

THE STYLE OF NONNOS' *DIONYSIACA*  
The Rape of Europa (1.45–136) and the Battle  
at the Hydaspes (22.1–24.143)\*

Stylistic analysis presented typically in the form of usages and tendencies abstracted from the text of the poet and given in the form of lists of examples, if not statistics, is perhaps the only practical way to describe a poet's style in detail and in extent while still in a surveyable scope. Nevertheless, a poet's style is experienced progressively as one reads or hears the work; style must therefore also be studied and analyzed in at least substantial sections of consecutive text, and not only because Nonnos' style varies considerably<sup>1</sup>. I shall examine the first brief episode in the poem, the Rape of Europa. Like a musical overture, it is a show-piece, a virtuoso performance with which Nonnos evidently wants

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1) A. Wifstrand, Von Kallimachos zu Nonnos. Metrisch-Stilistische Untersuchungen zur späteren griechischen Epik und zu verwandten Gedichtgattungen (Lund 1933) 78–154.

to get his reader's attention and pique his interest<sup>2</sup>. One can expect it to be a good example of Nonnos' artistry, worked with care, and therefore an especially useful passage for my purpose (1.45–136. I shall not comment on 321–351).

One of the most striking features of Nonnos' style is his fondness for certain ideas, words, or sets of words<sup>3</sup>. Roundness is among his favorites<sup>4</sup>; here Eros encircles Europa with his arms (49 κυκλώσας), the bull Zeus curves his neck downward (51 κυρτόν), Boreas bellies out Europa's robe and whistles at her unripe breasts (70 κόλπωσε, an apt word – indeed a pun – voyeurism is, of course, frequent in Nonnos), and Zeus rounds his back (77 κυρτώσας. See also 133 βόστρυχα and κυκλάδες).

In Nonnos nothing is real, everything is copy – if not false, feigned or fake<sup>5</sup>: the throat from which Zeus moos (47 νόθω, cf. 61

2) M. Whitby (From Moschus to Nonnus: The Evolution of the Nonnian Style, in: Studies in the Dionysiaca of Nonnus, Cambridge Philological Society, suppl. vol. 17 [1994] 99–155) compares short passages of the *Dionysiaca* with short passages from six Hellenistic and Imperial poets. She uses this passage and Moschus' *Europa* (especially 125–130) for her first comparison. She concentrates on what is or is not included (e.g. Europa's basket is absent from Nonnos), on linguistic novelties (e.g., Moschos' ελαφρίζεσκε [130] and Nonnos' ἀκροβαφή [65] and βοοστόλος [66]), on Nonnos' avoidance of prepositions and use of only the commonest particles, and on metrical practices.

3) The most significant work on Nonnos' style is Margarete Riemschneider's very original and perceptive essay: *Der Stil des Nonnos*, in: *Aus der byzantinischen Arbeit der DDR 1*, Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten 5, Berlin (1957) 46–70. It has not always received the appreciation it deserves; W. Fauth (*Eidos Poikilon*, Göttingen 1981, 13) cites the dismissive criticisms of Peek and Keydell "obwohl diese Ermittlungen ... für das Erfassen des Grundcharakters der Dionysiaka durchaus hilfreich sind." Riemschneider observes that words lose their meaning in Nonnos, that his free word placement is unGreek, that Nonnos is rich in synonyms but poor in concepts, that he has favorite words or ideas (especially the line, movement, illusion and paradox), and that he pays no attention to temporal or spatial reality in his narrative.

4) Riemschneider (above, n. 3) 53 lists the following: ἀγκύλος, καμπύλος, επίκυρτος, σπειρηδός, τροχόεις, τροχοειδής, τροχαλός, ἔλιξ; ὀκλός, αὐλός, κύκλος, ἕτυς, ἄντυξ, κώνος, σπείρα, σφαίρα, ἀψίς, ῥόμβος, κέντρος, ἄμμα, μίτρη, στέμματα; κάμπτω, κυκλώω, ἐλίσσω, γυροῶ, μιτροῶ. J. Winkler (*In Pursuit of Nymphs: Comedy and Sex in Nonnos' "Tales of Dionysos"* [Diss., University of Texas at Austin 1974] 177 n.9) counted 265 occurrences of κύκλος and its derivatives. Nonnos is also very fond of αὐτο-compounds (18 in books 7 and 8), but there are none in our passage. Winkler surveys their use in a discussion of spontaneous generation (79–84).

5) Riemschneider (above, n. 3) 57–59 lists: τύπος, εἰκόν, μίμημα, ἕνδαγμα, φάσμα, always in association with an adjective meaning 'counterfeit' such as νόθος, ψευδόμενος, ξείνος, ποιητός, ἀπατήλιος, μιμητός, ἀντίτυπος, ἀντίζυγος, ἀντίρροπος, δόλιος or κλεπτόμενος. Riemschneider holds that there is no

ἠπεροπῆα 'deceiver'), Zeus the strange voyager (65 ξεῖνον), Boreas' tricky breath (69 δολόεις), the Nereid pretending to swim (75 μίμημα). See also νόθον πλόον (97), οὐ ... τύπον εἰκελον (100), ἀήθεα ταῦρον (103), ἀπατήλιος (120) and χεύμασι μιμηλοῖσι νόθος κελάρουζεν Ἐνιπέυς (124)<sup>6</sup>. Triton's ἀντίτυπον μέλος (62) is perhaps an 'accompaniment' to Zeus' moos, but the adjective implies imitation, if not deceptive imitation. Then too, the word once meant 'opposed.' Is it accompaniment or counterpoint? One is often unsure of such matters in Nonnos.

