

contribution to recovering the section on Eutropius. This is because Zosimus, while he retails the main events and retains the personal focus on the eunuch and his henchmen, removes the disquisition on the consulship so characteristic of Eunapius' historiography.

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NONNUS' TYPHONOMACHY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE OF DIONYSIACA II

Whichever century can justly claim him – and Vian lists three candidates in his introduction, the fourth, fifth, and sixth¹) – Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* is "the last great poem preserved from antiquity"²). But Nonnus has not enjoyed critical acclaim. He is dismissed as a "very ordinary poet" by Bentley, the *Dionysiaca* is termed a "faded . . . tapestry" by Rose, and Fontenrose characterizes the *Typhonomachy* as "long-winded"³). Braden more usefully remarks on the "heady, lurid feel of Nonnus' Greek, its every move cloyed with the memory of a thousand good and bad poems"⁴). But Nonnus' art is not simply derivative; his pet words are not Homer's, nor yet Apollonius' nor Quintus'; and the tactile nature of Nonnus' language is very much his own.

When the *Dionysiaca* has received serious study the structure or organization of the epic has usually been discussed⁵). I too shall attempt to disclose the structure, not of the whole epic, but of one

1) Francis Vian, *Nonnos de Panopolis, Les Dionysiaques, Chants I-II* (Paris 1976) xvi, note 1.

2) Albin Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, trans. James Willis and Cornelis de Heer (London 1966) 817.

3) Quoted by H.J. Rose in W.H.D. Rouse, *Nonnos Dionysiaca*, vol. I (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1940) xviii; Rose in Rouse, *op. cit.*, xii; Joseph Fontenrose, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins* (Berkeley 1959) 74.

4) Gordon Braden, *Nonnos' Typhoon: Dionysiaca, Books I and II*, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, XV.5 (1974) 852.

5) See Vian's introduction, *op. cit.*, xviii-xli, 7-17, 33-43, 69-90, 104-105.

relatively self-contained episode, the battle between Zeus and Typhon (Bk. II 205–659), part of the “explosion” with which the poem begins⁶).

A walking tour of this unfamiliar territory might be in order. Book I begins with a three-fold invocation: of the Muse, the Muses, and the Mimallons (bacchantes). The narrative proper begins with the rape of Europa (featuring implausibly learned and clever animadversions upon the “bastard voyage” of the “bull-charge”, Zeus, from an adventitious Achaian sailor who knows an *adynaton* when he sees one); then the revolt of Typhon (which gives Nonnus an opportunity to indulge his passion for astrology); the marriage of Zeus and Europa (preceded by sardonic comments from Hera, e. g. “watch out for Hermes; he might rustle his own father”); and the trick by which Zeus recovers his lost sinews (Cadmus ravishes Typhon with his piping, then induces the monster to part with Zeus’ sinews by pretending to have lost his lyre strings) – all set into an account of the travels of Cadmus.

The action carries on into Bk. II when Typhon, awakening to the discovery that Zeus has repossessed his thunderbolt, vents his fury on earth, animals, rivers, and man. Now Nonnus can show his skill at describing what no man had ever seen: a Naiad comes stuck knee-deep in a muddy river bottom, and one of a brace of Hamadryads, routed from their sheltering trees, covers up as best she can with leaves while the other nervously catalogues the ruses for escaping male attention, all hopeless as she knows⁷). Night brings temporary and uneasy respite beneath a display of astral fireworks: shooting stars, lightning, comet, meteors and rainbow.

The battle of Zeus and Typhon is the climax of this dramatic prelude. Vian sets the limits of the battle at 244–631, reasonably enough, but the inclusion of some preliminaries and the aftermath allows Nonnus to make a point⁸). At 205–236 Nike comes to reproach Zeus for allowing Typhon to throw the universe into confusion, a familiar epic *topos*. At 631–59 we learn the consequences of the battle: Earth laments her son’s death and nature

6) Willis and de Heer’s version of Lesky’s “ausfahrende Gestik” (op. cit., 817).

