

Historia* in the Commentary of Servius

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The commentary of Servius on Vergil is one of the longest extant commentaries on a Latin author and contains, in addition to the usual lexical, grammatical, and exegetical notes, a rich array of significant comments on a wide variety of cultural, historical and literary topics.¹ While individual notes of the Servian commentary are frequently cited, consideration of specific topics involving the commentary as a whole has been infrequent.² This relative neglect may in part be due to the textual and formal peculiarities of the surviving commentary. This paper deals with the use and significance of one such topic, that encompassed by the term *historia*, and seeks to demonstrate that the Servian commentary employs it in several distinct but related senses which reflect ancient literary and historical theory and practice; and further that the commentary employs the term *historia* in its manifold meanings as an important critical tool in interpreting and evaluating the *Aeneid*.

This study of the Servian commentary will include the following considerations: 1) attempts to define *historia* and to distinguish it from *fabula*; 2) the meaning or meanings of the term as reflected in the specific context of notes in which it is employed; 3) the nature of the critical standards of veracity reflected in the use of *historia*; 4) how the commentary attempts to relate *historia* to an understanding of Vergil's artistic methods. It is hoped that the

* This paper in its present form has greatly benefited from the comments of TAPA's readers. To them and to the suggestions of the Editor is to be attributed much of what is meritorious in the presentation, to me whatever blemishes remain.

¹ Other important commentaries are those of Macrobius on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* (ed. James Willis, Leipzig 1963), Acron and Porphyrio on Horace (ed. F. Havthall, Amsterdam 1966), Lactantius Placidus on Statius (ed. R. Jahnke, Leipzig 1898), Aelius Donatus on Terence (ed. P. Wessner, 1902-05), and Tiberius Claudius Donatus on Vergil (ed. H. Georgii, 1905-06). Conte 628 calls the Servius commentary "exceptionally rich and complex."

² Several significant ones include Jones 1961, drawing on his 1959 dissertation; Bruggisser; Wallace. As this paper was being revised, two works of Lazzarini came to my attention. The second (1989) has only marginal connection with the present paper since it explores some of the principles of literary analysis employed by Servius, but the first (1984) overlaps somewhat, although here too the author's focus is different from mine—how the *historia/fabula* distinction becomes the basis for Servius to champion a two-level interpretation of the *Aeneid*. My focus is a more empirical study of *historia* itself. Where our investigations converge, however, there is much agreement.

topic, narrow in focus but comprehensive in treatment, may provide some useful insights to the following concerns: the complex nature of the commentary of Servius, the standards of literary criticism of Vergil's *Aeneid* in late antiquity, and the theory and practice of ancient historiography.

At present, and presumably for the immediate future, attempts to examine the commentary comprehensively face several difficulties. First, citations can be made from two different editions, the older one of Thilo-Hagen, which is complete but regarded as textually inferior, and the newer Harvard edition begun by E. K. Rand et al., textually superior, but still incomplete.³ A second, more significant, difficulty arises from the composite nature of the extant commentary, apparently representing at least two traditions, i.e., the shorter Servius and the longer Servius Danielis.⁴ The Thilo-Hagen edition attempted (unsuccessfully, to some) to provide through contrasting type styles (i.e., Roman and italic) some indication of the two-fold form of the commentary. The newer Harvard edition with its unique page format suggests that for any specific note in the extant commentary there is a three-fold possibility. Any comment may be distinguished as belonging: 1) only to the shorter or un-conflated form of the commentary, i.e., S; 2) exclusively to the longer form, i.e., DS; 3) commonly to both the shorter and longer forms, i.e., S = DS.⁵ Such

³ Although this new edition of Servius was eagerly awaited and the first volume was generally welcomed by scholars, its unusual format and even its textual integrity were questioned by a few reviewers, most notably Edward Fraenkel. The magnitude of the endeavor is seen in the fact that the second volume of the series (actually, volume 3 comprising the commentary on *Aeneid* 3-5) did not appear until nineteen years later (Stocker et. al. 1965). While we still await completion of the Harvard edition, scholarly work has continued on the thorny problem of the manuscript tradition of the commentary, e.g., Murgia. Meanwhile, in the words of one scholar, "A good critical text of the whole of Servius is still lacking" (Kenney 769).

⁴ The Servius identified as the author in manuscripts of the briefer commentary (= *Servius vulgatus*, Thilo) is generally thought to be the late 4th century AD Servius Grammaticus who appears prominently in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*. On the relationship of this Servius with the Servius of the commentary see Kaster 1980: 219-62 and 1988: 169-97. The identity and date of the compiler (or compilers) of the expanded commentary (*Danielis Servius*), as well as its ultimate source or sources, is much debated. It is now clear that this larger commentary was not itself the source of the shorter Servius commentary but the result of the accretion of much heterogeneous material, although both forms of the commentary preserve some material from Aelius Donatus' lost commentary. See Barwick 106-145. Many scholars, starting with Rand, championed Aelius Donatus, the teacher of Servius, as the ultimate source of the larger commentary, but more recent opinion is skeptical. In addition to the question of the ultimate source of Servius Danielis, there is much disagreement regarding the place, date, and reliability of the early medieval compiler(s) who presumably 'contaminated' the two commentaries. Cf. Thilo I, pref. xxiii-xlvi; Nettleship I, esp. pp. xcv-xcviii; Rand 158-64. For a useful discussion of the assumptions, many open to question, which underlie these debates, see Daintree 37-65.

⁵ For the three-fold division see Murgia 1 n. 1. This tripartite division, however, depends on the Harvard edition, which is not yet complete. I adopt the following practice in citing notes

clear-cut distinctions, however, frequently obscure the high degree of contamination that characterizes the manuscripts of both traditions. Despite these formidable difficulties, the present study hopes to contribute in however small a way to further understanding the literary and intellectual climate that the commentary reflects.

The term *historia* (in any form, singular or plural) appears 118 times throughout the whole commentary.⁶ Not surprisingly, nearly all of these appear in notes to the *Aeneid*, with only a few instances for the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*.⁷ This special relationship of the term to the *Aeneid* is, I believe, significant; indeed, it is the subject of several comments, as we shall consider presently. First, however, we must consider the attempt of the commentary to define *historia*, and then the context of the comments in which the term is found.

The commentary offers the most direct statement of the significance of *historia* in the following comment:

et sciendum est, inter fabulam et argumentum, hoc est historiam, hoc interesse, quod fabula est dicta res contra naturam, sive facta sive non facta, ut de Pasiphae, historia est quicquid secundum naturam dicitur, sive factum sive non factum, ut de Phaedra. (to *Aen.* 1.235)

This comment contains both expected and surprising elements. It is clear that the terms and general outline of the definition ultimately derive from the

from the commentary: 1) all citations will be introduced by 'to', i.e., to *Aen.*; 2) citations of the fuller commentary by DS (= Servius Danielis), and finally, 3) if nothing follows the citation, then that comment is found in both forms of the commentary. Such attribution may begin to lay the foundations for a comprehensive study of the relationship between the two forms of the commentary based on analysis of common topics.

⁶ This number does not include forms of *historia* used in the titles of works, e.g., Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, together with Sallust and Herodotus; this constitutes an additional 29 examples; also excluded here are such derivatives as: *historici* (12 instances), *historice* (1), *historiographi* (1) and *Polyhistor* (1).

⁷ Most of these clearly refer to specific historical works: e.g., Pliny (to *Ecl.* 7.30; to *G.* 1.414; 2.146), Pollio (to *Ecl.* 3.84), Augustus (to *G.* 2.41), Sallust (to *G.* 3.383), Herodotus (to *G.* 3.532), and Suetonius (to *G.* 4.127); with only two exceptions: to *G.* 2.533 and 3.25. Note that of the total number, approximately half are correctly identified in the generally useful but incomplete index of Mountford-Schultz; unfortunately, in addition to the many omissions, some citations given in the index (to *Aen.* 1.422, 2.166, 3.73, 8.655; to *G.* 2.523) are not to be found in the commentary itself due, presumably in one or two cases, to simple printing errors; others are cited erroneously under *historia*, due either to confusion with its cognate forms, e.g., *historicus* and *historice* (to *Aen.* 8.493, 9.144 DS, 11.597 DS), or to a failure to distinguish between common introductory phrases like *tangit* or *ostendit* and the similar, fuller forms, e.g., *tangit historiam* (to *Aen.* 1.491, 2.166, 3.73, 133 DS, 287 DS; 8.564).

tradition established in earlier writers, notably Cicero, Quintilian, and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.⁸ Quintilian demonstrates the obvious resemblance:

Et quia narrationum, excepta qua in causis utimur, tres accepimus species, fabulam, quae uersatur in tragoediis atque carminibus non a ueritate modo sed etiam a forma ueritatis remota, argumentum, quod falsum sed uero simile comoediae fingunt, historiam, in qua est gestae rei expositio, grammaticis autem poeticas dedimus: apud rhetorem initium sit historica, tanto robustior quanto uerior. (*Inst.* 2.4.2)

While Quintilian differs somewhat from Cicero and the *Rhetorica*, all three generally agree on the following points: 1) *fabula* is narration that is non-factual and unrealistic, appropriate to tragedy and poetry; 2) *historia* is narration of actual events, especially those remote from the present; and 3) *argumentum* is narration that is non-factual but realistic, appropriate to comedy. In addition, despite citing examples from drama and poetry, all three authors share an essentially rhetorical interest in the three critical terms.

When we compare the commentary's definition with this tradition, some important differences emerge. To begin with, there is an absence of any rhetorical or dramatic context. On the contrary, the definition has been occasioned by a question of narrative accuracy involving the figures of Dardanus and Teucer, which causes the commentators to remark that poets often carelessly shift names: *quia solent poetae nomina de vicinis provinciis vel personis usurpare*. In addition, the illustrations cited are not taken specifically from comedy and tragedy, but from myth more generally, i.e., Pasiphaë and Phaedra.

More importantly, a two-fold distinction has replaced the tripartite one. Instead of *fabula*, *argumentum*, and *historia*, we are left with *fabula* and *historia*. Considering the unanimity of the tradition regarding a triple distinction, the elimination of *argumentum*, or rather its replacement by *historia*, would seem to require some explanation. It might be assumed that the traditional connection of *argumentum* with the verisimilitude of comic plots and that of *historia* with realistic, often factual narrative has simply led to a conflation of the two terms. This would be a plausible explanation, if the commentators regarded *argumentum* in an essentially dramatic or comedic sense, as the earlier writers clearly do, e.g., Quintilian: *nam et fabulae ad actum scaenarum compositae argumenta dicuntur* (5.10.9). However, it seems unlikely that the commentators understand *argumentum* in the same sense, since

⁸ Cic. *Inv.* 1.27; *Rhet. Her.* 1.13; Quint. *Inst.* 2.4.2, also found in Isidore, *Ety.* 1.44.5. For a more complete list see Lazzarini 1984: 119 n. 5.

references to comedy or drama are absent from the definition. Perhaps such an omission was simply an error due to indiscriminate borrowing or confusion in the meaning of the term, and thus no great significance should be attached to its absorption by *historia*. Quintilian himself reminds us how diverse the meanings of *argumentum* were (*sed argumentum quoque plura significat*, 5.10.9) and proceeds to distinguish among them.

The frequent use of *argumentum* in the commentary affords an opportunity to judge how the commentators themselves viewed the term. There are 67 instances: 57 to the *Aeneid*, 7 to the *Georgics*, and 3 to the *Eclogues*. Examination yields the following results: 1) *argumentum* never refers to comedy or the plots of comedy; for this only *fabula* or *comoedia* are used;⁹ and 2) *argumentum* nearly always refers to a 'proof,' e.g., *argumentum amoris* (to *Aen.* 1.345) or to a form of reasoning, e.g., *et est genus argumenti a necessario* (to *Aen.* 1.562). It implies a rhetorical or logical rather than a dramatic context: *retorica esse argumenta, quae a contrariis laudant* (to *Aen.* 3.476). It seems clear that the commentary consistently regards *argumentum* not in the sense of plot, comic or otherwise, but as relating to proof or probability.¹⁰

One note will serve to illustrate the commentators' understanding of *argumentum*. Vergil describes the shield of Turnus, which contains a representation of Io, the maid transformed into a cow, as an *ingens argumentum* (*Aen.* 7. 791). The commentary offers the following note: *aut fabula, ut Cicero 'argumenta erant in valvis': aut re vera argumentum, quo se Graecum probare cupiebat. hoc enim etiam Amata superius dixit*. While this may seem at first confusing, the alternative explanation is consistent with the terms of the definition which we are considering. The shield scene can be judged from two different perspectives: the content with its improbable (as we shall presently see) metamorphosis is *fabula*, unnatural (*contra naturam*), but the purpose of shield scene is to present a proof of Turnus' Greek ancestry.