κέρας ('horn') is practically a leit-motif of the poem; how pleased Nonnos would be to learn the contemporary slang sense of 'horny,' that is, 'sexually excited or excitable'<sup>7</sup>. Zeus is high-horned (46) and a horn-bearing sailor (65) who is pointed out by Nereus, mingling wonder with fear (64). κεράσας ('mingling') has, of course, nothing to do with horns lexically, but given Nonnos' use of language and the context, the appearance of the word is hardly fortuitous. Europa grasps a horn to steer with (68). Again, whatever can have erotic associations undoubtedly has in Nonnos. See also 121.

Among Nonnos' most favorite verbs are those for drawing a line (scoring a surface)<sup>8</sup>. Zeus' hoof furrows the water (54 ἐχάραξε), a dolphin cuts the flood (73 ἀνέκοπτε), a fish's tail scores the surface of the sea (78 κατέγραφεν). See also διεσσυμένου (53,86), τέμων, -ουσι (93,108,114), χαράσσειται (96), διασχίζει (105), σχίζουσι (114), and αὔλακες and ἐχέτλη, which, though not verbs, have the same implication (117). There is perhaps more than a hint of sado-masochism in this fondness for penetration or scoring surfaces, but one need not labor to find perversion in Nonnos. Eros is a drover who lashes Zeus (80 ἐπεμάστιε) with the κεστός, a very prominent term in Nonnos which designates Aphrodite's charmed girdle, and which is associated with the ἱμάς or lash (24.318, 31.273,280, 32.5 f.,

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implicit valuation in these terms or even difference in meaning; "gemeint ist immer das Doppelgängerwesen."

6) Nonnos likes to heap these synonyms (μιμηλή δολίοιο παρήπαφει ὄψις ὀνειρόν, 26.7. At 8.324 f. five of six consecutive words indicate falseness.)

7) For the meaning of 'horn' in antiquity see J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy* (New Haven and London 1975) 20 and 127; J. Clay, *Providus auspex: Horace, Ode 3.27*, *Classical Journal* 88.2 (1993) 177 n. 39; J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore 1982) 22.

8) Riemenschneider (above, n. 3) 48-54 lists: γράφω, χαράσσω, ἐπιρρήσω, διαξύω, σχίζω, διχάζω, τέμων, δαίζω, μερίζω.

33.241)<sup>9</sup>. The Latin *caestus* might well have aided the association in Nonnos' mind.

The vignette is developed into one grand adynaton; Nonnos is more interested in the possibilities offered by a sea-going bull than in the erotic scene itself, dear as these are to him. After Europa's lament, Nonnos abruptly interrupts the narrative (137), and the poor girl must wait 200 lines to be undone, and that quickly (344–351). The adynaton allows Nonnos to indulge his predilection for paradox, reversal, oxymoron and the like, some mild, some piquant<sup>10</sup>. Zeus feels the sweet goad (48 γλυκὴν . . . μύωπα), and spreads the rounded ridge of his back (51 κυρτὸν ὑποστορέσας λοφίην) for the mounting maid (51 ἐπιβήτορι κούρη – reversing the erotic associations, for in Greek ἐπιβήτωρ 'mounter' means male), straining his relaxed back (52 κεχλασμένα νῶτα τιταίνων). Poseidon marvels at the "waddle-foot voyage" of Zeus (60 πλόον εἰλιπόδη)<sup>11</sup>. Since Zeus can hardly be said to be shambling unless he is walking on the water, not swimming in the water, the adjective emphasizes the unreality of the whole scene. Since the adjective is also used of women (LSJ citing Eup. 161), Nonnos is perhaps also hinting at a reversal of sex roles, with Zeus seductively wiggling his *derrière* and Europa mounting. Other paradoxical expressions make Zeus a watery wayfarer (76 ὕγρὸς ὀδίτης), and there is a watery pasture (83 νομὸν ὕγρὸν). A woman is Zeus' driver (85 ἡνίοχον), a variation on the metaphor of the boy-charioteer of Anacreon's heart (Anacr. 360), but here Nonnos is having it both ways, literal – if not quite real – and metaphoric. The sea does not quench his passion (87), for pregnant water gave birth to sea-deep Aphrodite from the heavenly furrow (87 f.)<sup>12</sup>. Here Nonnos confuses water and fire, sea (βρυχίην and ὕδωρ), earth (αὔλακος) and heaven (οὐρανίης). βοὸς ἀφλοίσβοιο (89) is a rather neat contrasting imitation of Homer's πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης. Zeus hoofs it over the water so daintily that he does

9) Nonnos' fondness for whipping crops up in the most unexpected contexts. At 40.437 the sun whips the earth with steam, and at 48.580 the balmy air is lashed by gales of fragrance from flowery meadows.