7) See Vian, op. cit., 72–4 for a discussion of the structure of the Hamadryad’s mythological excursus which he terms “un exemple remarquable de composition en forme de guirlande”.

8) Vian, op. cit., 77 and 104. Fauth (Eidos Poikilon [Hypomnemata 66] Göttingen 1981, 161) notes that the whole Typhonomachy is framed by descriptions of Typhon (1.154 ff. and 2.609 ff. [not 2.209 ff.]) and comments on the “chiasmic structure” of the “σύγχυσις κόσμου by Typhon” (p. 163).

repairs the damage done to earth and heaven. By means of ring-composition (ἀρμονίης δ' ἀλύτου λύτο πείσματα 222, ἀρμονίης ἀλύτοιο πάλιν σφρηγίσσατο δεσμῶ 653) Nonnus has at once marked the battle off as a self-contained composition and given an interpretation of its significance: the battle between Zeus and Typhon is "a tale of conflict between order and disorder, chaos and cosmos"⁹), the means by which the disorder brought about in Bk. I is set right. The relationship between the two passages is reinforced by other verbal repetitions: 221 κόσμος ~ 650 κόσμοιο, 228 γενέτης ~ 650 παλιγγεννέος, 228 ἄστρων ~ 654 ἀστρασιν, 234 ταμίη ~ 650 ταμίη, 238 φύσιν ~ 650 Φύσις.

The battle which Hesiod describes in Theogony 820–880 is vastly expanded by Nonnus. If Nonnus was familiar with Hesiod's poems, as one assumes he was, he did not follow Hesiod slavishly in either structure or language. The Hesiodic Titanomachy and Typhonomachy have a common narrative structure as West observes, but for the most part, Nonnus goes his own way in creating his narrative¹⁰). A brief outline of the battle (after Vian) will suffice.

- A¹ 244–257 Typhon awakens; his clamor
 B¹ 258–356 Typhon's challenge
 C 357–563a Battle
 B² 563b–631 Zeus' sarcastic reply
 A² 632–649 Gaia laments

The various and sundry animal sounds made by Typhon before the battle (A¹) are answered by the grieving and wailing of his mother after Typhon's defeat (A²)¹¹).

9) Fontenrose, op. cit., 465. See Fauth, op. cit., 161 ff.

10) M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 382f. Certain features common to the two narratives can not be fortuitous:

Hesiod	Nonnus
1. 829–35 T.'s animal bellowing	244–256 T.'s animal bellowing
2. 853–6 Z. defeats T. with bolt, burns off T.'s heads	508–14 Z. blasts T. with bolt, cuts off T.'s heads
3. 858 earth groans	555 Gaia grieves
4. 861–7 earth melts like tin or iron	548 Gaia melts
5. 869–71 T. is source of winds	273 ff. T. compels the four winds 524–36 T. suffers compulsion of the four winds
6. 878–80 winds raise dust, ruin crops	647–9 winds raise dust, overwhelm crops

11) Verbal repetitions: 245, 253 ἐπεβρυχάτο, βρύχημα ~ 635 βρυχήματα, 251 σύνθροος ἦχώ ~ 632 ἐπινίκιον ἦχώ, 254 μύκημα ~ 633 μυκήσατο.