Thus, the commentary's two-fold definition alters the notion of *historia* from the earlier tradition and more sharply contrasts it with *fabula*. By first restricting the sense of *argumentum*, now referring not to comic plot but to proof or evidence, then by equating *argumentum* with *historia*, *historia* itself

⁹ *Comoedia*, five times in the commentary, e.g., to *Aen.* 2.512 DS, 5.122, 10.567 DS, and to *Ecl.* Intr., and 3.1; for *fabula* in this sense, cf. n. 23 below.

¹⁰ Apparently this is not unique to the Servian commentary, cf. *TLL* which reports τεκμήριον as a gloss for *argumentum*. The use of *argumentum* in the commentary also seems to correspond to the use of τὸ εἰκός, which is frequently invoked by Greek writers in dealing with the credibility of myths; cf. Paus. 8.2.4. Note that my interpretation, based on the use of *argumentum* in the commentary itself, is somewhat different in focus from Lazzarini 1984: 124, who sees *historia* absorbing the more traditional sense of *argumentum* as versimilitude.

appears to absorb the notion of *ratio* or probability inherent in the use of *argumentum* throughout the commentary. The commentators state that both *fabula* and *historia* are *res dicta (dicitur)*, that is a described or narrated event or, perhaps as we might say, ‘an account.’ But *historia* apparently has the added element of *argumentum* or probability, which is lacking in *fabula*. Such a sharp contrast between truth and falsehood would seem to reflect the distinction traditionally made between *fabula* (μῦθος or μυθῶδες) on the one hand and *historia* (ἱστορία) and *ratio* (λόγος) on the other.¹¹

The presence of such an *argumentum* presumably guarantees what the commentators elsewhere call the *fides historiae* (to *Aen.* 1.267), or the *veritas historiae* (to *Aen.* 1.526, 9.742), or the *vera historia* (to *Aen.* 1.651 DS, 8.294 DS). Despite many and obvious cultural and intellectual limitations (by no means unique to the Servian commentary), the commentators do insist strenuously on discovering the truth and exposing what is false.¹² And they often look to the ‘historian’ and ‘grammarian’ to be able to discover the truth: *veritas tamen secundum philologos et historicos hoc habet* (to *Aen.* 8.190).

Returning to the definition, the meaning of *historia* is amplified by yet another element. *Historia*, a probable or credible account, is to be distinguished from *fabula* not on the basis of whether there is some objective evidence that it actually took place, i.e., *sive factum sive non factum*, but whether it is ‘natural’ (*secundum naturam*), whereas *fabula* is ‘unnatural’ (*contra naturam*). As Fornara 99 n. 10 remarks: “It is immaterial, of course, whether or not the story [i.e., *historia*] is a fiction; what matters is its authenticity as a story.”

While the precise meaning of the *secundum naturam* criterion is not yet clear, ultimately this linking of *natura* to *historia* seems to reflect the original association of the Greek ἱστορία with φύσις (*natura*). This sense is found in Aristotle (*Gen. An.* 716B32: ἐν ταῖς ἱστορίαις ταῖς περὶ τῶν ζώων; for further discussion of Aristotle’s use of the terms, see Press 33), continues in the title of Pliny’s work *Historiae Naturales*,¹³ and survives even today in the tradition of

¹¹ On the initial Greek distinction between λόγος and μῦθος see Peter 9. For some representative ancient views, cf. Paus. 1.3.3: λέγεται μὲν δὴ καὶ ἄλλα οὐκ ἀληθῆ παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς οἷα ἱστορίας ἀνηκόοις οὔσι καὶ ὅποσα ἤκουον εὐθὺς ἐκ παίδων ἔν τε χοροῖς καὶ τραγῳδίαις πιστὰ ἡγουμένοις; and Plut. *Thes.* 1.3: εἴη μὲν οὖν ἡμῖν ἐκκαθαίρομενον λόγῳ τὸ μυθῶδες ὑπακοῦσαι καὶ λαβεῖν ἱστορίας ὅψιν.

¹² Cf. *quod falsum est. nam si veritatem historiae requiras* . . . (to *Aen.* 9.742); also consider, for example, the frequency of such expressions as *veritas* (to *Aen.* 1.297, 6.25) and *re vera* in the commentary often in contrast to such words as *fictum* or *fabula* or *fabulosa*.

¹³ Pref. 1: *libros naturalis historiae*; cf. Servius to *Aen.* 3.113: *et Plinius in naturali historia dicit* . . .; Pliny is cited 36 times in the commentary of the *Aeneid* alone; see the Mountford-Schultz index.

museums of Natural History. It assumes the ability to discern by means of some critical method of inquiry (ἱστορία or λόγος) the permanent 'truth' or 'reality' (φύσις/*natura*) beyond immediate or generally accepted, and often, impermanent experience.¹⁴ Thus the means, ἱστορία, and the end, φύσις/*natura*, become easily identified. The resulting reliable and thus 'permanent' account can be applied equally to widely varied areas.¹⁵ In this way *historia* might include not only social and political events but also informational accounts of persons (including heroes and gods) and natural and physical phenomena (Press 21). We will shortly examine how these theoretical distinctions are carried out in practice in individual notes of the commentary.

The commentary also illustrates the distinctions offered in the definition by citing the examples of Pasiphaë and Phaedra. The account of Pasiphaë is *fabula* presumably because it tells of something unnatural (*contra naturam*), i.e., a woman mating with a bull and subsequently giving birth to a half-human, half-bull monster. Such an account can either be rejected totally as false, or can be regarded as fundamentally true if these unnatural elements are removed, which, in fact, the commentary later proceeds to do (to *Aen.* 6.14). On the other hand, the account of Phaedra is offered as an example of *historia*, i.e., *secundum naturam*, because it is not, apparently, unrealistic, unnatural, or at least not physically impossible that a stepmother should fall in love with her step-son and then kill herself because of her unrequited passion.¹⁶

While the definition of the Servian commentators retains the traditional terminology found in earlier writers, i.e., *fabula*, *historia*, and *argumentum*, it reduces this three-fold distinction from: 1) unnatural and unrealistic (*fabula*), 2) perhaps non-factual, but realistic (*argumentum*), and 3) realistic and factual (*res gesta*), to those that are either unrealistic and unnatural (*fabula*), or natural and realistic (*historia*). In addition, the examples of Phaedra and Pasiphaë are consistent with the implications of the definition. First, the commentary ignores the previous dramatic connotations of the terms implicit, for example, in

¹⁴ On *historia* as 'critical inquiry' see Fornara 49; Press, chapt. 2: "History as Inquiry in the Hellenic Age," 23-34.

¹⁵ For examples of this concern for permanence, although from contrasting viewpoints, cf. Aristotle *Poet.* 1451B7: ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποιήσις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δὲ ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει, and Thuc. 1.22.4: κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ; cf. Hunter 103: "In other words, Thucydides interpreted his data in such a way as to make it useful to the present and the future by isolating similarity of process in the past, permanence amidst change."

¹⁶ In applying such 'rationalizing criticism' rather than more objective empirical tests to the myths, the commentary reflects, although obviously in a more simplistic form, the common practice of many earlier historians; e.g., Herodotus, concerning which see Hunter 96.

Quintilian. Second, it blurs the distinction between a ‘natural’ and an ‘historical,’ i.e., human event, as well as between a probable and an actual fact.

While this blurring may seem surprising, the implications of the definition, far from being unique or unorthodox, reflect many of the prevailing theoretical views of history found in Greek and Roman writers.¹⁷ Even Thucydides’ insistence on testing accounts by means of τεκμηρία and σημεία (1.21.1) must be balanced by his readiness to base his judgments κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον (1.22.4) and his reporting of speeches according to τὰ δέοντα μάλιστ’ εἰπεῖν (1.22.1). A recent study of the question reminds us:

Rhetorical theory divided stories (*diegmata, fabulae*) into the ‘mythical,’ ‘historical,’ and the ‘lifelike.’ These theoreticians were not, however, interested in the actual veracity even of the ‘historical’ story. Quite simply, a story was ‘mythical’ if it was ‘contrary to nature,’ while a ‘historical’ narrative possessed verisimilitude and concerned actual events and people (including heroes recognized by the literary tradition).¹⁸

The peculiarity of this view to us tells much about our own scientific assumptions about history, as well as about the often protean nature of the concept of history in antiquity, and its close association with, and often subordination to, the principles of the rhetorician and the grammarian.¹⁹ Both Cicero and Quintilian stress the connection of *historia* to rhetoric.²⁰ In addition, Quintilian also exemplifies a peculiar ancient understanding of *historia* when he gives as one of the duties of the *grammaticus* the *enarratio historiarum* (1.8.18), while also noting that the *enarratio auctorum* is called *historice* (1.9.1). In this sense, a commentator or scholar (*enarrator*), like the authors of the commentary, is a kind of ‘historian.’²¹ The commentary’s definition fits squarely into this

¹⁷ The tendency to overlook the element of factuality in the concept of *historia* is frequent in late antiquity, see Press 19. Occasionally, one finds some expression of caution in the use of the plausibility yardstick, cf. Diod. 3.20.3: ὡς ἂν τῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις πιθανότητος τὴν μὲν ἀκοὴν πειθοῦσης, τὴν δ’ ἀλήθειαν οὐδαμῶς εὗρισκούσης.

¹⁸ Fornara 10. For Thucydides specifically, consider Gomme, *HCT* I 135: “it should be remembered that *tekmerion* is not evidence, but inference drawn from evidence . . .”

¹⁹ On the contrast between ancient and modern views of history, see Veyne 112: “History, born of inquiry and reportage, had, with Eusebius, come to be confused with philology. A very different thing, which also bears the name history, arises with the moderns. It is the product of controversy and a divorce from philology.”

²⁰ *De Orat.* 1.187: in *grammaticis historiarum cognitio, verborum interpretatio*; *Inst.* 1.2.14: *si quaestiones explicet* [i.e., *grammaticus*], *historiam exponat* and (2.4.3): *apud rhetorem initium sit historica, tanto robustior quanto verior*; on *historia* as a branch of literature see Press, chapt. 3: “History as a Literary Genre,” 35–60.

²¹ It is not surprising that even the terms cognate with *historia*, i.e., the adjective *historicus* and the adverb *historice*, have an essentially literary or stylistic or rhetorical flavor. This extends

common, if somewhat nebulous, notion of *historia*. The question arises how these distinctions are carried out in practice elsewhere in the commentary.

The formal definition implies two large classes of *historia*: probable, logical or realistic accounts (*historia = argumentum/secundum naturam*), and accounts of an actual event (*historia = res gesta, factum*). It remains to examine whether the commentators adhere to these distinctions throughout the rest of the commentary, and how significant they are to the meaning of individual notes and to the commentators' understanding of Vergil's artistic methods. We do not presuppose at the outset there is any consistency either among the various notes themselves, or between the notes and the components of the definition. In a work of such a heterogeneous nature as the Servian commentary, such uniformity is hardly to be assumed, and whatever consistency is found will be all the more remarkable.

The term *historia* occurs in 100 separate notes of the commentary. Most instances lie in common, nearly formulaic, introductory phrases or expressions; the most frequent are: *tangit (tetigit) historiam*,²² *historia hoc habet* (to Aen. 1.273, 443, 619; 2.201; 6.818), (*sic*)*ut habet historia* (to Aen. 1.259 DS; 4.36), *secundum historiam* (to Aen. 1.287; G. 2.533; 3.25), *tractum est (trahit, trahere) de historia* (to Aen. 1.44, 487; 3.46, 96, 566; 6.378; 7.709; 8.562, 693; 9.544; 11.743), or more simply, *hoc de historia (Romana) est* (to Aen. 8.713; 10.92; 11.642), *de (hac) historia* (to Aen. 2.81; 3.438 DS), *historia talis est* (to Aen. 3.121; 8.635 DS, 652), and finally *legit (legimus, lectum est) in historia (historiis, per historiam)* (to Aen. 1.343; 2.15, 615; 3.332; 8.461; 9.587 DS; 10.91; 12.359). Several of these same formulae can also be found without *historia*. For example the formula *tangit* [i.e., Vergil] . . ." is found 45 times without *historia*. In these instances the commentators claim that Vergil is "alluding to" or "hinting at" (frequently combined with *clam, latenter, per transitum*) some fact or truth, e. g., *rem veram* (to Ecl. 6.43), *bene rem notam*

to points of grammar, lexical choice, as well as formal expression and arrangement. For example, the commentators characterize Vergil's use of the infinitive as *et est figura propria historiographorum, ut Sallustius* (to Aen. 2.132), or *historicus stilus est* (to Aen. 8.493); the poet's choice of diction draws such comments as: *historice locutus est* (to Aen. 9.144 DS), or: *quam historici . . . dicunt* (to Aen. 12.446); and whole scenes are described as: *in tota hac descriptione historicum characterem poetico miscet* (to Aen. 11.597 DS), or: *descriptio per alterna divisa, ut solent historici* (to Aen. 12.505 DS). Note that Macr. 6.6.1 describes Servius as engaged *cotidie enim Romanae indoli enarrando eundem vatem* [i.e., Vergilium], and he is asked to address questions *quorum enarratio respicit officium literatoris* (6.7.2).