10) Riemschneider (above, n. 3) shrewdly observes that, although Nonnos' art has been termed antithetical, he does not set different things side by side but unites the mutually exclusive (61–63).

11) For this and many other translations I am indebted to W. H. D. Rouse, *Nonnos, Dionysiaca*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1940).

12) Neither does Typhon's water quench Zeus' thunderbolt (2.436–507) which is born of the rainy clouds. Nonnos likes to play with the opposition-relation between fire and water. See W. Fauth (above, n. 3) 45–58.

not make a sound (54 f. ἄψοφον) or get Europa wet (57,75). In other, less striking, paradoxes Europa is both sailor and cargo (56,66,89 f.).

An Achaian sailor is introduced to redouble and exaggerate the effect of this unexampled spectacle with his gaga commentary on the seagoing bull. As usual in Nonnos, the speech is addressed to whom it may concern, that is, the reader. The sailor's disbelieving eyes see an ἀγρονόμος βοῦς (94). He doesn't want to believe that Zeus has created navigable earth (πλωτήν . . . χθόνα, which is presumably implicit in the walkable water he is observing), or that a farmer's cart will cut a wet furrow (96, a golden line, of which Nonnos is fond; both ὑγρὸς . . . ὀλκὸς and ἀλιβρέκτιοιο . . . ἀμάξης . . . are paradoxical, as are διερὸν δρόμον [99] and βατὸν πλόον [109]). Contradictions multiply: οὐ πέλε Νηρεῦς / βουκόλος, οὐ Πρωτεὺς ἀρότης, οὐ Γλαῦκος ἀλωεύς, / οὐχ ἔλος, οὐ λειμῶνες ἐν οἴδμασιν (110–112) and ἀλλὰ φυτὸν πόντιοιο πέλει βρούα καὶ σπόρος ὕδωρ, / ναυτίλος ἀγρονόμος, πλόος αὐλακας, ὀλκὰς ἐχέτλη (116–117). The second list begins with what is hardly a paradox, but that soon changes, and the chiasitic alternation of order, between terrene – marine and marine – terrene, artfully adds to the confusion. “Do sex-crazed bulls rape women?” (119). In Greek myth, “of course,” and so the improbable paradoxically becomes straight – if mythic – reality. But for that matter and speaking of water, is seduction by a river more credible (122–4)?

The detail provided by Nonnos, especially in the first 40 lines of the passage, creates the remarkably visual character of the scene, without which the paradoxes would be less striking, if not impossible to achieve. “Literary pictorialism” or “visual immediacy” has lately been discussed by G. Zanker and M. Roberts in the context of ἐνάργεια and ἔκφρασις. By ἐνάργεια Dionysius of Halicarnassus means “the stylistic effect in which appeal is made to the senses of the listener and attendant circumstances are described in such a way that the listener will be turned into an eye-witness . . . [It] is for the rhetors one of the ‘virtues of *ekphrasis* . . . whereby you can almost see what is being related<sup>13</sup>.’” “The prime quality of the *ekphrasis* was ‘vividness’ (*enargeia, evidentia*), defined in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* as ‘when an event is so described in words that the business seems to be enacted and the subject to pass before our eyes’ [Rhet. ad Her. 4.55.68] . . . In an *ekphrasis* the writer

13) G. Zanker, *Realism in Alexandrian Poetry: A Literature and Its Audience* (Surry Hills, Australia 1987) 39–40.

tried to turn his hearers/readers into spectators<sup>14</sup>.” Wealth of visual detail is the means by which ἐνάργεια is achieved; Roberts adopts Aquila’s term ‘leptologia’ for “this technique of detailed description<sup>15</sup>,” which features figures of parallelism, homoioteleuton, anaphora, asyndeton, chiasmus (for variation), and a preference for commata (short phrases) over cola<sup>16</sup>.

Nonnos’ ‘Europa’ is a splendid example with an abundance of striking visual detail: Eros encircling Europa’s waist and lifting her up while the bull spreads his back beneath for her to mount (48–53); Europa dry and motionless, but trembling with fear (55–7) while steering with one hand on the bull’s horn (65–7); Boreas billowing her shaking robe and whistling on her unripe breasts (69–71); a Nereid seated on a dolphin, pretending to swim (72–75), and so on. The reader is an eye-witness, but Nonnos also supplies a literal eye-witness who, paradoxically, has trouble believing what he sees and describes so vividly. Verbs of seeing occur in abundance, not surprisingly: ἰδὼν δέ μιν ἧ τάχα φαίης / ἧ Θέτιν (57 f. The sailor who sees her does think she is Thetis, 99), ὀπιπέουσα (85), εἰσορόων (90), ὀφθαλμοί (93) and παπταίνω (97). ἐπεθάμβει (60), θαῦμα (64 and 93) and θαμβάλεος (126) also imply seeing.