The parallel between Typhon's challenge (B¹) and Zeus' sarcastic reply (B²) is evident¹²). Vian's observations are helpful, but his analysis can be improved by observing the verbal repetitions which he occasionally notes between Bks. I and II but not between the two speeches in Bk. II. Vian divides Typhon's speech into five sections (258–90, 291–95, 296–317, 318–333, 334–355) and Zeus' reply into three (565–604, 605–621, 622–630)¹³). I should rather divide them into four sections each on the basis of content and of verbal repetitions:

- 1a. 258–272 Typhon exhorts his hands to destroy
- 2a. 273–290 Typhon threatens the winds and exhorts his animal heads
- 3a. 291–333 Typhon threatens the Olympians with mayhem and forced marriages
- 4a. 334–355 Typhon's future empire
- 4b. 563b–578 Zeus mocks Typhon's plans for an empire
- 3b. 579–604 Zeus responds to Typhon's threats against the Olympians
- 2b. 605–621 Zeus belittles Typhon's weapons and animal heads
- 1b. 622–630 Zeus promises to bury Typhon under Sicily and build him a cenotaph

Vian fails to see the parallels beyond line 604. As an examination of the verbal repetitions makes clear, Nonnus has maintained the parallelism throughout the two speeches¹⁴). Some of the parallels

12) Vian, *op. cit.*, 86: "La première partie (v. 565–604 = 40 v.) reprend une à une sur le mode ironique les fanfaronnades antérieures de Typhée." There is ring composition between 356 and 563b.

13) *Op. cit.*, 104–5.

14) Those verbal repetitions which fall just outside the related section are enclosed in parentheses: 1a ~ 1b: 258 χεῖρες ~ (621 χειρῶν), 260 αἰθήρης ~ 630 αἰθέριον, 262 ἄντυγα ἀστερόφοιτον ~ (616 ἄντυγας ἀστρων), 265 αἰθέρος ~ 630 αἰθέρα, 267 πέτρας ~ 629 πέτρους, 269 κολώναις ~ 623 κολώναις, 272 πυρί ~ 630 πῦρ. – 2a ~ 2b: 274 μαστίζω ~ 616 μαστίζεις, 276 χειρὶ μῆ ~ 621 χειρὶ μῆ, 276 λαμῶ ~ 611 λαμῶν, 280 Ἄρκτος (287) ~ 619 ἄρκτου, 281 κύκλων ~ 613 κυκλάδι, 282 μυκήσασθε (285) ~ 611 μύκημα (614), 284 βόες ~ 614 βοέων, 285 δειδιότες ~ 608 εἰδειδες, 285 βαρύδουπον ~ 611 βαρυφθόγγων, 285 καρῆνων ~ 609 κεφαλαί, 286 χάσμα ~ 610 χάσματα, 286 βλοσυρῶν . . . γενείων (290) ~ 619 φρικτὰ γένεια, 287 Λέοντι λέων ~ 610 λεόντων, 290 δράκοντας ~ 612 δρακοντείης, 290 Ὀφίς ~ 613 ὀφιῶδει, – 3a ~ 3b: 291 ἀστεροπαῖς ~ 582 ἀστεροπῆς, 295 κεραινοῦ ~ 583 κεραινοῦ, 296 δεσμούς ~ 603 δῆσον, 296 Ποσειδάωνι ~ 587 ἐννοσίγαιον (580), 299 Ἥφαιστου ~ 593 Ἥφαιστον, 299 πυρός ~ 583 πυρός, 302 υἷα Μαίης ~ 591 υἷα Μαίης, 303 χαλκῶ ~ 604 χαλκῶ, 309 γυμνούμενον ~ 582 γυμνούμενον, 312 ὀμυγάμω ~ 594 νεοζεύκω, 312 ληιδίην ~ 585 ληιδίης, 313 Ἄρεα θητεύοντα (333) ~ 590 Ἄρεα λάτριον, 315 οὐρανόν ~ 592 οὐρανίην, 317

might seem slight, especially given Nonnus' frequent use of favorite words, but the amount of repetition can hardly be fortuitous, nor can repetitions such as those at 276, 336, 340 f., 356, etc. The repetitions strongly support the division of the speeches into four sections each, and give added force to the sarcasm of the victorious king of the gods as he throws Typhon's taunts back in his faces.

