

# The Bonds of Cypris: Nonnus' Aura

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NONNUS has a lot to answer for. For one thing, he turned Trevor Roper into a historian: the undergraduate classicist waded through more of the *Dionysiaca* than was good for him.<sup>1</sup> Although a certain rehabilitation of Nonnus has begun in recent years, marked by the ongoing Budé commentary under Vian's direction, few other than the professionally committed are generally attracted to this late antique monstrosity of a poem. Fewer still make it as far as the final book, although they are in for a treat if they do, for here Nonnus offers up perhaps his most extraordinary creation—Aura, last of Dionysus' female conquests and simultaneously last of his great adversaries. Aura is one of the large class of Greek hunting-maidens who are devoted to virginity, and whose virginity is forfeit because of their very anomalous and antisocial wish to preserve it. But Aura's story is more complex than that. She is punished for slighting the goddess Artemis, taunting her with her feminine physique, which contrasts with her own more masculine characteristics. Nemesis punishes her by decreeing her rape—a highly appropriate punishment, whose logic is to instill

<sup>1</sup>H. Trevor-Roper, "History and Imagination," in *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H. R. Trevor-Roper*, ed. H. Lloyd-Jones, V. Pearl, and B. Worden (London 1981) 358: "It was in my second year at Oxford, when I was reading the inexpressibly tedious Greek epic poem of Nonnus, that I decided to change my subject from classics to history. By now, I said to myself, I had read all classical literature worth reading. Why scrape the bottom of the barrel? Nonnus, it seemed to me, was very near the bottom."

"femininity" into her whether she will or not. Raped by Dionysus through the ruse of a river of wine, which makes her drunk, she becomes mother of twins, one of whom is the Attic mystery-god Iacchus. But, unlike most other victims of divine rape in classical mythology, she never acquiesces in pregnancy and childbirth. Instead she maintains a blinding rage throughout; a sequence of thwarted attempts to kill her children culminates in the murder (and cannibalisation) of one of them, and a sequence of suicide-attempts leads to her final plunge into the river Sangarius, where she is transformed into a spring. Iacchus is saved through the intervention of a series of goddesses, and his appearance on earth coincides with Dionysus' translation to heaven.

There is a small but growing bibliography on Aura. Earlier studies focussed on the relationship of the story to the twin story of the raped nymph Nicaea in books 15–16,<sup>2</sup> and on its geography, which fluctuates between Cyzicus on the Propontis and the river Sangarius in Phrygia.<sup>3</sup> They also discussed other incongruities and inconsistencies. The fact, for example, that twins are born but only one survives raised the question whether, in the "original" version, both were killed or both preserved; and whether one twin was killed off as a consequence of the secondary incorporation of Iacchus into the story, which made his brother superfluous.<sup>4</sup> Again, Aura's end is over-determined: a suicidal plunge into a pre-existing river cannot be reconciled

<sup>2</sup>R. Koehler, *Über die Dionysiaka des Nonnus von Panopolis* (Halle 1853) 92; P. Collart, *Nonnos de Panopolis* (Cairo 1930) 262; R. Keydell, "Nonnos 15," *RE* 17 (1937) 909, and "Zur Komposition der Bücher 13–40 der Dionysiaka des Nonnos," *Hermes* 62 (1927) 399–400; G. d'Ippolito, *Studi Nonniani* (Palermo 1964) 103–108.

<sup>3</sup>C. Rühl, *De Graecis ventorum nominibus et fabulis quaestiones selectae* (diss. Marburg 1909) 50–62; for the geographical aspects of the story see also P. Chuvin, *Mythologie et géographie dionysiaques: recherches sur l'œuvre de Nonnos de Panopolis* (Clermont-Ferrand 1991) 167–170.

