps should, imagine a different procedure, but still one by which the Roman commentator

(28) Note that some late mss. (on which in general see E. THOMAS (1880) p. 9-32 and THILO (1881) p. xci-xciii) contain additional material that very closely parallels material from the Iliad scholia. In the interpolated version after the Servian phrase sicut Homerus ostendit we find the following: qui exploratores sic armat et primo de Diomed.: ...sed de illa Diomedis galea proprie intellegendum est, quae sine cono est, ut occultor sit explorator: talis enim vocatur ἀκαταιτυφα, quia sit humilis fabricata, i.e. κάτω τευκτῇ. MÜHLELT (1965) p. 130-135 shows that much of the interpolated material can be paralleled in the (9th or 10th c.) Etymologicum Magnum, and such is the case here (ἡ δὲ εἰς τὸ κάτω τευκτῇ ἔλεγεν ē καταιτυφα, Etym. Mag. 488, 2 (MÜHLELT (1965) p. 132). The etymology given by these two sources (κάτω τευκτῇ δι τευκτημένη) closely parallels that of the T scholia (κάτω τευκτῇ, and it is difficult to believe that one of these versions was not available to Servius as well, even though he does not mention the word καταιτυφα or discuss its etymology.

(29) CASALI (2004) makes a convincing argument that Vergil’s imitation of the Dolonelia does not eliminate, but rather maintains features of the original that were objected to by the ancient exegetical tradition, in such a way as to ensure that the critical reception of the Vergilian episode follows that of its Homeric model, as Casali shows is in fact the case.
would have employed the Homeric scholia to find notes that would be suitable to his own project of explicating Vergil. For example, in Servius’ commentary on Aeneid 1 we find a note that explains the etymology of the name Pallas:

Serv. in Aen. 1, 39 PALLASNE] Minerua óπο τοῦ πάλλειν τὸ δόρυ, id est ab hastae concussione; uel quod Pallantem gigantem occiderit.

The substance and much of the phrasing of this comment, as Fraenkel and Mühmelt have shown, are drawn from a scholium on Iliad 1, 200 (30). The poetic contexts have nothing to do with one another. They do however share a characteristic that is accidental, but perhaps important: both are the first passages in which the name of the goddess appears within each of the poems. Does this circumstance explain the borrowing of the Greek scholium by the Roman commentator? Funaioli and especially Fraenkel imagine that Servius (or some predecessor) found this notice on the name of Pallas nowhere else but in a book of Homeric scholia. Since there is nothing in the text of the Aeneid that would point the Roman commentator to this passage of the Iliad, one has to imagine a procedure of the following sort. If one wanted to mine the Homeric scholia for information, it would be reasonable to use the text of Homer itself as an index to the notes. Scanning the text of the Iliad from the beginning, one would soon come upon the goddess’ name at line 200 of book 1; and, consulting the note ad loc. one would find the desired information. The result would thus be exactly what we see in the correspondence between Aen. 1, 39 and II. 1, 200. In view of this possibility, it is necessary to consider anew the parallel notes on the word Pergama. In this case as well we find that the word appears for the first time in Aen. 1, 466 and in II. 4, 508; and once again the Greek scholium has made its way into the corresponding position of Servius’ commentary. I have not looked systematically for such coincidences; it is conceivable that they are not infrequent. However this may be, the existence of these examples forces us to ask whether Vergilian exegetes did in fact simply read through the Homeric

poems and their scholia in search of material that might be readily transferred into their own commentaries.

While it is not impossible that Vergilian exegesis took shape in this way, it seems to me unlikely that this was the principal method employed. In the first place, it is practically the most cumbersome and inefficient research method imaginable. I take it that this statement requires no defense. In the second place, specific circumstances, different in the case of each example, cast doubt upon our hypothetical reconstruction. In the case of Pallas it is true that part of the same scholium that annotates the word's first appearance in Homer (II. 1, 200) also glosses its first appearance in Vergil (Aen. 1, 466); but, as we have already seen, another part of the Greek scholium is found several hundred lines earlier in Servius’ Aeneid commentary on a line (1, 95) in which the word Pergama does not appear. This is perhaps not a fatal problem; no commentary is composed without revision and rewriting, and it is possible that, after reaching Aen. 1, 466 and thus having occasion to comment on the word, the Roman commentator went searching in Homer, found the note on II. 1, 200, used part of it to gloss Pergama at 1, 466 and added the other part to what he had already written on 1, 95. More telling perhaps is the comment on Pallas. As we have seen, the goddess’ name occurs for the first time at II. 1, 200 and at Aen. 1, 39, and the scholia to both lines contain substantially identical notes. What complicates this picture is that the name also occurs for the first time at Od. 1, 252 where, once again, it is glossed by essentially the same scholium in a form that actually parallels Servius still more closely than does the Iliad scholium (31). This could mean that Servius (or whoever it was who imported this note into the tradition of Vergilian exegesis) needn’t have begun his search with the Iliad scholium, because he would have obtained the same results by searching the Odyssey scholia. (Indeed, by doing so he would have come upon the note that he needed after much less searching!) Still, the most economical assumption, and the one that I personally favor, is that all three commentaries were following a procedure that is still widely respected, namely, that of explaining the significance of a name (character, theme, or what have you) the first time it appears in the text that is being explicated; and that the author of each of these commentaries will have got the