²² To Aen. 1.41 DS, 362, 382, 443 (*historia quam tangit*), 444, 487; 2.557, 683; 3.256; 4.159, 459; 6.770; 7.51, 715; 8.44; 10.91; to G. 4.127; to Aen. 1.726 with addition of the adjective, *Romanam* [Thilo-Hagen, *morem Romanorum*, Harvard ed.].

(to *Aen.* 5.751), or some custom or practice (e.g., *morem*, to *Aen.* 1.446; 2.313; 2.319; *ritum Romanorum*, to *Aen.* 1.736).

A similar introductory remark with forms of *trahere* is frequently found with various prepositional phrases introduced by *de* (30), *a(b)* (26), *ex* (3). Through these notes the commentators suggest that Vergil is "adapting," "taking" or "borrowing" some fact derived from: a custom, e.g., *de more Romano* (to *Aen.* 9.52 DS), a field or sphere of activity, e.g., *a iure* (to *Aen.* 4.674), *de sacris* (to *Ecl.* 8.82 DS), *a militia* (to *G.* 4.165), *de negotio* (to *Aen.* 11.186), and less frequently, a literary source, e.g., *de Homero* (to *Aen.* 2.604); *de Lucilio* (to *G.* 2.98), *de Pseudulo Plauti* (to *Aen.* 1.140). Through formulae of both types without *historia* the commentators attempt to demonstrate the underlying factual basis or probability of Vergil's account. Although the evidence needs to be examined carefully, it is not unreasonable to ask whether the similar introductory formulae with *historia* stress the same notions. Such a meaning would be in keeping with the commentary's definition of *historia*.

In light of the sharp distinction made in the definition between *fabula* and *historia*, it should not be surprising that most of these formulae are not found with *fabula*. In fact, one way of understanding the meaning of *historia* throughout the commentary is to examine the notes in which the commentary employs its opposite, *fabula*.

The term *fabula*, like *historia*, is very frequent: 163 instances in 143 separate notes, about equally divided between the two forms of the commentary (DS = 86); also *fabulosus*, 12 (DS = 2) and *fabulor*, 2 (1 each). Based on the definition, we would expect that the commentators would consistently employ *fabula* and its derivatives to refer to something that is false, improbable, or unnatural. For example, the commentators always employ *fabulosus* to mark something that is not credible, paralleling the use of $\mu\upsilon\theta\acute{o}\delta\epsilon\varsigma$ and $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\delta\omicron\varsigma\omicron\varsigma$ in Greek writers. This includes both Greek and Roman accounts or parts of accounts, e.g., the exposing of Hesione to a sea monster at Troy (to *Aen.* 1.619: *quae de liberata dicuntur Hesiona . . . esse fabulosa*), the nursing of the twins Romulus and Remus by a wolf (to *Aen.* 1.273: *fabulosum figmentum est ad celandam auctorum Romani generis turpitudinem*), the killing of Remus by Romulus (to *Aen.* 6.779: *fabulosus enim est quod a fratre . . . dicitur interemptus*); the story of the one-eyed Polyphemus (to *Aen.* 3.636: *sed totum fabulosum est*). What is *fabulosus* is contrasted with the truth (cf. *re vera*, to *Aen.* 7.761), or is considered contrary to reason: *nisi . . . fabulosa acceperimus, ratio non procedit* (to *Aen.* 3.578, referring to the Giants). While the use of what is *fabulosus* may be characteristic of poetic freedom, it is best

done as discreetly as possible: *ne in rebus fabulosis aperte utatur poetarum licentia* (to *Aen.* 1.15), and almost apologetically: *bene se fabulosam rem dicturus excusat* (to *Aen.* 3.578). It must be admitted, however, that the instances of *fabulosus* are relatively rare (only 12). In addition, the adjectival suffix *-osus* tends to stress the notion of excess. The question remains whether the commentators use *fabula* itself in a similarly consistent fashion.

Forms of *fabula* are even more frequent than *historia*, most introducing an extended narrative regarding some figure mentioned in Vergil's text.²³ This frequently takes the form of such formulae as: *fabula talis est* (some 40 times in all), *fabula (quidem, sane, autem, nam) hoc habet* (8 times); or 10 instances of such related introductory remarks as: *alia fabula*, or *alius ordo fabulae*, or *aliter fabula* (i.e., *narrata est*) usually to indicate a different version of an account. The commentators employ the term in much the same sense as *fabulosus* to imply falsehood, improbability, and poetic fiction, e.g., *falsitate fabulae* (to *Aen.* 1.275). In numerous cases *fabula* is directly contrasted with *veritas* or *re vera*, e.g., *ut fabula loquitur . . . ut veritas habet* (to *Aen.* 1.619 DS), *si fabulam respicis . . . si autem veritatem* (to *Aen.* 1.743; also to *Aen.* 6.16); or *secundum fabulam(s)* contrasted with *veritatem* or *re vera autem* (to *Aen.* 6.25, 6.288, 8.190). In addition, the commentators claim that Vergil frequently marks his use of what they consider *fabula* by inserting in his verse *fertur*, *dicitur*, or *fama* to indicate that something improbable is to follow (cf. to *Aen.* 6.14 [re: Daedalus and Icarus]: *dicendo autem Vergilius 'ut fama est' ostendit requirendam esse veritatem*). The commentators state explicitly that *fabula* in itself has little value, its chief function being to provide some pleasure and relief from more serious matters. For example, in dealing with Vergil's 'account' of Deucalion and Pyrrha, the commentators muse:

quaestio est hoc loco: nam relictis prudentibus rebus de mundi origine, subito ad fabulas transitum fecit. sed dicimus, aut exprimere eum voluisse sectam Epicuream, quae rebus seriis semper inserit voluptates; aut fabulis plenius admirationis puerorum corda mulceri: nam fabulae causa

²³ Only a few instances need to be excluded from consideration. These involve the use of *fabula* in the specific sense of "play" = *μῦθος* in the sense 'plot.' This is found in references to Plautus (to *Aen.* 1. intro.), Terence's *Hecyra* (to *Aen.* 1.267), and Livius Andronicus (to *Aen.* 10.636). The connection to *μῦθος* naturally suggests the relationship between *μῦθος* as dramatic plot and *μῦθος* as legendary material, since myth in this sense generally constituted the subject matter of tragedy as well as other dramatic forms, notably satyr plays, and even of some comedies. As we said above, the commentary does not use the more familiar *argumentum* in these cases. Also to be excluded are uses of *fabula* in the general sense of "talk" or "speech" which do not represent the words of the commentators but either the words of characters in the text, e.g., the Sibyl's rebuke to Aeneas for his *inanibus fabulis* (*Aen.* 6.535), or quotations

delectationis inventae sunt, ut ipse etiam in georgicis docet dicens “cetera quae vacuas tenuissent carmina mentes.” (to *Ecl.* 6.41)²⁴

Again, the falsity of *fabula* is closely linked to poetic fiction: *vituperabile enim est, poetam aliquid fingere, quod penitus a veritate discedat* (to *Aen.* 3.46), and *quamvis fabula sit illa res et poetis composita* (to *Aen.* 10.91). To employ *fabula* is to speak poetically: *iam transit ad fabulam et poetice dicit* (to *G.* 1.62). It is clear from the context that in the case of these notes the use of *fabula* generally indicates falsehood.

While *fabula* is clearly linked to falsehood and poetic fiction, *historia* is everywhere associated with truth; and truth in turn is joined to nature (*natura*) and reason (*ratio*), e.g., to *Aen.* 6.719: *quod continet veritas et ratio naturalis*. Like the *secundum naturam* aspect of *historia*, *natura* itself is a yardstick of reality: *Stoicos et Academicos secutus est, qui dicunt ea quae contra naturam sunt, non fieri, sed fieri videri* (to *Aen.* 3.90). *Natura* refers to various underlying realities, to physical elements, e.g., *fulmina* (to *Aen.* 8.427), to elements of human nature, *humanae enim naturae* (to *Aen.* 9.129), e.g., of love (to *Aen.* 8.389): *adludit ad rem naturalem: namque ideo Vulcanus maritus fingitur Veneris, quod Venerium officium non nisi calore consistit*. It is also used in interpretation of myths where the commentators claim (to *Aen.* 8.240): *rem naturae vertit in fabulam*. Examples include the physical nature of fire (Vulcan, to *Aen.* 8.414), or of the rainbow (Iris, to *Aen.* 4.700).

Similarly, *ratio* (often combined with *vera*, *natura*, or *naturalis*) refers to some fundamental nature or principle, including such diverse topics as religion (to *Aen.* 9.81, to *Ecl.* 5.73) and religious rites (to *Aen.* 3.370: *in ratione sacrorum*), fate (to *Aen.* 1.258: *fati enim immobilis ratio est*), a sphere (to *Aen.* 2.250: *sphaerae ratio hoc habet*), grammar (to *Aen.* 1.156: *ratio artis antiquae*), the moon (to *Aen.* 3.645: *ex lunae ratione*), and human life (to *Aen.* 11.118). In addition, *ratio* combined with *physica* and paralleling the use of *natura* and *historia* indicates the physical, moral and human realities which the commentators believe Vergil is expressing in a subtle fashion. Again this is especially true for *fabula*, where the commentators state: *sub poetica licentia physicam quoque tangit rationem* (to *Aen.* 1. 142). Here the mythic details of Neptune reveal the nature of the sea; of Apollo and Diana, the nature of the sun and moon (to *Aen.* 3.73); of Amor/Cupido, the nature of love (to *Aen.* 1.663);

from other authors, e.g., Horace: *mutato nomine de te fabula narratur* (to *Aen.* 6.603), or proverbs, e.g., *lupus in fabula* (to *Aen.* 3.477 DS, to *Ecl.* 9.54).

²⁴ Cf. also: *hoc est, fabulae, quae delectationi esse poterant* (to *G.* 3.3). For the rhetorical perspective of *delectationis causa*, cf. Cic. *Inv.* 1.27. Also cf. Strab. 1.2.17: τῆς μὲν οὖν ἱστορίας ἀλήθειαν εἶναι τέλος . . . μύθου δὲ ἡδονὴν καὶ ἐκπληξιν.

of Saturn eating his children, the nature of time (to *Aen.* 3.104); and, more historically, the *fabula* of Prometheus concerns the discovery of *astrologia* (to *Ecl.* 6.42).

Thus the commentators use *historia*, *natura* and *ratio* in parallel and often overlapping senses. This is not surprising in light of the characteristics of *argumentum* and *secundum naturam* given in the definition of *historia*. All three terms figure prominently in the commentators' attempts to elucidate what they believe is Vergil's real meaning. An illustration of this practice can be seen in the discussion of the figure of Aeolus, where the commentators assert:

poetae quidem fingunt hunc regem esse ventorum, sed ut Varro dicit, rex fuit insularum, ex quarum nebulis et fumo Vulcaniae insulae praedicens futura flabra ventorum inperitis visus est ventos sua potestate retinere.
(to *Aen.* 1.52)

One should note here that this explanation does not reject the entire *fabula* outright, but seeks to purge it of its poetic or improbable fictions and thus involves various possible senses of *historia*, although in this instance the term *historia* is not used.²⁵ First it sees a real king behind a mythical god (cf. Polyb. 35.2.5-6); it converts divine control over the winds (*rex ventorum*) to a human skill (*praedicens futura flabra ventorum*) involving the physical elements of nature (*nebulae, fumo Vulcaniae insulae, flabra ventorum*),²⁶ and lastly by citing Varro, it relies on what would be considered a reliable historical source.