If the sense of sight is exploited primarily, the senses of hearing and touch are also repeatedly engaged. Braden notices the pun in μύκημα . . . μιμήσατο . . . μύωπα<sup>17</sup>, but the two lines also artfully sound the moo: ἰμερόεν μύκημα νόθω μιμήσατο λαίμῳ καὶ γλυκὺν εἶχε μύωπα μετοχμάζων δὲ γυναῖκα (47–48). Note also alliteration of κ, γ, χ (78), and π, ρ (84) and the weaving of sound in 100 f.

Nonnos has been more severely criticized for poor or inconsequential composition than for any other flaw. But he shows considerable compositional skill, at least within the passage or episode. The Achaian sailor who provides such voluble, vivid and literate commentary on the bull-barge is introduced just half way through the passage: lines 45–90a are narrative, lines 90b–136 consist of speeches by the sailor and Europa and brief introductions and conclusions to the speeches. The sailor’s speech is carefully articulated; the introductory words to clauses occur in inverse

14) M. Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca and London 1989) 39.

15) Roberts (above, n. 14) 41.

16) Roberts (above, n. 14) 40–44. Whitby (above, n. 2) 102 mentions but does not develop the visual quality of Nonnos’ version.

17) G. Braden, *Nonnos’ Typhoon: Dionysiaca, Books I and II*, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, XV 5 (1974) 857.

order (μῆ [95,95b], ἦ ῥα [97] and ἀλλὰ [99] ↔ ἀλλὰ [118], ἦ ῥα [118,120] and μῆ [122]) and frame a central section (104–117) which is in two parts, the first beginning εἰ πέλε Δημήτηρ σταχυκόμος (104), the second οὐ πέλε Νηρεὺς βουκόλος (110 f.), separated by a brisk “Bull, you’re off course” (110). The second section is artfully composed of a tricomma<sup>18</sup>, οὐ [πέλε] Νηρεὺς βουκόλος, οὐ Πρωτεύς ἀρότης, οὐ Γλαῦκος ἄλωεύς, in which the homoioteleuta of the first two names and the last noun (-εύς) and of the first noun and the last name (-ος) create the effect of chiasm and closure. Then come a similar pair (οὐχ ἔλος, οὐ λειμῶνες ἐν οἴδμασιν) followed by a longer clause (ἀλλὰ . . . σιδήρω) which together form a tricolon abundans. A second ἀλλὰ introduces a series of contrasts: ἀλλὰ φυτὸν πόντοιο πέλει βρύα / καὶ σπόρος ὕδωρ, / ναυτίλος ἀγρονόμος, / πλόος αὐλακας, / ὄλκας ἐχέτλη (116–117)<sup>19</sup>. The first two pairs are in the order terrene – marine, the next two reverse the order, the last pair revert to the initial order. This set of five contrasting pairs form a specious parallel to the first two sets of three, in which the quintuple οὐ(χ) creates the appearance of pentacolon. One might regard this as fortuitous if not a flaw were it not for Nonnos’ fondness for the false and deceptive. Also, the tetracolon ἦ Θέτιν / ἦ Γαλάτειαν / ἦ εὐνέτιν ἐννοσιγαίου / ἦ λοφίη Τρίτωνος ἐφρξομένην Ἀφροδίτην (58 f.) and the tricolon on Poseidon (60), Triton (61–63a), and Nereus (63b–65) early in the scene were of increasing length. Here, as the scene nears its conclusion, the tricomma beginning in 100 and the pentacomma beginning in 116 give the effect, at least, of decreasing length, but the tricolon between them (112–114) is abundans – for variety, one supposes<sup>20</sup>. Another example of careful word placement occurs at 100 which begins [οὐ] βοὶ χερσαίω and ends – with isocolon, contrast and chiasm – εἰνάλιος βοῦς; the chiasm effectively incorporates the sense of the line – the sea-bull is different from the land-bull.

To the Achaian sailor, travelled, knowledgeable, and with a taste for the novel, Europa plays the expected ingénue. Despite the

18) Roberts (above, n. 14) 41 takes the term ‘komma’ (a phrase of two or three words) from Longinus (Rhet. 1.309.20–21 Spengel).

19) φυτὸν πόντοιο belies the familiar Homeric notion of the barren sea (θαλάσση / ἀτρυγέτω, 112 f.) only to reaffirm it.