(31) Πολλάς ἐπιθετικῶς ἢ Ἀθηνᾶ, ἀπὸ τοῦ πάλλειν τὸ δόρυ· ἢ ὅτι Πάλλαντα ἀνείλεν, ἕνα τῶν Γιγάντων.
information not from another commentary, but from a reference work of some sort (32). This does not exclude the possibility that Servius, as Mühmelt would have it, had learned by heart from his teachers this information about Pallas' name, and then some time later inserted it in his own commentary. But Mühmelt himself is aware of the many places outside of commentaries as such in which the same information about Pallas' name appears (33). Furthermore, although I do not want to underestimate the mnemonic powers of ancient scholars, the degree of precision that one finds among the multiple repetitions of this scholium seems to argue in favor of written transmission. Thus I think it is most probable that the Roman exegete, in writing his Aeneid commentary, when he first encountered the name of Pallas began hunting for an explanation of its significance not in his own memory, but in a handbook written expressly for that purpose — very probably the same book used for their parts by the Homeric commentator(s) on II. 1, 200 and Od. 1, 252, by the scholiast on Lycophron 355, and so on.

Parallels of the sort between the notes on Pallas and Pergama, then, should be viewed as belonging to a particular class. It is clear that information of this type circulated widely among ancient scholars and that it was not attached to the exegetical tradition of any poet in particular, but was freely applicable to all. Scholia belonging to this class are fairly abundant in Servius' commentary; after grammatical notes, they may be the second most numerous category of information. With respect to Funaioli's dictum about the relationship between Servius' commentary and the Greek scholia, they probably do not represent a "via diretta" between the two, but rather attest the fact that the Roman commentator was breathing the same air and using the same reference works as his Greek colleagues. It is true that such material may have interacted with notes of a more particular kind to create the sense of a special relationship between Servius' Aeneid commentary and the Homeric scholia. Recall that Servius begins his commentary with the observation that many discuss why Vergil begins with the word "arms," and that this

(32) This possibility is complicated by the fact that the first occurrence of the name Pallas in the Odyssey is annotated by a scholium that is practically identical to the ones found in the Iliad and Aeneid scholia.
(33) Besides Servius and the Homeric scholia, he lists as parallel testimonia Apollonius Sophista, 126, 29; Σ Lycophron 355; Etym. Mag. 649, 52; Suda s.v. Pallas (II 50 Adler).
beginning repeats that of the *Iliad* scholia, which ask why Homer begins with *menin*. I have suggested that imitation of the Homeric scholia by the Roman commentator reflects a desire to emulate the form of a Homeric commentary. If this idea were correct, one could imagine a procedure whereby Servius read the *Aeneid* together with the Homeric scholia, searching through the Greek notes for material appropriate to the exegesis of Vergil – a procedure that would have left traces in structural correspondences between the text of the *Aeneid* and the sequence of comments on Homer, without much concern for parallels between the *Aeneid* and the Homeric poems themselves. Notes such as those on *Pallas* and *Pergama*, even if produced by normal procedures found in all commentaries, would have contributed to the impression of formal parallelism between the Homeric and Vergilian exegetical traditions. But the idea of an extensive intertextual relationship between Servius' *Aeneid* commentary and one or more Homeric prototypes must remain hypothetical until the evidence has been sifted more systematically.

What we can say is that there are a few passages in which Servius refers openly to Vergil's imitation of Homer and where his commentary follows the lead of the Homeric scholia. This observation brings me to my last example (34). At *Aen.* 5, 112, in the memorial games for Anchises, Aeneas promises several talents of gold and silver to the winner of the boatrace. Servius comments on the meaning of the word *talentum* which, according to him, differs among different peoples:

Serv. in *Aen.* 5, 112 ARGENTI AVRIQVE TALENTA] talenti secundum variae gentes uarium pondus est 3a sed apud Romanos talentum est septuaginta librae, sicut Plautus ostendit in *Mostellaria*, qui ait duo talenta esse centum quadraginta libras. legimus etiam talentum esse paululum quiddam 4d1 nam Homerus in ludis funebribus Patrocli ultima praemia dicit duo talenta 4c quod nos cogit aliud minimum 4d2 intellegere. nam si primus victor bouem accept, consequens non est ut dicamus, ultimum tam magnum accepisse praemium 4f unde apparent talentum etiam minimum quiddam 4d3 significare.