A similar method of reduction to a more 'realistic' account is found in the numerous euhemeristic interpretations throughout the commentary.²⁷ Here

²⁵ Such poetic inventions are most frequently indicated by forms of *fingere* with obvious negative connotations. Greek writers and historians often convey a similar negative view with the equivalent πλάττω; cf. Plut. *Thes.* 28.1: φανῶς ἔοικε μῦθος καὶ πλάσματι; and Diod. 5.23.5, who speaks of "the fabricators of this myth," τῶν τὸν μῦθον τοῦτον πεπλακῶτων, and 3.51.1 [re: some strange atmospheric apparitions]: παραδόξου δ' εἶναι δοκοῦντος τοῦ πράγματος καὶ μῦθος πεπλασμένον παραπλησίον. While from a modern perspective it may be surprising or perplexing to find the commentators so hostile or insensitive to what we would regard as the "truth" of poetry, it tells us much about the literary and intellectual climate of late antiquity; cf.: *sed in carminibus quaedam nec ad subtilitatem nec ad veritatem exigenda sunt* (to *Aen.* 9.74 DS). This negative view seems to represent the prevailing view of the rhetorical tradition, cf. Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.28: *Meminerimus tamen non per omnia poetas esse oratori sequendos, nec libertate uerborum nec licentia figurarum: genus ostentationi comparatum, et, praeter id quod solam petit uoluptatem eamque fingendo non falsa modo sed etiam quaedam incredibilia sectatur.*

²⁶ Cf.: *'vasto antro' physica ratione hoc fingit poeta. naturale enim est ut loca concava plena sint ventis.* (to *Aen.* 1.52)

²⁷ Jones 226 lists 42 examples; discussion on pp. 221-22; once again his list is incomplete. Cf. Daedalus and Icarus (to *Aen.* 6.14). Similar euhemeristic rationalizations of this myth can be found in Diod. 4.77.5-6 and Paus. 9.11.4-5.

actual or real individuals and historical events are thought to be the bases of certain mythic accounts by a similar process of historicizing, and by rationalizing the ‘unnatural’ or incredible elements, either mythic (*fabulosa*) or poetic fiction (*figmenta*).²⁸ These notes sharply contrast the ‘true meaning’ underlying the poetic fiction by contrasting such phrases as *veritas* (to *Aen.* 1.568), *historia* (to *Aen.* 3.256) or *historicus* (to *Aen.* 8.190) with *secundum poeticum morem* (to *Aen.* 8.319), *colorate tangit historiam* (to *Aen.* 3.256), and especially by forms of *finco* (to *Aen.* 9.561).²⁹ Thus, in addition to Aeolus cited above, there is Atreus, the first to predict an eclipse of the sun (to *Aen.* 1.568); the prophetic harpies, merely an oracle of Jupiter at Epirus (to *Aen.* 3.256); the fire-breathing Cacus, a wicked and thieving slave of Evander (to *Aen.* 8.190); the gods Jupiter and Saturn, quarreling kings of Crete (to *Aen.* 8.319); Jupiter’s ministering eagle, a mere auspicious augury (to *Aen.* 9.561). The account of Hercules and Hylas is typical of this method:

Historia tamen hoc habet. Herculem cum Colchos iret perditto Hyla, (qui aquatum profectus, ut fabula loquitur, a nymphis adamatus et raptus est, ut veritas habet lapsum in fontem altissimum necatus est, DS), post peragratam Mysiam navibus Troiam venisse. (to *Aen.* 1.619)

Once again the truth (*veritas*) of the account (*historia*) can be found by converting the mythic or ‘improbable’ element (*fabula*) to something probable. This normalizing methodology, which ignores the difference between the mythic and historical periods, is a common feature of much ancient historiography. While the commentary may fail to distinguish clearly between

²⁸ The Servian commentators, just as other Roman and Greek writers, often rely on the use of etymology (often fanciful) to expose what is believed to be the historical realities lurking behind mythic and poetic distortions. Cf. Veyne 67: “In order to make the transition from myth to history, it will thus be sufficient to correct mistakes that often are simple confusions over words.” In modern times this approach became the famous ‘disease of language’ school, championed by the 19th century philologist Max Müller. The commentators, also philologists, already note this linguistic phenomenon in explaining, for example, how the sheep of a shepherd named Dracon, became the mythical apples of the Hesperides guarded by a serpent; see to *Aen.* 4.484 DS: *quarum pastor vocabatur Dracon, cui praebebant epulas regis filiae; sed quia Graece oves μήλα dicuntur, ex dubio nomine fabula conposita est*. Diodorus is equally fond of euhemeristic interpretations supported by etymology, e.g., his reduction of the myth of fire-breathing bulls of Aëtes based on the principle of μετενεχθείσης τῆς ὁμωνυμίας (4.47.3).

²⁹ For a similar contrast of these concepts in reference to the origin of amber, cf. Diod. 5.23.4: διημαρτηκότων δὲ πάντων τῶν τὸν μῦθον τοῦτον πεπλακότων καὶ διὰ τῶν ἀποτελεσμάτων ἐν τοῖς ὕστερον χρόνοις ἐλεγχόμενων, προσεκτέον ταῖς ἀληθιναῖς ἱστορίαις.

mythical and historical time, this failure is not unusual even in the more critical of the ancient historians, e.g., Herodotus and Thucydides.³⁰

In another large number of notes (68 instances), the use of *fabula* in the commentary suggests a notion of falsity on the following basis. The commentators generally reject as untrue (*fabula* or *fabulosus*) any direct agency of the gods in human affairs, often involving some form of metamorphoses (cf. Paus. 9.2.4 on Artemis and Actaeon). The general principle here is that no mythic account of the gods can be regarded as truthful: *sed in deorum ratione fabulae sequendae sunt, nam veritas ignoratur* (to *Aen.* 1.297). The gods and the accounts about them are either rejected or reduced to historical figures through the well-known method of euhemeristic reasoning or to physical elements of nature (*secundum naturam*).

This 'natural' sense of *historia* provides the bases for one of the important types of interpretation frequently found in the Servian commentary, i.e., nature allegory (cf. Jones 219-20 and 226, listing 35 instances, to which more could be added). According to this standard of interpretation, a mythic or fabulous story is believed to be the result of an allegory ultimately referring to natural or physical elements and processes (*historia/natura*). In such explanations, the commentators often appeal to *physici*. (See the Mountford-Schultz index for a complete listing.) This reduction often takes the form of applying the well known principle of nature allegory to the gods to show that some 'physical' fact lies beneath the mythic elements, or, as the commentary (to *Aen.* 1.144) claims: *nomina deorum plerumque de causis sunt ficta ab elementis, quae numina dici voluere maiores*. Thus, for example, according to this *ratio physica* (cf. to *Aen.* 1.78) Juno refers, in reality, to the movement of the air (to *Aen.* 1.78), Tellus to the earth (to *Aen.* 1.171), the Chimaera to a mountain in Cilicia (to *Aen.* 6.288), and Virbius to the sun (to *Aen.* 7.776 DS).³¹

³⁰ Cf. Hunter 103: "It is now clear that one cannot discover in the works of Herodotus and Thucydides a distinction between historical and mythical time, and hence an opposition of human history and mythology, for both consider the mythological period a *temps des hommes*, a time of real, historical personages"; for bibliography on this issue, see 104 n. 9. For an example of some distinction of a 'mythic' period cf. Paus. 8.2.2: ἐξ τὰ ἀνωτέρω τοῦ ἀνθρώπων γένους.

³¹ For the use of *ratio physica*, cf. Cic. *N. D.* 2.64 (the castration of Uranus) and *Div.* 2.43-44 (thunderbolts of Jupiter); while *physici* most often refers to philosophers of materialism, e.g., Democritus and Epicurus, such reductions of divine elements to physical realities are typical of not only Epicureans but also Stoics. Perhaps the commentators owe something to the Stoic Cornutus, who taught at Rome in the 1st century AD and composed a commentary on Vergil in addition to his famous allegorical interpretation of the gods. Cf. *Cornuti theologiae graecae compendium*, ed. Carolus Lang (Leipzig, 1881). Hays provides a new translation and commentary of this important work. For an example of a Greek historian who frequently relies

In employing the term *fabula* and its derivations to mark what is false, improbable, or fictitious, it is clear that the commentators consistently maintain the distinction between *fabula* and *historia* which is explicit in the definition. It is also significant that the terms *historia* and *fabula*, which together occur nearly 300 times in the commentary, are not used in the same note except to mark a contrast or distinction involving the notions of truth or falsity. Such consistency can be discerned not only among the individual notes but also in the case of several notes which are linked to a common subject. A series of notes concerning Paris and Helen and the causes of the Trojan war are instructive.³² In one note (to *Aen.* 1.651 DS), *fabula* and *historia* are clearly contrasted: *nota fabula omnibus traditum est, quamvis vera historia hoc habere dicatur*. In others, however, it might seem that the two terms are used either carelessly or interchangeably.

A closer examination of these related comments, however, reveals a consistent distinction between *fabula* and *historia*. Certain features are labeled as *fabula* with the assumption that they are false, while others are characterized as *historia* or more importantly *vera historia*. These distinctions apply to three interrelated elements: 1) The judgment of Paris (to *Aen.* 1.27, 1.651 DS, 10.90) is consistently labeled *fabula* (to *Aen.* 1.27, 1.651 DS) or a poetic invention (*a poetis composita*, to *Aen.* 10.90), presumably because it involves some divine agency, e.g., Venus. 2) As for Helen's voluntary following of Paris, the commentators insist (cf. *historiae . . . veritas*, to *Aen.* 1.526, *vera historia*, to *Aen.* 1.651 DS) that Paris in fact abducted Helen (to *Aen.* 1.526, 1.651 DS, 10.90, 10.92, 11.262), presumably because this would explain more realistically why Menelaus welcomed her back (to *Aen.* 1.526, 10.92), i.e., it would be more logical or probable (*argumentum*) for a husband to so act in the case of a wife who was abducted than one who ran off willingly. 3) Paris sacked Sparta (to *Aen.* 1.526, 10.90, 10.92) after he was hospitably received, which action broke a treaty between Greece and Troy, and this is the real, i.e., more probable,

on the interpretations of οἱ φυσιολόγοι and οἱ φυσιολογοῦντες, who (3.62.6) εἰς φυσικάς τινὰς αἰτίας μετὰ γούσι τοὺς τοιοῦτους λόγους, cf. Diod., esp. 3.62.3-7, regarding the birth of Dionysus. It is also noteworthy that Diodorus (1.6.3) links οἱ φυσιολόγοι with οἱ ἱστορικοί as giving a natural explanation of the origin of man, and characterizes both groups as οἱ νομιμώτατοι. The philosopher Sallustius, *De deis et mundo* 4.1 recognizes this as one, if an inferior one, of the possible interpretations of myth: τῶν δὲ μύθων οἱ μὲν εἰσι θεολογικοί, οἱ δὲ φυσικοί, οἱ δὲ ψυχικοί τε καὶ ὕλικοί, καὶ ἐκ τούτων μικτοί; however most of the commentary's interpretations of this type would fit Sallustius's ὕλικοί group.

³² The chief comments are found in seven notes: to *Aen.* 1.27; 1.526; 1.651 DS; 2.601 DS; 10.91; 10.92; 11.262. In six of these notes (to *Aen.* 1.27, 1.651 DS, 2.601 DS, 10.91) the term *fabula* appears, and *historia* in four (to *Aen.* 1.526, 1.651 DS, 10.91, 10.92); with *fabula* and *historia* appearing together with *historia* in same note twice (to *Aen.* 1.651 DS, 10.91).

cause (*vera causa*) of the Trojan War (to *Aen.* 10.90).³³ Thus a series of comments related to common material and drawn from both forms of the commentary agree on a clear distinction between *fabula* and *historia*. Significantly, the basis for the distinctions is consonant with that of the definition and again demonstrates a consistency of interpretation between the two major traditions of the commentary.

Another series of notes reveals similar consistency, but focuses more clearly on the 'natural' criterion of the definition, i.e., *historia* = *secundum naturam*. Venus' guiding of Aeneas (*Aen.* 1.382) draws the following comment:

hoc loco per transitum tangit historiam. quam per legem artis poeticae aperte non potest ponere. nam Varro in secundo divinarum dicit "ex quo de Troia est egressus Aeneas, Veneris eum per diem cotidie stellam vidisse, donec ad agrum Laurentem veniret, in quo eam non vidit ulterius: qua re terras cognovit esse fatales:" unde Vergilius hoc loco "matre dea monstrante viam." (to *Aen.* 1.382)

In this instance *historia* might be understood to refer to: 1) an actual fact or event; 2) a factual source, i.e., Varro; 3) a natural phenomenon. At issue here is whether Aeneas and the Trojans were guided by the mythic figure of Venus, the mother of Aeneas, or by the star (planet) Venus. Again reflecting a rejection of divine involvement in human affairs, the commentary, citing Varro, opts for a more natural, less mythical explanation.