20) F. Vian (Nonnos de Panopolis, Les Dionysiaques, Chants I–II, Paris 1976, 15 f.) gives a very different analysis of the composition based on content. Whitby (above, n. 2) 101 contrasts “the careful symmetry of Moschus’ treatment” with the “asymmetry” of Nonnos’ version.

artificiality of the scene – artful beyond the point of unreality – one has developed a certain sympathy for Europa, however hard it is to feel for characters in what seems a baroque painting<sup>21</sup>. Nonnos has carefully included certain features to rouse our emotion: δείματι παλλομένη (56: Nonnos can't resist the opportunity for paradox even here. The trembling girl doesn't move [ἀστεμφής], and ναυτίλλετο also implies that she is in control). The sight elicits wonder and fear in the mythical spectators (θαύμα φόβω κεράσας, 64). Europa is described as τρομέουσα . . . πηδάλιον κέρασ ἔσχε (67f.), but is she really steering or holding on for dear life? Is Europa's robe shaking (δεδονημένον<sup>22</sup> αὔρη / φᾶρος ὄλον 69f.) before Boreas' breath bellies it out or only after? Europa tears her hair, foretelling her bullbridal (126f.).

Europa's naivety defeats our sympathy and turns the scene into melodrama if not comedy. She asks the κωφὸν ὕδωρ and ὀηγμῖνες ἀναυδέες to convey her appeal: “ἀμείλιχε, spare a maiden” to the bull, εἰ βόες εἰσαίουσιν. An excellent plan, if water were not deaf, shores speechless, Zeus pitiless, and bulls uncomprehending. What might have heightened the desperation of Europa's situation trivializes it<sup>23</sup>. Europa wants her father to know that she has left home – λιπόπατρην has at least a suggestion of desertion – seated on a bull, ἄρπαγι καὶ πλωτῆρι καί, ὡς δοκέω, παρακοίτη (132), a tricolon abundans interrupted by an indication of quickly vanishing innocence (ὡς δοκέω). She thinks also of mother, but were the curls (βόστρυχα) she asks the breezes to convey perhaps suggested by βοῦς? The breezes surely make her think of Boreas whom she considers a possible saviour. It is bad enough that she prefixes ὡς ἤρπασας Ἀτθίδα νύμφην to her request for help but it was δυσίμερος Boreas himself whose breath had bellied out her robe and whistled at her unripe breasts (69–71). Even Europa finally realizes that this is a bad idea. The Europa episode sets the tone for the whole epic with its startling (ab)use of language, its exploitation of paradox, its undercutting of anything serious.

21) Whitby (above, n. 2) rightly remarks on “Nonnos' abandonment of Hellenistic interest in internal psychology” (101). Although Nonnos does give some indication of Europa's inner feelings, it is only to make clever comic capital of them.

22) In his 1959 edition Keydell reads δεδονημένος. In that case Boreas would be shaking. Keydell also has ὡς ὄγε † ταῦρον at 79.

23) Nonnos finds a rather nasty pleasure in the plight of virgins at risk. See especially the Hamadryads, lost the security of their tree homes (2.92–162). Nonnos' cleverness and invention does not quite mask his sadistic *Schadenfreude*. And this is nothing compared to the truly ugly rape of Aura in bk. 48.

Wifstrand noticed that Nonnos' style was not uniform throughout, that there were stylistic differences between speech and narrative, and between battle narratives and the erotic sections<sup>24</sup>. It is hardly surprising to find differences between a relatively compact erotic showpiece like the Europa episode and the long and somewhat diffuse narrative of the Battle at the Hydaspes (22.1–24.143).

One expects, for example, more Homeric effects, even if the effect is hardly Homeric. "Now the Indians would have bent the neck to Dionysos, but Hera . . ." (22.71 ff.), and "Now the dark Indians would have attacked from ambush, but a Hamadryad . . ." (82 ff. See also 312 ff.). In Homer this formulation occurs later in an episode and more climactically, as when Aphrodite saves Paris, defeated by Menelaus in the duel (Il. 3.373 ff.), or when Apollo prevents Patroklos from sacking Troy to cap his ἀριστεία (Il. 16.698 ff.).

Lesser mythological figures do not butt into Homeric warfare, as does the Hamadryad Nymph who, peering over a high branch, hip-deep in leaves, whispers into Dionysos' ear that she is taking his side, and will plant his vines, and that he had better not cross the river because the Indians are waiting in ambush (22.90 ff.). The treatment is, moreover, quite unHomeric.

Ἄμπελόεις Διόνυσε, φυτηγόμε κοίρανε καρπῶν,	90
σὸν φυτὸν Ἄδρυάδεσσι χάριν καὶ κάλλος ὀπάσει·	
Βασσαρίς οὐ γενόμεν, οὐ σύνδρομος εἶμι Λυαίον,	
μοῦνον ἐμῇ παλάμῃ ψευδήμονα θύρσον αἰείρω·	
οὐ πέλον ἐκ Φρυγίης, σέο πατρίδος, οὐ χθόνα Λυδῶν	95
ναιετάω παρὰ χεῦμα ὄρηφενέος ποταμοῖο·	
εἶμι δὲ καλλιπέτηλος Ἄμαδρυάς, ἦχι μαχηταὶ	
δυσμενέες λοχόωσιν, ἀφειδήσασα δὲ πάτρης	
ῥύσομαι ἐκ θανάτοιο τεὸν στρατὸν· ἕμετέροις γὰρ	
πιστὰ φέρω Σατύροισι, καὶ Ἰνδῶν περ εὐῶσα,	100
ἀντὶ δὲ Δηριαδῆος ὁμοφρονέω Διονύσῳ·	
σοὶ γὰρ ὀφειλομένην ὀπάσω χάριν, ὅτι ῥεέθρων	
ὑγροτόκους ὠδῖνας, ὅτι δρύας αἰὲν ἀέξει	
ὄμβρορῆν ῥαθάμιγγι πατήρ μέγας ἕτιος Ζεῦς.	
δός μοι σείο πέτηλα, καὶ ἐνθάδε ταῦτα φυτεύσω,	
δός μοι σείο κόρυμβα, τὰ περ λύουσι μερίμνας.	105