It is noteworthy that Servius at just this moment mentions the funeral games of Patroclus, where we find mention of a prize of two talents (*Ili.* 23, 269). Of course one realizes immediately that the games in Patroclus'
honor are Vergil’s model for these games. Therefore, one might suppose that Servius found his comment on talentum in the Homeric scholia next to the passage in which Homer mentions the prize of two talents. But no: the relevant comment occurs elsewhere, in Iliad 9, where Agamemnon offers ten talents of gold if Achilles would desist from his wrath. At this point, however, one notices that the embassy to Achilles is mentioned in the Greek commentary on the funeral games, and vice versa:

Σ D in Il. 9, 122 τάλαντα] τά νῦν ἔξαιρισθίλια λέγεται παρά Ἀθήναιόις, διαφόρως δὲ νοεῖται ἣν γὰρ βραχύ τι ἄλι παρά τοῖς ἁχαίοις. καὶ ὁ ποιήτης δῆλον ἤμιν τούτο ποιεῖ ἐν τῷ ἐπιταφίῳ Πατρόκλου λέγων “ὑπελθὼν μὲν πρῶτα ποιῶν ἄγλα’ ἀεθλα τῆκε γυναικα ἀγέθαι αἵμοινα ἐργ’T εἰδυναν καὶ τρίποδ’ ὑτώντα δυσκαλεικοσῦνον, τῷ πρῶτῳ ἀτόρ αὐ τῷ δευτέρῳ ἔπρεπον θῆκεν ἐξῆτε’, ἀμήτης, βρέφος ἢμίωνον φορέουσαν αὐτοῖς δὲ τὸ τρίτον ἂπυρον κατέθηκε λέβητα, τῷ δὲ τετάρτῳ τῆκε δύσι χρυσοί τάλαντα” [Il. 23.262-69]. εἰ γὰρ περὶ τοῦ τάλαντον τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐστι βραχύ τι ἄλι τό τάλαντον τοῦ χρυσοῦ ἢν παρ’ αὐτοῖς, ὡς καὶ Δίφιλος ἐν Αναγύρῳ εἰ “βραχύ τι ἄλι ἔστι τάλαντον” φησί. τάλαντον δὲ, οὐ τάλαντα. ταῦτα δὲ χρυσοί τάλαντον.


One has to suppose that Servius (or some earlier commentator) got from the note on Patroclus’ funeral games not only the idea that he should write a note to explain the word talentum, but also the cross-reference to the embassy passage, where he found the real model for his own note (35).

But he does not cite the embassy; indeed, it would have been totally illogical to do so. Instead he cites the funeral games, which we know with a certainty that Servius recognized as the model of the Vergilian games, as he informs us in a note at the beginning of Aeneid 5 (36).

To conclude, it seems to me certain that Servius pursued diverse ways of exploiting the Homeric scholia. As a grammaticus, he obviously had a lifetime’s experience working with the exegetical material, and so will have incorporated into his own work procedures, concepts, technical vocabulary, and also perhaps some specific exegetical material that he will have learned by heart from studying the Homeric (and other) scholia. But in addition it seems overwhelmingly probably that Servius used lexica, handbooks, and so forth, more frequently than Mühmelt, at least, supposes. It also seems clear that Funaioli and Fraenkel were right, and that Servius did consult the Homeric scholia in the form of a proper, line-by-line commentary, at least on occasion, perhaps for special purposes; the note on arma (1, 1) is perhaps the clearest, simplest example. And there are some notes that in my opinion are best explained as instances in which the Roman commentator was guided by Vergil’s program of Homeric imitation to specific passages in the Homeric scholia that he was able to incorporate into his own commentary on the Aeneid; our discussions of the prize in the foottrace (5, 112) and of Nisus’ helmet (9, 307) afford the most definite examples. Finally, I have advanced the hypothesis that the general tendency of Vergilian exegesis to model itself according to a Homeric prototype gave rise to an intention on the part of Servius or one of his predecessors to imitate Vergil as an emulator of Homer, by making himself an emulator of Homeric exegetes, and that this intention has left clear traces in specific passages of Servius’ commentary. All of these conclusions must remain provisional, but I hope to have made a case that all are worthy of further investigation and discussion.

University of Pennsylvania. 

Joseph Farrell.

(36) Serv. in Aen. 5, 1 INTERRA dum fletur aut sepelitur Dido: et hoc sermone librum, ut solet, superioribus iuxit. cuius pars maior ex Homero sumpta est: nam omnia quae hic commemorat, exhibentur circa tumulum Patroeli, nisi quod illic curule exercetur, hic nauale certamen.
Sergio CASALI, Fabio STOK

Servio :
stratificazioni esegetiche e modelli culturali

Servius :
Exegetical Stratifications and Cultural Models

ÉDITIONS LATOMUS
BRUXELLES
2008