In another example, the traditional account of the tying down of the islands of Gyarus and Myconus involves three separate notes which might seem at first indiscriminate in the use of *fabula* and *historia*. The expanded commentary (to *Aen.* 3.76 DS), referring to Vergil's statement *mycono gyaroque revinxit*, notes: *quidam per historiam dictum putant; nam inter Myconum et Gyarum Syrum, unam de cycladibus esse dicunt*. The uniqueness of *per historiam* (it is the only example of this prepositional phrase in the commentary) and the absence of any mention of a source would seem to remove the possibility that *historiam* here might refer to a specific source. If we look to the related note at *Aen.* 3.73, the commentators clearly attempt to make a distinction between the falsity of the myth (*fabula*) and the truth. The story is twice referred to as *fabula*, both in the introduction to this note: *fabula (autem, DS) talis est*, and later to *Ecl.* 3.6: *ut in tertio legimus, "Mycono e celsa*

³³ There is less consistency regarding the Proteus episode, with many variations as to how and why Helen came under his protection (cf. to *Aen.* 11.262 giving various alternatives). Based on the general distinctions between *fabula* and *historia*, it may be that an account of Proteus is referred to as *historia* if he is regarded as an historical king (to *Aen.* 1.651 DS), but a mythic figure (*fabula*, to *Aen.* 2.601 DS) if a sea god (*deus marinus*, to *Aen.* 11.262).

Gyaroque revinxit," ubi fabulam plenius diximus. After giving the details of the *fabula* the commentators insist:

veritas vero longe alia est. nam haec insula cum terrae motu laboraret, qui fit sub terris latentibus ventis, sicut Lucanus "quaerentem erumpere ventum credidit," oraculo Apollinis terrae motu caruit. (to *Aen.* 3.73)

They further claim that Vergil here as elsewhere alludes to this fact of nature: *quod etiam Vergilius latenter ostendit*, using a phrase which echoes the more frequent *per transitum historiam tangit*. Despite the mention of a source, here the poet Lucan, it would appear that *historia* is being used in the sense of something more natural and realistic, something *secundum naturam*.

One final group will demonstrate how difficult it often is to understand the precise meaning of *historia* intended by the commentators, especially in cases where *historia* may refer to an account of a physical or natural fact. In a note regarding Scylla (to *Aen.* 3.420), the commentators describe the familiar metamorphosis mentioning only "others" and Homer as sources, e.g., *Homerus hanc dicit immortale monstrum fuisse*. Immediately and in clear contrast, the commentators cite the historian Sallust:

Sallustius saxum esse dicit simile formae celebratae procul visentibus. canes vero et lupi ob hoc ex ea nati esse finguntur, quia ipsa loca plena sunt monstris marinis, et saxorum asperitas illic imitatur latratus.
(to *Aen.* 3.420)

The point of the note is that the metamorphosis of Scylla is a mere poetic invention (*finguntur*) of the natural, i.e., physical features of the region. Later (to *Aen.* 3.566) the commentators refer back to this note: *de historia, ut supra diximus, hoc trahit: undae enim inlissae concavis saxis imitantur latratum*, to explain Vergil's phrase *scopuli clamorem*, again apparently in an effort to emphasize the natural reality behind the mythic features. Does the use of *historia* here refer only to the work of Sallust, as it admittedly does more clearly elsewhere, or to the naturalistic interpretation itself, which, significantly, is not directly attributed to Sallust, and is the kind of rationalistic reduction which is so often championed by the commentators? In a related note to Vergil's *haec saxa horrenda canebat* (to *Aen.* 3.559) the commentators add: *rettulit se ad historiam: nam pro Scylla 'saxa' dixit 'horrenda.'* Here the focus upon the rationalization of Scylla to rocks, without the reference to Sallust, lends support to the latter view.

At this point, it might be appropriate to consider a possible objection to this interpretation. Since the commentators often support their views by citing

sources, the possibility exists that the contrast between *fabula* and *historia*, which is clearly perceptible both in theory and practice in the commentary, might tell us more about the nature of the source than the nature of the content of the note. That is, does the use of *fabula/historia* distinction convey a referential difference with little or no qualitative inference, or does it suggest, as we have been maintaining, a substantial and internally consistent judgment on the part of the commentators on the probability of the content? According to the former hypothesis, the use of *fabula* in a comment might simply indicate that the material for that comment ultimately derives from a Greek or poetic source while the use of *historia* might mark information derived from a prose and/or Latin source.

Defense for this view might be found in a number of comments. As indicated above, *fabula* in one form or another is often linked to *poeta*, e.g., *frequenter enim variant fabulas poetae* (to *Aen.* 6.617), and once to Greek poets in particular: *ut poetae graeculi fabulantur* (to *G.* 3.89 DS). In addition, *fabula* is often combined with *poetica licentia* and *poeticus mos* in comments where the commentators regard some feature as unnatural, untrue or non-factual. And it is not unlikely that *historia* might in some instances refer to a prose account, especially since both *historia* and *historiae* (as we shall see presently) are sometimes combined with reference to a specific author.

While such a referential sense may well underlie some uses of *fabula* and *historia*, the context of these notes suggests that in most cases the predominant sense is a contrast of truth and falsity based on the principles set out in the definition, irrespective of the language (Latin or Greek) or form (prose or poetry) of a possible source. For example, the accounts of the Trojan War, which presumably derive from Greek and poetic sources, are frequently referred to as *historia*, but that part dealing with the judgment of Paris and the adultery of Helen is dismissed as *fabula*, e.g., *quamvis fabula sit illa res et poetis composita* (to *Aen.* 10.91). Similarly, accounts of Romulus and Remus are generally termed *historia* as we might expect, but those elements to which the commentators object on factual grounds are unequivocally labeled as *fabula* or *fabulosus*, e.g., *fabulosum enim est quoad a fratre . . . dicitur interemptus* (to *Aen.* 6.779). In a similar way, the use of *historia*, both in notes lacking any suggestion of a source, as well as those where a source is mentioned, almost always stresses the notion of 'truth' or probability as indicated in the formal definition.³⁴ There seems to be little evidence to support the view that the use

³⁴ While there is room for some difference of opinion here, I believe most instances of *historia* suggest much more than mere reference to a source. Consider, for example, the comment on Ajax (to *Aen.* 1.41 DS): *sane latenter tangit historiam; dicitur enim Minerva in tantum ob*

of *historia* or *fabula* points to any inference as to the language (Greek or Latin) or literary form (poetry or prose) of the source which the commentators may be using.³⁵

One might argue, however, that ultimately the two are nearly equivalent. That is to say, poetic sources, filled with their usual imaginative inventions (*figmenta, ficta*), would be termed generally *fabula*, while prose sources, which one would expect to be more factual, realistic and rationalistic in outlook, would typically be called *historia*. However, particularly in dealing with myth, this is hardly the case. Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, for example, although a poem, is a highly rationalistic work which also reduces mythical figures to natural elements, e.g., Neptune = sea, Bacchus = wine, Ceres = grain, Hades = psychological states.³⁶ The commentators frequently cite with approval Lucretius (cf. to *Aen.* 6.596: *sane de his omnibus rebus mire reddit rationem Lucretius et confirmat in nostra vita esse omnia quae finguntur de inferis*) and Epicureans (cf. to *G.* 1. 332: *per transitum secundum Epicureos loquitur, qui dicunt fulmina non iudicio deorum, sed ex nubibus fieri: nam montes quid necesse fuerat fulminari?*) in support of interpretations which attempt to prove that a natural or physical fact underlies a poetic fiction (*historia* = *secundum naturam*). Often for these interpretations the commentators employ a similar introductory formula, e.g., *tangit*.³⁷ On the other hand,

vitiatam Cassandram in templo suo solius Aiakis poena non fuisse contenta, ut postea per oraculum de eius regno quotannis unam nobilem puellam iusserit Ilium sibi ad sacrificium mitti, et quod est amplius, de ea tribu, de qua Ajax fuerat, sicut Annaeus Placidus refert. Here one might assume that *historia* refers to a source, i.e., Annaeus Placidus; however, it is not clear whether the whole note is being attributed to this author or only the concluding information regarding the ethnic origin of the custom, since the whole remark is introduced by the indefinite "dicitur." It is important to note that the comment is mostly directed to Vergil's *unius ob noxam* as the initial discussion of both *unius* and *noxam* (*noxia*) clearly show. Thus, the note attempts to link a mythical story of one individual to a custom involving many, an actual, annual ritual which required a young girl of noble birth to be sent to Ilium in recompense, it was claimed, for the crime of Ajax. This is the kind of historical connection (here *historia* = a cultural fact, custom) that the commentators are eager to point out elsewhere.

³⁵ The emphatic character of *historia* as fact can be seen in the brief comment to Vergil's *nympharum domus* (*Aen.* 1.168): *aut verum dicit et est historia, aut ad laudem pertinet loci.*

³⁶ Cf. 2.676-80: *hic si quis mare Neptunum Cereremque vocare constituet fruges et Bacchi nomine abuti mavolt quam laticis proprium proferre vocamen, concedamus ut hic terrarum dicitur orbem esse deum matrem, dum vera re tamen ipse religione animum turpi contingere parcat;* and 3.1018: *hic Acherusia fit stultorum denique vita.*

³⁷ Cf. to *Aen.* 1.142: *'placat' sub poetica licentia physicam quoque tangit rationem. mare enim dicitur esse Neptunus, quem superius dixit graviter commotum, quia tempestas erat. nunc ait 'placat,' quia iam sedari coeperant maria.* For the mention of another poet with rationalistic outlook, cf. to *Aen.* 6. 289: *Serenus tamen dicit poeta [Gorgonas, DS] puellas fuisse unius pulchritudinis, quas cum vidissent adulescentes, stupore torpebant: unde fingitur, quod si quis eas vidisset, vertebatur in lapidem.*

the commentators may well have made use of prose summaries of myths of the type surviving under the name of Hyginus, which are mainly content to collect the existing accounts without imposing any rationalistic interpretations. As the commentators suggest, there must have been many such works upon which to draw: *apud eos qui de fabulis scripserunt plenius invenitur* (to *Ecl.* 4.34 DS). What might have been a valid distinction between prose and poetry for an earlier age has been blurred in later antiquity, especially in the case of those who, like the Servian commentators, are primarily working with a traditional mass of exegetical material. It would seem that the nature of the content, rather than the form of the source itself, is most often the main, but certainly not the only, reason behind the commentators' use of *historia* and *fabula*.

Thus far our examination has dealt with instances where certain and clear distinctions made in the definition are reflected in various notes in the commentary. This has mainly involved examples of two large classes both involving the contrast between *fabula* and *historia*: 1) *historia* as probable or realistic elements (*historia* = *argumentum*), especially apparent in euhemeristic corrections of *fabula*, and 2) *historia* (*secundum naturam*) referring to the physical or natural realities which can be discerned underlying *fabula* through the process of nature allegory. It is clear that neither of these senses of *historia* refers to our sense of history as actual events. While the practice of nature allegory and euhemerism is well established before the time of the commentary,³⁸ and their presence is probably strongly influenced by the earlier sources used by the commentators, it is clear that the ultimate basis, if not the justification, of both can be linked with a concern for these senses of *historia*. In this and many other similar cases, *veritas* or *historia* is achieved not by appeal to objective facts but by removing the *fabulosa* from it, i.e., what is *contra naturam* (cf. Thucydides' apology for τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες, 1.22.4). Again there is no insistence on factuality.³⁹ Such uses of the term *historia* in the commentary suggest a meaning which is consistent with the formal definition given above and parallel the examples of Phaedra and Pasiphaë.

The frequent use of the *argumentum* and *secundum naturam* criteria to characterize *historia* and distinguish it from *fabula*, i.e., the probable and realistic account from the improbable or unrealistic one, is of course, highly subjective and makes little appeal to any specifically objective standard. At best

³⁸ Cf. Veyne 62: "Two schools exist, then: the criticism of legends by historians and the allegorical interpretation of legends by the majority of philosophers, including the Stoics."