Vian divides the battle proper (C) into nine sections¹⁵. I should rather divide it into thirteen sections, but it is questionable at best to try to impose order upon a narrative of which Vian aptly remarks: "he resorts to a technique of juxtaposed tableaux to enlarge his subject and he creates the illusion of multiple peripetias in adapting the Homeric manner of epic battle"¹⁶.

Since Nonnus does not make consistent use of verbal repetitions in the battle narrative to aid a structural analysis we are left with a rather confused and disorganized description – appropriate enough for a battle. True, there is a degree of alternation between Typhon and Zeus; and Typhon first hurls trees (380–390), then javelins (404), and finally rocks (451–474). At 475–507 the poet interrupts the battle for a detailed account of the formation of the thunderbolt, what Rose calls "a page from the poet's handbook of natural science"¹⁷. Any excuse will do for Nonnus to show off his book learning, but here the digression serves a significant purpose. Braden remarks that "at line 508 . . . , for no specific reason, Zeus acquires sudden ascendancy"¹⁸. Sudden it is, and the battle will soon be over, but not "for no specific reason". To be sure, Zeus had been hurling thunderbolts all along; some fell harmlessly into the sea (409–410), and the battle was indecisive (475 f.). But once Nonnus has described its creation (475–507) the thunderbolt is

ζῆλον ~ 586 ζηλήμονα, 317 νυμφίος (312, 321) ~ 594 νύμφη, 317 Ἥρης ~ 585 Ἥρης (599), 319 στεροπῆς ~ (606 στεροπῆς), 319 θαλάμων (324) ~ 585 θαλαμηπόλον, 319 δαλός ~ 584 δαλόν, 325 θεράπεινα ~ 590 θεράπων, 328 λέκτρα ~ 586 λέκτρων, 329 παστόν ~ 584 παστῶ, 332 τραπέζης ~ 588 τραπέζη. – 4a ~ 4b: 336 οὐρανὸν οἶκον ἔχων ~ 578 οὐρανίης . . . ὄρνιν ἔχων, 337 καὶ Κρόνον ~ 574 καὶ Κρόνος (565, 568), 338 χθονίω ~ 566 χθών, 339 δεσμά ~ 576 δεσμά, 340 Τιτήνας ~ 567 Τιτήνων, 340 f. κομίσσω/ . . . ἐς οὐρανόν ~ 572 κόμισσον ἐς οὐρανόν, 342 κεραινῶν ~ 568 κεραινοί, 352 ἄστρον (348) ~ 575 ἄστρον (572), 354 τέκνα λοχεύση ~ 566 υἷα λόχευσε, 356 Κρονίδης δ' ἐγέλασεν ~ 563 Κρονίδης δ' . . . γελάσασας, [358 Νίκη (362) ~ 557 νίκη], [363 σκῆπτρα Διός ~ 571 σκῆπτρα Διός], [363 θῶκος ~ 570 θῶκος].

15) *Op. cit.*, 105.

16) *Op. cit.*, 77–8.

17) In Rouse, *op. cit.*, 83.

18) *Op. cit.*, 877.

unerring and devastating¹⁹). Typhon's countless hands, shoulders, and heads are blasted with one shot each (511–514). Perhaps an explanation can be found in Eliade's views on myth, specifically myths of origin. "The idea that a remedy [read device] does not act unless its origin is known is extremely widespread". "In most cases it is not enough to *know* the origin myth, one must *recite* it"²⁰). Of course, the 'myth' of the origin of the thunderbolt is not a myth at all but a pseudo-scientific explanation, and Zeus does not recite it, Nonnus does. It might seem improbable that the account of the thunderbolt's origin makes it effective: did 5th cent. A. D. Panopolitans still appreciate the function of origin myths? But the change is immediate, and it is dramatic. Till 475 Typhon attacks and Zeus parries; after 507 Zeus attacks with devastating effect.