24) Above, n. 1, 140f. Whitby (above, n. 2) 107 cites Alan Cameron to the contrary. To give one example, participles are approximately as frequent as other verb forms in the narrative passages, 1.45–92 and 5.287–315, but other verb forms are four to six times as frequent in the speeches, 1.93–124 and 5.337–365.

She begins with a formal and alliterative Ἄμπελόεις Διόνυσε, φυτη-  
κόμε κοίρανε καρπῶν (90) and a compliment (91). Then tells what  
she is not and does not, two clauses of 2 1/2 and 3 1/2 feet, then  
two more of 4 and 8 feet, the pairs separated by a line (93) which  
acknowledges that hers is a false thyrsos. She then goes on to say  
what she is and will do, in five segments 8+, 7+, 8, 6 and 18 feet in  
length, with variation on τεόν, ὑμετέροις and σοί. The five segments  
are chiasmically constructed as follows: main clause – subordinate  
clause; subordinate clause – main clause; main clause – subordinate  
clause; in the fourth segment ἀντι δὲ Δηριαδῆος has at least the  
effect of a subordinate clause before the ‘main clause’ ὁμοφρονέω  
Διονύσῳ; and finally main clause – two subordinate clauses of  
increasing length which give the effect of a coda. This first part of  
her speech is framed by the compliment to Dionysos for the grace  
of the grape and to Zeus for the fruitful rain (χάριν is used both  
times, 91 and 101). Parallelism, isocolon and homoioteleuton in-  
form her twofold appeal which follows: δός μοι σεῖο πέτηλα . . . δός  
μοι σεῖο κόρυμβα . . . (104 f.) Finally she gives her confidential  
warning: note that she calls Dionysos ‘friend’ (φίλος) and ends  
with a conspiratorial shushing (σιγῇ ἐφ’ ἡμεῖων, 112). The second  
part of her speech (106–113) is divided into two four-line periods,  
both articulated by the sequence ἀλλά . . . μή . . . μή. One can ad-  
mire the ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’ charm of the scene, but it is  
wholly unlike Homeric narrative<sup>25</sup>. That the Hamadryad departs  
in the form of a bird ὡς πετρὸν ἢ ἐ νόημα (115, cf. Od. 7.36) calls  
attention to the contrast with Homer if anything.

Nonnos had Dionysos arm himself for battle earlier, like any  
Homeric warrior. Or rather, unlike any Homeric warrior, since  
Dionysos affected purple buskins, furry fawnskin, thyrsos, and  
horn of wine, in preference to shield, sword, helmet, etc.  
(14.230–246). Here the armed warrior is described in more familiar  
fashion (146–158), but the passage is primarily a formal and visual  
showpiece.

Τεύχεσι δ’ ἀφνειοῖσι κορύσσετο Λύδιος ἀνήρ,  
χρυσοφαῖ Λυκίοιο τύπον Γλαύκοιο κομίζων,  
κηρύσσων ἐὸν οὔδας, ὄπη Πακτωλίδος ὄχθης

25) H. Bogner (Gnomon 7 [1931] 183) correctly observes that Nonnos is  
unHomeric, but I would credit Nonnos with more purpose: “Zweifelloso ist die  
Weltanschauung des Nonnos unhomerisch, überhaupt ungriechisch; das mußte  
sich bei seiner Homerbenutzung bemerkbar machen und ist für sein Wesen höchst  
aufschlußreich, aber es ist ein unbewußter Vorgang, keine bewußte Tat.”

φαιδρὸς ἐρευθομένης ἀμαρύσσεται ὄλβος ἐέρης,  
 καὶ ῥοδέαις ἤστραψε βολαῖς ἀντώπιον Ἡοῦς, 150  
 σείων ξανθὰ μέτωπα ῥυηφενέος τρυφαλείης  
 Λυδὸς ἀνὴρ ἀριδηλός, ἀπὸ στέρων δὲ φορῆς  
 μαρμαρυγὴ σελάγιζεν ἐρευθομένοιο χιτῶνος·  
 καὶ κυνέην στίλβουσαν ἐπὶ κροτάφοισι τινάσσων  
 ἔξ Ἀλύβης πρόμος ἄλλος ἀριστεύων Διονύσῳ 155  
 πάτριον ὄλβον ἔφαινε, δι' εὐφαέος δὲ καρῆνου  
 ἀργυρέης πῆληκος ἐλάμπετο μάρμαρος αἶγλη  
 χιονέη σέλας ἴσον ἀκοντίζουσα Σελήνη.