³⁹ Cf.: *quasi non sit facta historia* (to *Aen.* 9.78 DS); also Cicero's often quoted remark that *primam esse historiae legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat* (*de Orat.* 2.62) may refer to this less restrictive sense of *historia*. For a discussion of the term in Cicero, see Press 48-49.

it might be termed a 'negative' standard and only the bare starting point in the development of a genuinely scientific view of objective history. Here, too, the commentary shares a common ground with much of ancient historiography. For despite some exceptions, it more often resorts to verification or proof by means of similar *a priori* assumptions, innate concepts, or metaphysical constructions, rather than empirical or objective evidence.⁴⁰

The use of the term *historia* to refer to natural accounts, including allegorical and euhemeristic reductions or rationalizations of traditional, mythical or legendary stories, tells us much about the intellectual fashions of late antiquity, especially in regard to the propensity for allegory, even if, from a modern viewpoint, it may seem to contribute little to our understanding of Vergil's artistic intentions.⁴¹ In fact, such strained interpretations seem to justify the highly negative (often unfairly so, in my judgment) opinion of the commentary by some modern scholars.⁴²

But instances of *historia* involving these types of euhemeristic and allegorical interpretations constitute only a part of the use of *historia* in the commentary. Contrary to what we might suppose from the examples given above, there are many cases where the commentary does employ the term *historia* in a more restrictive and, according to modern standards, a more demanding sense of factual events. There are numerous instances where the commentators unmistakably use *historia* to refer to actual historical elements. These include historical individuals, e.g., Cleopatra (to *Aen.* 8.713: *hoc de historia est; nam legitur Cleopatra . . .*); Agrippa (to *Aen.* 8.693: *hoc de historia traxit*); Pompey (to *Aen.* 2.557 DS: *Pompei tangit historiam*); historical actions, e.g., Caesar's conquest of Britain (to *Aen.* 1.287), and events, e.g., the *stella Juliana: aut certe secundum historiam; re vera enim* (to *Aen.* 1.287); or to a collective sense, e.g., *in historia Romana* (to *Aen.* 8.461), Carthage: *historiam Carthaginis* (to *Aen.* 1.342; and to *Aen.* 1.738: *ut Punica testatur historia*); or to actual cultural

⁴⁰ Cf. Fornara 57 and Hunter 108-115, who uses the term 'rationality' to distinguish the critical methods of ancient historians from those of modern 'rationalism.' Veyne 51 speaks of "credulity by means of methodical criticism."

⁴¹ For a recent study of the allegorical approaches by both late pagan Neoplatonists as well as Christian writers, cf. Lamberton.

⁴² For example, consider the harsh judgment on the Servian commentary made by Grube 356, "hardly ever rising to anything that deserves the name of criticism." The compiler (or compilers) of the expanded commentary also come in for caustic criticism, e.g., Goold 116: "Nevertheless, he is revealed as a hack, without taste or learning or brains" (116); for a reaction to Goold, cf. Daintree 70. Zetzel 140 cautions against the eagerness of some to dismiss Servius "as a mere purveyor of worthless fiction," and recognizes the importance of the commentary for the insight it affords us "into the aims and methods of the fifth-century grammarian himself."

practices (to *Aen.* 12.359). We might ask if the Servian commentary, in using *historia* in this more modern sense, exhibits any critical criteria in addition to the kind of tests we have been considering based on realism, probability and naturalism (*secundum naturam*).

Perhaps to modern thinking, the only genuinely historical standard is that of chronology: *ratio temporum*. Occasionally, an account is identified as a poetic fiction *contra historiam* because of some chronological incompatibility:

sic autem omnia contra hanc historiam ficta sunt, ut illud ubi dicitur Aeneas vidisse Carthaginam, cum eam constet ante LX annos urbis Romae conditam. inter excidium vero Troiae et ortum urbis Romae anni inveniuntur CCCXL. (to *Aen.* 1.267)

At another point the commentators conclude, following Hyginus, that there must have been several different individuals bearing the name Latinus: *sed quia temporum ratio non procedit, illud accipiendum est Hygini, qui ait Latinos plures fuisse, ut intellegamus poetam abuti, ut solet, nominum similitudine* (to *Aen.* 7.47).⁴³ Occasionally the commentators defend interpretations on the evidence of chronology and geography:

quamquam fingatur in extrema Oceani parte Vlixes fuisse: quod et ipse Homerus falsum esse ostendit ex qualitate locorum, quae commemorat, et ex tempore navigationis; dicit enim eum a Circe unam noctem navigasse et ad locum venisse, in quo haec sacra perfecit: quod de Oceano non procedit, de Campania manifestissimum est. (to *Aen.* 6.107)⁴⁴

However, such instances of critical judgment based on considerations of chronology or geography are rare in regards to questions of *historia*.

The mention of historical criteria leads naturally to the question of the commentators' use and evaluation of sources. In many instances it is clear that the commentary uses the term *historia* to refer specifically to a recorded or written account of events, not merely to the events themselves. Frequent phrases such as *in historia lectum est* (to *Aen.* 2.615; 8.461), *ut in historia legimus* (to *Aen.* 3.332; 12.359), *legitur in historiis* (to *Aen.* 10.91) and especially *lectum est et in historia Poenorum et in Livio* (to *Aen.* 1.343) and *in*

⁴³ For another example see to *Aen.* 12.164: *sed de Ulixee, ut etiam supra <7.47> diximus, temporum non ratio credere non sinit.*

⁴⁴ Cf. to *Aen.* 7.563 and to *Aen.* 8.330. These are only a small part of much more frequent method of proof which the commentators claim is based on what *procedit* and what *non procedit*.

prima historia [i.e., *apud Herodotum*] (to G. 3.532) specifically point to written historical accounts.

The commentary not only uses the term *historia* in this more restrictive sense but also comments on the various forms or genres that *historia*, as the written account of human events, can take. The commentary makes a distinction between remote and contemporary historical writing, especially as it is found in its own specific Roman form, i.e., between *historiae* and *annales*:

inter historiam et annales hoc interest: historia est eorum temporum quae vel vidimus vel videre potuimus, dicta ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱστορεῖν, id est videre; annales vero sunt eorum temporum quae aetas nostra non novit. (to *Aen.* 1.373: this note is also found with slight variation in Isid. *Ety.* 1.44.5).

However, the commentators are satisfied with the mere etymology of the term *historia*—here and elsewhere using the singular instead of the more common plural—in the simplest sense of events personally seen or able to be seen in contrast to those merely read about from other sources. The commentators, again reflecting traditional ancient attitudes, make no mention of the more important connotations of personal investigation and inquiry or ‘autopsy.’⁴⁵ This more demanding sense is an important part of the Greek word ἱστορεῖν from its original use by the pre-Socratics, where it includes critical investigation of all of ‘nature’ (φύσις, cf. Heraclitus #101, 101a D-K), to its later application specifically to the inquiry into past events by Herodotus.⁴⁶

The commentators do point out that the development of the forms of *historiae* and *annales* only occurred after a period characterized by oral history, in which elders handed down the deeds of the past to the younger generation: *apud veteres historiae hoc genus fuit, ut maiores natu ante acta posteris indicarent . . . quia adhuc non annales erant nec historiae* (to *Aen.* 7.206). In addition to this familiar and elemental distinction, the fuller commentary goes on to describe (to *Aen.* 1.373 DS) how the *annales* developed from the pontifical practice of the *tabula dealbata*. Though one might expect, for example, some awareness of the inherent *annuatim* structure of the *annales* (cf. Gell. 5.18.6), the commentary does not suggest how this fact might have affected the content and structure of the resultant *annales* in contrast to the *historiae*. This note concludes by conceding that Livy encompasses both historical genres: *unde Livius ex annalibus et historia constat*. Again mere formal,

⁴⁵ See Fornara 49; also 56: “It is indicative that the concept of research finds no place in the Latin prefaces.”

⁴⁶ Praef. 1; see W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* (Oxford, 1964) I 53.

literary, or rhetorical classification is more important than any concern for the peculiar characteristics of each historical form. Thus, while the commentary occasionally employs the term *historia* to refer specifically to various genres of written history, it fails to display any specific critical judgments in dealing with them.⁴⁷

Passing from historical genres to specific historical sources themselves reveals a similar, generally indiscriminating viewpoint. The accounts, or *historiae*, with which the commentary deals may stem from any number of writers, e.g., Homer (*hoc in Homero lectum est et in historia Romana*, to *Aen.* 8.461), Thucydides (to *Aen.* 8.328), Euripides (to *Aen.* 3.46), and Suetonius (to *G.* 4.127). Among those authors the commentators frequently cite to support their historical comments are to be found many historians, some well known, e.g., Sallust, Livy, Cato, and Varro, others more obscure, e.g., Hyginus, Quadrigarius, and Coelius. Only rarely are these labeled with the distinctive title *historicus*.⁴⁸ But *historici* is also used in reference to obviously mythical material, for example where the commentary (to *Aen.* 1.41 DS) claims that the tradition that Ajax had a third hand is found in *multis historicis Graecis*. But references to *historici* are infrequent in comparison with the numerous citations of other literary sources, nor is there any suggestion that these *historici* have a unique claim on truth, nor are they given any special status.⁴⁹ An indicative example is a comment on Achelous in which the comic writer Aristophanes and the historian Ephorus are linked together as equal authorities (to *G.* 1.8 DS). As we have seen, it is seldom the circumstances or status of the source but rather the nature of the account itself which determines its validity.

Since the 'reality' or 'truth' of an account is primarily determined by the general principles of probability, narrative or chronological consistency (*argu-*

⁴⁷ We might include here a single reference to what might be considered a distinct historical genre, i.e., local history or *topica historia*, cf. to *Aen.* 1.44: *qui 'tempore' legunt de topica historia tractum dicunt; nam Ardeae in templo Castoris et Pollucis in laeva intrantibus post forem Capaneos pictus est fulmen per utraque tempora traiectus*.

⁴⁸ E.g., Ephorus (to *G.* 1.8 DS); Rubellius Blandus and Quadrigarius (to *G.* 1.103 DS); Alexarchus (to *Aen.* 3.334 DS); Coelius (to *Aen.* 3.402 DS); in addition Alexander Polyhistor is cited (to *Aen.* 10.388 DS). As far as I have been able to determine, all these are contained, as appropriate, in either Jacoby, *FGrH*, or Peter, *HRR*, with one exception—Alexarchus. This note could be added to the lone citation (by Plutarch) of this historian, see *FGrH* 829:3C:900.

⁴⁹ Cf. *secundum philologos et historicos* (to *Aen.* 8.190) and *commentatores et historicos* (to *Aen.* 7.678). It is true, of course, that *historici* are superior to *poetae*, but both seem to rank below *philosophi*; cf. to *Ecl.* 4.26 DS: *et bono ordine primo poetas, deinde historicos, deinde philosophos legendos dicit*. For *historici* see to *Aen.* 12.446, 505 DS; to *G.* 1.103 DS; also *historiographi* to *Aen.* 2.132.

mentum) and considerations of ‘nature’ (*secundum naturam*), sources are usually cited to support a probable account without any evaluation of the source itself. But in some individual cases, problems arise regarding the handling of sources which require more than the customary criteria.

Where sources agree, the commentators follow the ‘received’ or traditional account: *unde sequenda est potius Livii, Sisennae et Catonis auctoritas: nam paene omnes antiquae historiae scriptores in hoc consentiunt* (to *Aen.* 11.316). Once again the commentary is following the accepted practice, for example, that sanctioned by Quintilian: *nam receptas [i.e., historias] aut certe claris auctoribus memoratas exposuisse satis est* (1.8.18).⁵⁰ In such cases, sources often go unnamed and support for a particular interpretation is sought by such general expressions as: *tam Graeci . . . quam Romani consentiunt* (to *Aen.* 8.203 DS), and *alii* or *multi volunt*. At other times, however, the commentators are faced with the *varietas et historiarum confusio* (to *Aen.* 4.427; cf. to *Aen.* 12.164: *de varietate historiae*); occasionally, specific sources are contrasted by name, e.g., Caesar and Varro (to *Aen.* 11.743 DS), Donatus versus *paene omnes antiquae historiae scriptores* (to *Aen.* 11.316). And, of course, these conflicts involve considerations of fact and thus can not be resolved by an appeal to the usual criteria. This is particularly true of conflicting accounts of very ancient events such as those involving the deaths of Aeneas and Latinus,⁵¹ the final resting place of the remains of Anchises, which pits Varro against Cato (to *Aen.* 4.427), and especially the founding of the city of Rome:

de civitatibus totius orbis multi quidem ex parte scripserunt, ad plenum tamen Ptolemaeus graece, latine Plinius. de Italicis etiam urbibus Hyginus plenissime scripsit, et Cato in originibus. apud omnes tamen si diligenter advertas, de auctoribus conditarum urbium dissensio invenitur. adeo ut ne urbis quidem Romae origo posset diligenter agnosci.

(to *Aen.* 7.678)

The commentators attribute this circumstance to the antiquity of these events and the difficulty of passing down information uncontaminated with error.⁵²

⁵⁰ Similarly Arrian (*Anab.* 1, pref. 1): ὅσα μὲν ταῦτα . . . ξυνέγραψαν, ταῦτα ἐγὼ ὡς πάντῃ ἀληθῆ ἀναγράψω; and Paus. 8.8.3: τῶν μὲν δὴ ἐς τὸ θεῖον ἡκόντων τοῖς εἰρημένοις χρῆσόμεθα.