The pivotal digression is *not* precisely centered in the battle narrative, but comes approximately two-thirds of the way through. The irresistible force of the thunderbolt does not allow for a long drawn out battle. Perhaps I seem to be making too much of a mere digression. Not only does it signal the reversal in the battle (and thus in the whole episode) but here Nonnus produces a rigorous symmetry with dense verbal repetition in almost perfect chiasmic order – four exceptions in fourteen instances – centered on the precise instant of the thunderbolt's birth as male stone strikes female (λίθος ἄμφι λίθῳ, 493). As in Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* and Quintus Smyrnaeus, Book I (see footnote 19) the symmetry is most apparent and regular, and the verbal repetitions most dense, at the pivotal center of the symmetrical structure.

19) Something similar occurs in Quintus Smyrnaeus, Bk. 1, and Callimachus' Hymn 4. Penthesileia is irresistible until the central debate between Tisiphone and Theano, ineffectual thereafter. The central speech of Apollo in Callimachus' hymn marks a reversal from rejection of Leto to acceptance. See R. Schmiel, *The Amazon Queen: Quintus of Smyrna, Book I*, Phoenix 40 (1986) 188–190, and *Callimachus' Hymn to Delos: Structure and Theme*, Mnemosyne 40 (1987) 52–54. Fauth comments on the "Feuer-Wasser-Antithetik der Verse 2,435 ff. ... [m]itten zwischen diesen beiden Komplexen [the battle narrative]", but, if 2.435 ff. is more central physically, 2.475–507 is functionally central and pivotal.

20) Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York 1963) 16 and 17.

ἰσόροπος	475	ἰσότυποι	507
αἰθέρος	477	αἰθέρος	501
κεραυνοί	477	κεραυνοί	507
νέφος	479	νέφος	504
στεροπήν	480	στεροπήσι	507
πυριγλώχινες οἰστοί	481	φλογερεῖσι βολαῖς	500
ἀπὸ χθονίου	482	ἀπὸ χθονίοιο	497
ἀτμός ἀρούρης	483	ἀτμίδα γαίης	499
καπνῶ	485	καπνοῦ	497
πυριτρεφέων	486	πυρρογενής	495
θλιβομένη . . . ἐνδόμυχος φλόξ	487	θλιβομένησιν . . . οὐρανίη φλόξ	496
ἀλλόμενον πῦρ	492	αὐτόγονον πῦρ	494

λίθος . . . λίθω 493

491–5 ὕγρον ↔ ἄξαλέου / ὑπέρτερον ↔ νειόθεν / θῆλυς ↔ ἄρσενι

At the center of the digression, where the origin of the thunderbolt is described in a simile and the chiasmic sequence reaches its midpoint, the description revels in contrasts: ὕγρον – ἄξαλέου (491), ὑπέρτερον – νειόθεν (491 f.), and θῆλυς – ἄρσενι (495). This has, of course, been set up by the monster's inept attempt to douse the thunderbolt with water. "Fool, he did not know that the flaming thunderbolts and lightnings are the offspring of the rain-bearing clouds" (449–50). But contrasts also are appropriate at the center of this pivotal digression, both because the blazing thunderbolt has its origin, paradoxically, in the wet, and because this digression keys the reversal in battle from Typhon's aggressiveness and Zeus' counterattacks to the irresistible bombardment of bolts from Zeus and helpless suffering on Typhon's part.

Nonnus' version of the Typhonomachy might well have originated in a version earlier than Hesiod's (Keydell conjectures that Nonnus used an allegorizing commentary on Hesiod's *Theogony*); in any event, one need not second Jacoby's appraisal of *Theogony* 820–868 ("non poetae est sed balbutientis hominis") to conclude that Nonnus' account of the battle is far more interesting literature than Hesiod's perfunctory narrative²¹).

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21) But see H. Schwabl, *Zu Hesiods Typhonomachie*, *Hermes* 90 (1962) 122–3 for ring composition in Hesiod's version.