There is word play involving both sound and sense in the first four verbs (κορύσσετε, κομίζων, κηρύσσων, ἀμαρύσσεται); also in the sequence τύπον, ἀντώπιον, μέτωπα, (κροτάφοισι); τρυφαλείης ('helmet', 150) recalls τρυφή (one of a number of words for wealth: ἀφνειοῖσι, ὄλβος, ῥυηφενέος, ὄλβον); notice also (σελάγιζεν) σέλας Σελήνη. The passage features σ and κ (γ, χ, ξ) sounds. Verbs meaning 'flash' and verbs which mean 'brandish' or 'shoot' gradually coalesce in the passage: κορύσσετε 'equip, make crested,' ἀμαρύσσεται 'sparkle; shoot forth,' ἤστραψε 'hurl lighting; flash' with βολαῖς 'stroke; ray,' σείων 'shake,' μαρμαρυγὴ 'flashing' with σελάγιζεν 'shine, flash,' στίλβουσαν 'glisten,' τινάσσων 'shake,' ἐλάμπετο 'shine' with μάρμαρος 'sparkling' and αἶγλη 'gleam,' and σέλας 'blaze; lightning' with ἀκοντίζουσα 'hurl (spear); shoot forth (rays).' The flash and brandishing of the weapons turns into the hurling of weapons.

Not to omit the obvious, the description is brilliantly colored gold, red, rosy, yellow, red, silver and snow-white<sup>26</sup>. Finally, there is a degree of conceptual symmetry (five rings):

147	τύπον Γλαύκοιο	–	158	ἴσον . . . Σελήνη
148	ἔδον οὐδας	–	156	πάτριον
149	ὄλβος	–	156	ὄλβον
151	σειών	–	154	τινάσσων
151	μέτωπα	–	154	κροτάφοισι

Military tactics and technology are conspicuously absent from the *Iliad*. Nonnos brings the tortoise on stage – a μιμηλὴν χελώνην, of course – not to use it tactically, but to exploit it poetically (182–186).

26) Roberts (above, n. 14) 55: "The art of the poet was akin to that of the jeweler – to manipulate brilliant pieces . . . and to throw them into relief by effects of contrast and juxtaposition."

ἔγχει μὲν στατὸν ἔγχος ἐρείδεται, κεκλιμένη δὲ  
 ἀσπίς ἔην προθέλυμος ἀμοιβαδὶς ἀσπίδι γείτων  
 στεινομένη, καὶ ἔνευε λόφω λόφος, ἀγχιφανῆς δὲ  
 ἀνδρὸς ἀνήρ ἔψαυεν· ἐγειρομένης δὲ κονίης  
 ἵππειοὶς δυνύχουσιν ἔλευκαίνοντο μαχηταί. 185

In four consecutive lines one observes the tortoise taking shape: ἔγχει – ◡ ◡ ἔγχος, ἀσπίς ◡ – ◡ ◡ – ◡ ◡ – ◡ ◡ ἀσπίδι, then tightly compacted with λόφω λόφος and ἀνδρὸς ἀνήρ. Verbs are carefully varied – ἐρείδεται, κεκλιμένη, ἔνευε and ἔψαυεν – and placed last, first, first (after καὶ) and last in their clauses<sup>27</sup>. The second and fourth clauses begin with adjective or participle of the shape – ◡ ◡ – plus δέ at line end. Finally, lest the tortoise gape and let an arrow through, Nonnos goes against his usual practice and enjambments 182–186, the lines in which the tortoise comes into existence<sup>28</sup>.

Homeric effects come more thickly at the center of the book. ἔνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ' ὕστατον Ἴδι πέμπων (187) is a composite of Homeric ἔνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ' ὕστατον ἔξενάριξαν, -ει, -ας (Il. 5.703; 11.299; 16.692) and . . . Ἴδι προιάψεν, -ει, -ειν (Il. 1.3; 6.487; 11.55). Wounds are located as in Homer above the nipple (191), in the neck (192), in the navel (193). A hand is cut off (196 ff.) as in Il. 5.82 (αἱματόεσσα δὲ χεὶρ πεδίῳ πέσει), but here the severed hand takes on a life of its own: ἡ δὲ πεσοῦσα / αἰμοβαφῆς ἤσπαιρεν ἐπὶ χθονὸς ἀλλομένη χεὶρ (197 f.), like Philomela's severed tongue in Ovid's *Met.* 6.557–60.