⁵¹ Cf. to *Aen.* 4.620, where the claims of some *non idonei commentatores* are dismissed: *nam si veritatem historiae requiras, primo proelio interemptus Latinus est in arce.*

⁵² Thuc. 1.21.1 also recognizes the special conditions of antiquity: καὶ τὰ πολλὰ ὑπὸ χρόνου αὐτῶν ἀπίστως ἐπὶ τὸ μυθώδες ἐκνευικηκότα . . . ὡς παλαιὰ εἶναι ἀποχρώντως; on the special ‘indulgence’ granted to antiquity, also cf. Liv. 1. pref. 7: *datur haec venia*

Mere awareness of the unique circumstances seems in eyes of the commentators to remove blame from the sources:

unde nec historicos nec commentatores varia dicentes imperitiae condemnare debemus: nam antiquitas ipsa creavit errorem, et plerique fundant, plerique augent, et se transferunt nomina; quam rem etiam non parvum errorem adferre manifestum est . . . (to *Aen.* 7.678: cf. *Plut. Thes.* 27.6: καὶ θαυμαστὸν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπὶ πράγμασιν οὕτω παλαιοῖς πλανᾶσθαι τὴν ἱστορίαν.)

While the commentary is somewhat aware of the difficulty, it offers no criterion for evaluating such cases of conflicting testimony, makes no attempt to appeal to any independent or objective *argumentum*, historical or archaeological, displays no willingness to evaluate the reliability or validity of a particular source, preferring to apply the simple criteria of probability (*argumentum*), naturalness or realism (*secundum naturam*), or occasionally and rarely, the test of chronological or narrative consistency.⁵³ Partly, no doubt, this is due to lack of historical knowledge. The commentary remarks on the inability to interpret some Vergilian passages not only because of textual difficulties and obscurities, but also because of their ignorance of past history: *ut a nobis per historiae antiquae ignorantiam liquide non intellegantur* (to *Aen.* 9.361).

While acknowledging the difficulties, the commentators seem to take refuge with Vergil's invocation to the Muses, and to be content with the mere fact that some account has survived:

omnis antiquitas difficile pura et incorrupta manat in posteris. hoc enim dicit [i.e., Vergilius]: factum hoc licet priscum sit, id est antiquum, tamen fama eius non est oblitterata temporis vetustate. (to *Aen.* 9.78)

This is not to say that the meager level of historical judgment (as has been noted above) displayed in the commentary is a fault unique to the Servian commentary. Its handling of historical sources, just as its attempts to apply some incipient standards of probability and veracity, reflects what is characteristic of much of ancient historiography.⁵⁴ Foremost is the failure to recognize the

antiquitati; for Greek historians with a similar tolerance for ἀρχαιολογία, cf. *Plut. Thes.* 1.5 and *Diod.* 4.44.5.

⁵³ E.g., the commentary's concern for the *certa ratio* of Rome's founding seems based more on internal narrative consistency than factuality (to *Aen.* 7.678); other examples of this use of *ratio* can be found in notes on the Giants (to *Aen.* 3.578), and Hippolytus (to *Aen.* 7.761).

⁵⁴ Cf. Hunter 97: "In fact, it is possible to view Herodotus' attempts to distinguish the true λόγος from the false, or from the μῦθος, as a rudimentary form of source criticism."

underlying problems implicit in the use of the term *historia* both in the more restrictive sense of factuality (*res gesta*) and in reference to written sources and distinct historical genres. In this regard, however, the commentators are typical of those whose chief concern is with the *enarratio historiarum* or *auctorum*.

As we have shown, many instances of *historia* in the commentary refer to: 1) traditional accounts involving gods and heroes, which can be regarded as true accounts (*historia*) provided the incredible, improbable, and chronological or narrative inconsistencies are removed through rational analysis or euhemeristic reductionism; and 2) accounts which are claimed to be a result of poetic distortions or embellishments of natural and physical phenomena, often discernible by the application of the principles of nature allegory. Such usages are consistent with important elements of the definition which we took as the starting point of this study. In addition, we have seen that *historia*, *historiae* (in contrast to *annales*), and *historicus* are often used to refer to various written sources, which the commentators regard as containing factual or actual events.

Finally, this brings us to consider more specifically how the commentators employ the various senses of *historia* that we have seen to their understanding of Vergil's epic. In a series of notes, they first deal with the relation of *historia* in the more restrictive sense of *res gesta* to both the form and content of Vergil's *Aeneid*, and in doing so reveal their essentially literary concerns. In an introductory comment to the *Aeneid*, the commentators make a sharp distinction regarding the nature of poetry (*carmen*), especially epic (*heroicum*) poetry:

qualitas carminis patet. nam est metricum heroicum et actus mixtus, ubi poeta loquitur et alios inducit loquentes. est autem heroicum quod constat ex divinis humanisque personis, continens vera cum fictis; nam Aeneam ad Italiam venisse manifestum est, Venerem vero locutam cum Jove missumve Mercurium constat esse compositum. (to *Aen.* I. pref.)

To the commentators, epic poetry (*heroicum*) essentially consists in the joining of human and divine characters, and of combining reality with fiction (*vera cum fictis*, *manifestum* and *compositum*). It would seem that the contrast here once again is the fundamental one between *fabula* and *historia*, for *fictis* here refers to obvious mythical elements, since the examples given refer to Venus, Jupiter and Mercury, while the 'real' (*manifestum*) or 'historical' refers to the fact of Aeneas' coming to Italy.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ This parallel is further strengthened by the comment: *sed in deorum ratione fabulae sequendae sunt, nam veritas ignoratur* (to *Aen.* I.297).

This comment, however, raises a further issue regarding *historia* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. If *historia* is by definition essentially true, and poetry, like *fabula*, essentially false, what is the relationship between these two elements, which appear mutually exclusive?⁵⁶ At one point, the commentators describe *historia* as that *quam per legem artis poeticae aperte non potest ponere*, and continue: *quod autem dicimus eum poetica arte prohiberi ne aperte ponat historiam, certum est* (to *Aen.* 1.382). Frequently the commentators speak of *poetica licentia*, or *poetice*,⁵⁷ by which they seem to refer mainly to the poet's deviation from the 'truth,' *veritas* or *historia* (cf. to *Aen.* 3.46: *vituperabile enim est, poetam aliquid fingere, quod penitus a veritate discedat*).

A similar conflict between fact and fiction can be seen in a comment regarding Vergil's description of Carthage in the first book of the *Aeneid*:

topothesia est, id est fictus secundum poeticam licentiam locus. ne autem videatur penitus a veritate discedere, Hispaniensis Carthaginis portum descripsit. Ceterum hunc locum in Africa nusquam esse constat, nec incongrue propter nominis similitudinem posuit. nam topographia est rei verae descriptio. (to *Aen.* 1.159)

Here the contrast between *topothesia* and *topographia* parallels not the distinction between 'natural' and 'unnatural' but suggests the more restrictive contrast between 'fact' (*veritate, rei verae*) and 'falsity' (*fictus*). Thus the commentators reject as unhistorical Aeneas' visit to Carthage: *sic autem omnia contra hanc historiam ficta sunt, ut illud ubi dicitur Aeneas vidisse Carthaginem* (to *Aen.* 1.267) on the basis of chronology, not because it is in itself unrealistic or unnatural, i.e., *contra naturam*.

The commentary attributes this departure from *historia* and others as well not to any ignorance on the part of Vergil but to his poetic choice and skill: *ab*

⁵⁶ Aristotle (*Poet.* 1451A38-1451B6) makes a distinction between the concern of the ἱστορικὸς with actual events (τὰ γινόμενα) and that of the ποιητής for what events should or ought to occur (οἷα ἂν γένοιτο καὶ τὰ δυνατὰ κατὰ τὸ εἶκος ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον); while the commentators' *secundum naturam* principle can be reconciled to Aristotle's insistence on an inherent *a priori* principle of the poet, they do not, because of the varied senses they employ for *historia*, assume, as Aristotle does, that καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν.

⁵⁷ For *poetice*, see Mountford-Schultz index s.v. *poetica dicta*. For *poetica licentia* contrasted with fact or truth, see to *Aen.* 1.159, 267 (= *artem poeticam*); 3.349 DS; 8.294; to *G.* 2.336; 4.363; for a similarly pejorative sense of this phrase in Greek writers, cf. Strab. 1.2.17: εἰ δέ τινα μὴ συμφωνεῖ, μεταβολὰς αἰτιᾶσθαι δεῖν ἢ ἄγνοιαν ἢ καὶ ποιητικὴν ἐξουσίαν, ἢ συνέστηκεν ἐξ ἱστορίας καὶ διαθέσεως καὶ μύθου, and Porph. *De antr. Nymph.* 2.4: κατὰ ποιητικὴν ἐξουσίαν πλάσσωσιν ἄνθρωπον ἀπίθανος. Lamberton 122 calls the phrase "unequivocally pejorative here."

hac autem historia ita discedit Vergilius, ut aliquibus locis ostendat, non se per ignorantiam, sed per artem poeticam hoc fecisse (to *Aen.* 1.267). Here the opposition of epic poetry and *historia* seems to be based on both the restrictive sense of ‘fact’ as opposed to ‘fiction’ inherent in the previous quote and the more general sense of a probable account (*argumentum*) and a natural one (*secundum naturam*). This seems to be behind the curious comment about Vergil’s refusal to be bound by nature: *licet, ut supra diximus, Vergilius ista, quae per naturam necesse est fieri, plerumque contemnat* (to *Aen.* 4.6). Elsewhere the commentary uses the term *historia* to stress Vergil’s inclusion of accounts of actual, or real persons and events (*res gestae*) of Roman history. In fact, this direct and extensive inclusion of actual events and persons of Roman history in an epic poem led, the commentators claim, to the fact that the work was called by some not the *Aeneid* but the *Exploits of the Roman People*:

nam qui bene considerant, inveniunt omnem Romanam historiam ab Aeneae adventu usque ad sua tempora summatim celebrasse Vergilium, quod ideo latet quia confusus est ordo: nam eversio Ilii et Aeneae errores, adventus bellumque manifesta sunt: Albanos reges, Romanos etiam consulesque, Brutum, Catonem, Caesarem, Augustum, et multa ad historiam pertinentia hic indicat locus; cetera, quae hic intermissa sunt in *aspido* poioia commemorat. unde etiam in antiquis invenimus, opus hoc appellatum esse non Aeneidem, sed gesta populi Romani, quod ideo mutatum est, quia nomen non a parte, sed a toto debet dari.

(to *Aen.* 6.752)

The specific passages to which the commentary is referring are, of course, the great parade of Roman heroes that Anchises points out to Aeneas as the culmination of his visit to the Underworld in book six, and the historical tableaux of Roman history contained on the great shield presented to Aeneas in book eight: *cum in clipeo omnem Romanam historiam velit esse descriptam* (to *Aen.* 8.625).

Many comments amplify the specific historical events and characters directly presented by Vergil even if in a manner that is described as *summatim* and *intermissa*. But these two passages, extensive as they are, are clearly not the only ones the commentators have in mind. We must remember that the commentators, as indeed all Roman writers, also regarded many of the main actions of the other books, such as the wanderings of Aeneas, the fall of Troy, Aeneas’ arrival in Italy, the negotiations with Latinus over Lavinia, and the conflicts with Mezentius and Turnus as equally a part of actual and recorded fact, i.e., *historia* (to *Aen.* 6.752). The commentary reminds us how prone Vergil is to incorporate a fact of history in his poem: *et scimus amare Vergilium historiarum rem per transitum tangere* (to *Aen.* 7.715), and *sed*

carmini suo, ut solet, miscet historiam (to *Aen.* 7.601).⁵⁸ Considering what the commentators previously stated as the *legem poeticae artis* regarding the exclusion of *historia* in poetry, we might detect a contradiction here. For example, the commentators deny to Lucan the title of poet on the grounds that his work consists mainly of *historia*: *Lucanus namque ideo in numero poetarum esse non meruit, quid videtur historiam composuisse, non poemam* (to *Aen.* 1.382).⁵⁹

Interestingly enough, this criticism again reflects a traditional ancient view regarding the distinctiveness of history and epic poetry. For example, Petronius' Eumolpus also has Lucan in mind when he says:

non enim res gestae versibus comprehendae sunt, quod longe melius historici faciunt, sed per ambages deorumque ministeria et fabulosum sententiarum tormentum praecipitandus est liber spiritus, ut potius furentis animi vaticinatio appareat quam religiosae orationis sub testibus fides. (118.6)

While going far beyond the commentary to touch on the very nature of the poet and poetic inspiration in general, the Petronius passage does insist, as does the commentary, on the distinctiveness of poetry (*versibus*) and history (*res gestae*) and poetry's need for the *fabulosum*, especially the *ambages deorumque ministeria* reflecting the commentary's concern for mingling of *vera cum fictis* and *humanis et divinis personis* (to *Aen.* 1, pref.).

