contribution to recovering the section on Eutropius. This is be­
cause 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’ his­
toriography.

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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) – Non­
nus’ Dionysiaca is “the last great poem preserved from antici­
py”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 re­
marks 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.
(Cambridge, Mass. and London 1940) xviii; Rose in Rouse, op. cit., xii; Joseph
4) Gordon Braden, Nonnos’ Typhoon: Dionysiaca, Books I and II, Texas
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 (bacchants). The narrative proper begins with the rape of Europa (featuring implausibly learned and clever animadversions upon the “bastard voyage” of the “bullbarge”, 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 “chiastic structure” of the “σύγχυσις κόσμου by Typhon” (p. 163).
Nonnus’ Typhonomachy: An Analysis of Dionysiaca II

repairs the damage done to earth and heaven. By means of ring-composition (ἀρμονίας δ’ ἀλάτου λύτο πείσματα 222, ἀρμονίας ἀλάτου πάλιν σφηγίσσατο δεσμό 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 κόσμοι, 228 γενέτης ~ 650 παλιγγενές, 228 ἄστρα ~ 654 ἄστραςιν, 234 ταμή ~ 650 ταμή, 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.

A^1 244–257 Typhon awakens; his clamor
B^1 258–356 Typhon’s challenge
C 357–563a Battle
B^2 563b–631 Zeus’ sarcastic reply
A^2 632–649 Gaia laments

The various and sundry animal sounds made by Typhon before the battle (A^1) are answered by the grieving and wailing of his mother after Typhon’s defeat (A^2)11).

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

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

The parallel between Typhon’s challenge (B¹) and Zeus’ sarcastic reply (B²) is evident. 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). 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 speeches. Some of the parallels

14) Those verbal repetitions which fall just outside the related section are enclosed in parentheses: 1a ~ 1b: 258 χείρες ~ (621 χειρῶν), 260 αἰθέρις ~ 630 αἰθέριον, 262 ἄντυγα ἄστερόφωτον ~ (616 ἄντυγα ἄστρων), 265 αἰθέρος ~ 630 αἰθέρα, 267 πέτωσ ~ 629 πέτροις, 269 κολώναις ~ 623 κολώναις, 272 πυρ ~ 630 πῦρ. – 2a ~ 2b: 274 μαστίζω ~ 616 μαστίζεις, 276 χειρί μή ~ 621 χειρί μή, 276 λαμψ ~ 611 λαμμόν, 280 Ἄρχτος (287) ~ 619 ἄρχτον, 281 κύκλων ~ 613 κυκλάδι, 282 μυκήσασθε (285) ~ 611 μύκησα (614), 284 βοες ~ 614 βοεῖν, 285 δειδίτες ~ 608 ἐδείδεις, 285 βαρυδουμον ~ 611 βαρυφθόγγον, 285 καρῆνον ~ 609 κεφαλαι, 286 χάσιμα ~ 610 χάσματα, 286 βλόσυφαν ... γενείων (290) ~ 619 φροκτά γένεια, 287 Λέοντι λέον ~ 610 λέοντον, 290 δράκοντας ~ 612 δρακόντες, 290 Ὄρις ~ 613 ὅριοδεῖ, – 3a ~ 3b: 291 ἄστεροπτας ~ 582 ἄστεροπη, 295 κεραυνο ~ 583 κεραυνό, 296 δειομος ~ 603 δήσον, 296 Ποσειδάοιν ~ 587 ἔννοσιαῖς (580), 299 Ἡφαιστοῦ ~ 593 Ἡφαιστον, 299 πυρός ~ 583 πυρός, 302 ιύεα Μαῖη ~ 591 ιύεα Μαίη, 303 χαλίκω ~ 604 χαλίκ, 309 γυμνουμένον ~ 582 γυμνούμενον, 312 ὄψιγμῳ ~ 594 νεοζεύκτερο, 312 ληδίην ~ 585 ληδίης, 313 Ἀρεα θητεύοντα (333) ~ 590 Ἀρεα λάτιν, 315 οὐρανόν ~ 592 οὐρανήν, 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 sections\(^{15}\). 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 peripeties 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

\[\begin{align*}
\text{ξηλον} & \sim 586 \text{ ξηλήμονα, 317 νυμφίος (312, 321) \sim 594 νύμφη, 317 Ἄνδης \sim 585}
\text{ Ἄτης (599), 319 στεροπής \sim (606 στεροπής), 319 σαλάμον (324) \sim 585 ἄλαμελ-
πόλον, 319 δαλός \sim 584 δαλόν, 325 θεράτανα \sim 590 θεράτων, 328 λέκτορα \sim}
\text{586 λέκτρων, 329 παστόν \sim 584 παστύ, 332 τραπέζης \sim 588 τραπέζης. – 4a \sim 4b:
336 οὐρανόν οίκον ἔρων \sim 578 οὐρανής ... ὅριν ἔρων, 337 καὶ Κρόνον \sim 574}
\text{καὶ Κρόνος (565, 568), 338 χοινίσιο \sim 566 χθών, 339 δεσμά \sim 576 δεσμά, 340}
\text{Τυτήνας \sim 567 Ττίτηνος, 340 f. κομίσω/ ... ἐς οὐρανόν \sim 572 κόμισον ἐς}
\text{οὐρανόν, 342 κεραυνόν \sim 568 κεραυνοί, 352 ἄστρων (348) \sim 575 ἄστρων (572),}
\text{354 τέκνα λογεύση \sim 566 υἱὰ λόγευσε, 356 Κρονίδης δ’ ἐγέλασσεν \sim 563}
\text{Κρονίδης δ’... γελάσσας, [358 Νίκη (362) \sim 557 νίκην, [363 σκήπτρα Δίως \sim}
\text{571 σκήπτρα Δίως], [363 θόκος \sim 570 θόκος].}
\end{align*}\]

\(^{17}\) In Rouse, op. cit., 83.
unerring and devastating\textsuperscript{19}). 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”\textsuperscript{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 chiastic order – four exceptions in fourteen instances – centered on the precise instant of the thunderbolt’s birth as male stone strikes female ($\lambda\iota\theta\iota\varsigma \dot{\alpha} \mu\varsigma \iota \lambda\iota\omicron\omicron$, 493). As in Callimachus’ \textit{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.


\textsuperscript{20}) Mircea Eliade, \textit{Myth and Reality} (New York 1963) 16 and 17.
At the center of the digression, where the origin of the thunderbolt is described in a simile and the chiastic sequence reaches its midpoint, the description revels in contrasts: ὑγρὸν - ἀζαλέου (491), ὑπέρτερον - νείόθεν (491 f.), and θῆλυς - ἀφεσεν (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 narrative.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{21}\) But see H. Schwabl, Zu Hesiods Typhonomachie, Hermes 90 (1962) 122–3 for ring composition in Hesiod’s version.