The need to provide victims and interestingly varied deaths for heroic battle places great demands on the ingenuity and narrative skill of the epic poet. Homer is not above simply listing victims by name as an appendage to a more interesting casualty (Il. 16.415 ff.). Nonnos resorts to τὸν μὲν, τὸν δὲ, ἄλλον, ἄλλου, ἄλλον (191–206); οἱ μὲν, ὅς δὲ, ἄλλος, ἄλλος, ὅς δὲ, ὅς δὲ, ἄλλου, ἄλλου (234–246); τοὺς μὲν, τοὺς δὲ, τοὺς δὲ, ὁ μὲν, ὁ δὲ (263–269), always with a degree of patterning<sup>29</sup>. Aiacos' thigh is grazed by an arrow

27) Roberts (above, n. 14) 46 f.: "The principle of variation is applicable at every level of composition, from the word or group of words to the arrangement of a larger unit of composition . . . In practice, special attention is paid in the grammatical and rhetorical tradition to 'small-scale' variation and word choice within enumerative or synonymic sequences." Nonnos takes his inspiration from Il. 13.130–133, but as usual, creates something quite original.

28) Wifstrand (above, n. 1) 138 notes the infrequency of enjambment in Nonnos.

29) Wifstrand (above, n. 1) 152 f.

turned aside by Athena (287 ff., cf. Il. 4.134 ff.) A nameless Indian carries what is familiar to readers as Ajax' seven bull's-hides shield (305 Ἴνδικὸν ἑπταβόειον ἔχων σάκος, εἰκόνα πύργου, cf. Il. 7.219 and 222 φέρων σάκος ἤυτε πύργον . . . σάκος αἰόλον ἑπταβόειον). An Indian struck by Erechtheus does a somersault (313 ff., cf. Il. 16.745–750). As Patroklos slew thrice nine men (τρὶς δ' ἑννέα φῶτας ἔπεφνεν, Il. 16.785), Oiaeros fires nine arrows and kills one warrior with each (ἑννέα δ' ἄνδρας ἔπεφνεν, 325). Homer does not stop to name Patroklos' victims or describe their deaths; Nonnos has arrows splitting a forehead (ὁ μὲν), cutting a hairy breast (ὃς δὲ), hitting flank (ἄλλος), or belly (ἕτερος), side (ὃς δὲ) or foot (ὃς δὲ), once again creating a sort of pattern, and moving steadily down from head to foot, as Ovid had done in his description of Hunger, for example (Met. 8.80–808)<sup>30</sup>. Perhaps Nonnos' knowledge of anatomy failed him. At any rate, we don't learn where the last three arrows hit. The book ends as it began – after the preliminaries – with a peeping Naiad (82–117 and 390–401).

Nonnos often uses a motif to give unity to a passage or section of narrative. In this instance the motif is liquid which first appears in the favorable and fruitful form of the Dionysiac miracle of flowing wine and dripping honey (22.16–27), but soon turns sinister as life-giving rain turns to deathly gore (esp. 22.253–275). The paradoxical union of life and death in liquid takes its most emphatic form at 22.276–283, in which the paradox is stated and restated six times running, with homoioteleuton, chiasm, isocolon, etc.<sup>31</sup>:

1. (Υἱὲ Διὸς) ζεῖδωρε ↔ μαιφόνε (– καὶ γὰρ ἀνάσσεις)
2. ὄμβρου καρποτόκοιο ↔ (καὶ) αἰμαλέου νιφετοῖο, –
3. ὄμβρω μὲν γονόεσσαν ὄλην ἐδίηνας ἀλωὴν Ἑλλάδος, ↔ Ἴνδῶν δὲ κατέκλυσα ἀύλακα λύθρω,

30) Roberts (above, n. 14) 43: "... ephrases of people should proceed from head to toe..." When Nonnos describes Zeus observing Semele (7.257–266), he moves from fingers to face, to eyes, to hair, to neck, to breast, to crotch. Since Semele is swimming, Nonnos has the opportunity for a little variation while still observing the rhetorical convention. Ovid allows himself the naughty fun of suggesting that Hunger's dry dugs dangle below her waist.

31) P. Friedländer, Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius. Kunstbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit, Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Kommentare 8, Leipzig–Berlin 1912, 122: "Er [JvonG] hat die unüberwindliche Neigung, dasselbe zwei- und dreimal zu sagen mit oft nur leisem Wechsel des Ausdrucks. Auch hierfür kommt die Anregung von Nonnos, der sich aber selten oder nie in so grob deutlicher Weise wiederholt, sondern seine Gedanken und Bilder kunstvoll durchzuvariieren strebt."

4. ὁ πρὶν ἀμαλλοφόρος ↔ θανατηφόρος·
5. ἀγρονόμοις μὲν σὸς νιφετὸς στάχυν εὗρε, ↔ σὺ δὲ στρατὸν ἔθρισας  
Ἴνδῶν ἀνέρας ἀμῶων μετὰ λήιον·
6. (ἀμφότερον δὲ) ἐκ Διὸς ὄμβρον ἄγεις, ↔ ἐξ Ἄρεος αἵματι νίφεις.

Similar kinds of organizing and patterning are seen in both the 'Europa' and the 'Battle at the Hydaspes'. Pet words are less evident in the longer passage. Word play, paradox, and visual effects occur in both. Homeric formulations and verbal variation are more prominent in the battle scene. The stylistic display in the longer passage is, of course, less dense. I should say that Nonnos' style is as consistent as that of Homer. But of no other ancient poet can it be so truly said that the style is the poetry.

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