However, Vergil seems to escape the criticism directed at Lucan for a variety of reasons, and many of these involve the various senses of the term *historia* which we have seen in the commentary. First, Vergil, unlike Lucan, does include the 'non-historical' in the sense of the 'unnatural' (*contra naturam*), i.e., divine or mythical characters and events, and not only within the

⁵⁸ Similarly, cf.: *amat poeta rem historiae carmina suo coniungere* (to *Aen.* 1.246); but here the context seems to require the sense of *historia* as a fact of nature rather than an historical event. The precise interpretation of *historia* must always be determined by the immediate context. For example, the *historia* mentioned in the opening comment of book six (*totus quidem Vergilius scientia plenus est, in qua hic liber possidet principatum, cuius ex Homero pars maior est. et dicuntur aliqua simpliciter, multa de historia*) while referring mainly to the historical figures and events, such as those which appear in the Underworld scenes, can also be linked to Vergil's *alta scientia*, through its connection with *ratio* and *natura*, especially in relation to the physical and moral realities which the commentators believe Vergil is suggesting through his poetic fictions; cf. to *Aen.* 6.719: *et ostendit tam quod est vulgare, quam quod continet veritas et ratio naturalis*.

⁵⁹ Once again, this note is found verbatim in Isid. *Etym.* 8.7.10; for the importance of Isidore as a transmitter of various ancient views of *historia* and *fabula* to the Middle Ages, see Curtius 452-455.

work as a whole but also in those passages the commentary particularly cites as examples of *historia*; e.g., Apollo's presence at Actium on Aeneas' shield, as well as the mythical features of the Underworld. But, claims the commentary, Vergil does so in such a way as to suggest, in the terms of the commentary, an underlying reality or *historia* behind the *fabula*.

In addition, *historia*, both in the broader sense of 'natural' and physical facts and in its more restrictive reference to actual *res gestae*, is presented indirectly (*latenter, clam, non aperte, subtiliter*), not as openly (*aperte*) as in Lucan.⁶⁰ This 'indirectness' seems to refer to something more than the familiar epic practice established by Homer. Thus, for example, Homer is praised in Macrobius because *historicum stilum vitet by non per ordinem digerendo quae gesta sunt* (*Sat.* 5.14.11). While the commentary does mention *confusus est ordo*, which parallels Macrobius' attention both to Homer's *in medias res* beginning (cf. *Sat.* 5.2.9) and his narrative arrangement *ad narrationis suae seriem*, i.e., the sequence of events, the commentary seems more concerned with Vergil's practice of intermingling mythic and 'realistic' (both factual and natural) elements.

Furthermore, Vergil draws most of his historical events from a more remote period of time, not from contemporary events (*historiae*) as does Lucan. Here the contrast of *historiae* and *annales* seems to be appropriate. Many others are found in a more discrete (*intermissa*) or summary (*summatim*) fashion that the commentators characterize as more 'selective': *carptim tamen pauca commemorat* (to *Aen.* 8.625).⁶¹ In fact, it is this very characteristic of allusiveness or indirectness that brings us to yet another aspect of *historia* which the commentators see as important to Vergil's *Aeneid*.

The comments we have noted to this point, especially those of books six and eight, deal with *historia* in the sense of actual events and characters of Roman history, many of them in the distant and even legendary past, explicitly mentioned and described by Vergil even if only briefly and often out of chronological order. In another note the commentators call attention to what they regard as more indirect or oblique historical references or allusions to later historical elements which are often to be found in certain epic characters

⁶⁰ Regarding this also cf. *Lucanus apertius . . . ait* (to *Aen.* 7. 206); *sed tamen colorate tangit* [i.e., Vergil] *historiam* (to *Aen.* 3.256).

⁶¹ The use of *carptim* in this sense may derive from Sallust, who is among the classical sources most frequently cited in the commentary; cf. *Cat.* 4.2: . . . *statui res gestas populi Romani carptim . . . perscribere*; on the historical significance of this term see Vretska 111-12, and Syme 67.

and situations.⁶² Or conversely, a particular epic incident or character was suggested by an historical one:

frequenter, ut diximus, ad opus suum Vergilius aliqua ex historia derivat:
nam sic omnia inducit, quasi divini honores solvantur Anchisae, quos
constat Iulio Caesari tribuisse Augustum. (to *Aen.* 5.45)

Most of these more indirect historical references, allusions or analogies refer to contemporary historical events and individuals, especially the turmoil of the civil wars, to Pompey (to *Aen.* 2.557),⁶³ Caesar (to *Aen.* 1.287; 3.158; 10.316), Antony (to *Aen.* 7.684),⁶⁴ and especially Augustus (to *Aen.* 1.291, 292, 294; 3.274, 280, 501 DS; 5.45, 556; 6.69, 612, 7.170, 762). Only a few refer to earlier Roman history: the Punic Wars (to *Aen.* 3.437 DS; 4.691; 9.544), Romulus and Remus (to *Aen.* 3.46), Brutus (to *Aen.* 3.96), and Servius Tullius (to *Aen.* 2.683). While some of these more indirect allusions may strike modern scholars as tenuous at best, the commentators seem to regard them as another illustration of Vergil's subtle (*latenter, subtiliter*) use of *historia* and an important component of Vergil's poetic skill. Thus Vergil seems to avoid the censure directed at Lucan, not only because the poet retains the 'unhistorical' elements (*fabulosa*) of divine interaction but also because he is able to make effective use of *historia* in the various senses that the commentary has defined and employed.

First, *historia* in the sense of what is *secundum naturam*, natural and physical fact, is often concealed, according to the commentary's view of nature allegory, beneath the usual epic and mythic elements, while *historia* in the restricted sense of actual or real characters and events, especially of the past, are joined directly to the *ficta* (*rem historiam suo carmini coniungere*), the

⁶² Such historical allusions often begin with the phrases: *latenter tangit historiam*, cf. to *Aen.* 1.41 DS; 2.683; *per transitum tangit historiam*, to *Aen.* 1.382; 4.159; 4.459; 6.770 (= *rem plenam historiae*); 7.51; 7.715 (= *rem historiarum*); and: *adludit ad historiam*, to *Aen.* 4.676; 7.684. Some scholars prefer to call these examples of historical allegory, e.g., Jones; while others might find this designation somewhat misleading in terms of the commentary's use of *allegoria*; perhaps typology would be a more accurate term to describe this joining of remote (epic) and later historical events. On the distinction between allegory and typology see Dawson 15, who offers the following description: "a mode of composition, or interpretation, that links together at least two temporally different *historical* [my emphasis] events or persons because of an analogy they bear to one another." Another extreme may be seen in the attempt of T. C. Donatus to see praise of Augustus behind most incidents of the *Aeneid*; see Starr 161.

⁶³ On Pompey's identification with Priam, see Bowie.

⁶⁴ Vergil may also allude to Antony as one of his criminals in the Underworld, cf. Berry 416-20, referring to Vergil's "protean elusiveness" (416).

mythical, and the poetic (*contra naturam*).⁶⁵ For example, in the view of the commentators, Vergil's description of the causes of the Trojan war contains elements of both *historia* and *fabula* (to *Aen.* 10.91): *hinc ergo Vergilius utrumque tangit, et istam historiam quam modo diximus, et propter iudicium Paridis: quamvis fabula sit illa res et a poetis composita*; the breaking of treaties between Greeks and Trojans is described as the *vera causa*, whereas the story of the judgment is a poetic invention, *a poetis composita*. In addition, *historia* or *historiae* in the special sense of contemporary individuals and events is concealed beneath (*latet*) or subtly alluded to through (*per transitum*) the parallel *historia* of the past: *tangit, namque, ut frequentius diximus, latenter historiam* (to *Aen.* 2.683) and *et scimus amare Vergilium historiarum rem per transitum tangere* (in *Aen.* 7.715).⁶⁶ This skillful use of *historia* in its various senses and often by indirect means elicits the commentator's highest accolade: *unde apparet divinum poetam aliud agentem verum semper attingere* (to *Aen.* 3.349 DS).⁶⁷

Ultimately, the fundamental sense of *historia* linked with *natura* and *ratio* as permanent and philosophical truth is what the commentators insist lies beyond Vergil's poetic surface (to *Aen.* 6.719): *miscet philosophiae figmenta poetica et ostendit tam quod est vulgare, quam quod continet veritas et ratio naturalis*.⁶⁸ They apply the criteria inherent in their understanding of *historia* to uncover Vergil's *alta scientia*, or "deeper meaning."⁶⁹ This involves not only philosophy, especially that, like the Epicureans, concerned with the physical or natural basis of reality, but also astrology, the influence of the celestial bodies on human life.⁷⁰ The commentary's stress upon Vergil's profound, almost

⁶⁵ Perhaps the commentary refers to this by the phrase: *ut solet, miscet historiam* (to *Aen.* 6.69).

⁶⁶ For *transitus* as a kind of analogy (= Gk. μετάβασις) see Quint. *Inst.* 9.3.65: *fit ex uicino transitus ad diuersa ut similia*; and 9.4.50: *ad metabolen, id est transitum*.

⁶⁷ Macr. 5.14.11 gives this epithet to Homer, *divinus ille vates*. The term and its Greek equivalent, θεολόγος, may suggest the influence of Neoplatonic allegorical interpretation, especially that of Porphyry, on both Servius and Macrobius; see Courcelle 31.

⁶⁸ Cf. to *G.* 1.269 DS: *quem morem poeta agendo aliud subtiliter docuit*; to *Aen.* 8.128: *ramus olivae cum vitis offeratur, partim fabulae, partim naturae efficit ratio*; and to *G.* 1.243: *et licet alii hoc a Vergilio dictum per poeticam licentiam velint, tamen sciendum est, eum poeticae licentiae inseruisse philosophiam*.

⁶⁹ On *alta scientia*, cf. to *Aen.* 3.104: *sed altior est hoc loco poetae intuitus*; to *Aen.* 4.58: *est etiam sensus altior*; to *Aen.* 4.242: *huius autem rei ratio altioris est scientiae*; to 6.439: *qui altius de mundi ratione quaesiverunt*; to *Aen.* 6.532: *alii altius intellegunt*. Lazzarini 1984: 143 also draws attention to the importance of *alta scientia* in establishing the basis of the commentators' practice of finding a deeper, allegorical level of interpretation of Vergil.

⁷⁰ For the commentators' view of the *ratio astrologiae*, cf. to *G.* 1.252: *non sine causa in-tuemur siderum ortus et occasus; hinc enim universa noscuntur*. The best examples of this are

occult knowledge (cf. to *Aen.* 10.98: *arcana ratione*; and to *G.* 1.86: '*occultas' autem arcana quadam ratione celatas*) not only reflects the intellectual climate of late antiquity, but provides the foundation of the mystical figure of Vergil as *poeta doctus et magus*, which was to play such an important role in Vergil's medieval popularity.⁷¹

In summary, the Servian commentary both defines and employs the term *historia* according to the various senses common in antiquity: 1) reflecting its etymological origins (and in opposition to *fabula*) to contrast an account of what is natural, probable and realistic (*argumentum* and *secundum naturam*) against that which is unnatural, improbable and unrealistic (*contra naturam*); 2) to distinguish an account, often written, of what is historical fact (*res gesta, factum*) from what is false (*fictum*); and 3) to contrast written accounts of the past (*annales*) with those of contemporary events (*historiae*). In addition, all the senses of *historia* are employed as important critical tools in the commentary's exegesis of the *Aeneid* as an epic poem (*carmen heroicum*) in which poetic imagination (*fabulosum, figmentum, fictum*), 'nature' (*historia = secundum naturam*), the past, both legendary and factual (*historia, annales*), together with contemporary events and individuals (*historiae*) are intermingled (*compositum, miscet*) often in a uniquely subtle (*latenter*) and indirect (*per transitum*) way. It is also clear that these various senses of *historia*, while reflecting from a modern scientific historical viewpoint only a rudimentary critical view of history itself, are not only consistent with the essentially artistic and literary concerns of the commentary, but also are, for the most part, well within what one might call the mainstream of ancient literary and even historical theory.

not to be found under the *astrologia* but *mathematici*, e.g., to *Aen.* 1.223, 2.690 DS, 4.489 DS, 6.511, 714, 10.18. In addition, several mythical figures are identified as historical individuals connected with *astronomia* or *astrologia*, e.g., Prometheus (to *Aen.* 6.42), Atlas (to *Aen.* 6.42), Hercules (to *Aen.* 6.42), and even Atreus (to *Aen.* 1.568).

⁷¹ See Jones 1986: 117 discussing how Servius' occasional allegorical interpretations were "a reflection of the spirit of the times in which he lived." Servius in turn became the basis of the comprehensive medieval commentaries such as those of Fulgentius and especially of Bernard Silvestris; also see Chance 50-51. On the image of Vergil as magician or necromancer, see Compagnon, esp. 249 ff.

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