<sup>4</sup>R. Keydell, "Eine Nonnos-Analyse," *AntCl* 1 (1932) 199–200.

with metamorphosis into a (new) spring.<sup>5</sup> The latter looks to be inherited, the former invented. These are not just formalist concerns, for they raise the question of Nonnus' use of his sources, of how he has adapted the version of the Aura story that he inherited, and of his intentions in doing so. More recently, there has been a trend against "analysis" and in favour of taking the story on Nonnus' own terms, which are not necessarily those of Homeric epic narrative. More "unitarian" readings have pointed out that Nonnus tends rather to treat narrative as a series of tableaux, each to be wrung for maximum emotional effect, and that strict consistency between them was not uppermost in his mind;<sup>6</sup> they have also begun to analyse thematic patterns that *do* recur, such as the extraordinary preoccupation with voyeurism and the female breast throughout the Aura episode.<sup>7</sup>

Most recently, Vian has taken on both "analyst" and "unitarian" points of view.<sup>8</sup> He has argued that the rapes of Nicaea and of Aura do belong and were planned together. It is certain that the Aura story is very strongly coloured by the story of Nicaea (but also quite possible that a few "Aura" motifs are already present in books 15–16), but that Aura is a deliberately scaled-up version. The model for these twin rapes, one of which results in the minor goddess Telete, and the other in the mystery-god Iacchus, was the Orphic poems. Here, the rape of

<sup>5</sup>Contra R. Schmiel, "The story of Aura (Nonnos, 'Dionysiaca' 48.238–978)," *Hermes* 121 (1993) 470–483, at 472. The river-stories of Ps.-Plutarch *De fluviis* regularly end with a plunge into river but do not combine it with transformation.

<sup>6</sup>P. Krafft, "Erzählung und Psychagogie in Nonnos' Dionysiaka," in C. Grilka and W. Schetter, edd., *Studien zur Literatur der Spätantike* (Bonn 1975) 91–137, esp. 98–109.

<sup>7</sup>So Schmiel (*supra* n.5). To his observations I would add that the voyeurism characteristic of Nonnus' other scenes of divine infatuation and rape is markedly absent from Dionysus' wooing of Aura. A mere flash of Aura's thigh must suffice (485–486: Schmiel 480 calls this "a marginal example"). It is as if the voyeuristic topoi have been transferred to Aura's own quasi-male gaze at Artemis.

<sup>8</sup>F. Vian, "Théogamie et sotériologie dans les *Dionysiaques* de Nonnos," *J Sav* 1994, 197–233.

Demeter/Rhea, which results in the birth of Persephone/Kore, is followed by that of Persephone herself, which results in Dionysus/Iacchus. The implication is that Nonnus did intend to end the *Dionysiaca* in this way, that Iacchus is not a mere afterthought, and that Aura is very much more than a mere "doublet."<sup>9</sup>

My purpose in this paper is simply to analyse one of the ways in which Aura is presented as a scaled-up version of Nicaea: the fact that before Dionysus rapes Aura, he first ties up her hands and feet. He has been warned by a Hamadryad that he cannot have her "unless he binds her fast in inescapable bonds, winding the bonds of Cypris round her hands and feet; or else yokes her to him in marriage as she sleeps, and steals the girl's maidenhead without a dowry."<sup>10</sup> And when he does rape her, he lays aside her quiver and bow, "and tied the girl's feet with unbreakable bonds, and twined a rope round and about her hands."<sup>11</sup> The detail is often noticed in the earlier literature—usually with surprise; and I do not think its significance and implications have been grasped.<sup>12</sup> For some, it is just a specimen of Dionysus' sexual perversions; others have seen that it has a "religious" origin, but not what that might be. Vian wrote that "Ce luxe un peu comique de précautions étonne; du moins signifie-t-il que la Titanide Aura est particulièrement redoutable, comme la suite de son histoire le confirmera," but he also con-

<sup>9</sup>For a comparison of the two figures, see also B. Gerlaud, *Nonnos de Panopolis: Les Dionysiaques VI (Chants XIV–XVII)* (Paris 1994) 102–107.

<sup>10</sup>*Dion.* 48.522–526 οὐ δύναται ποτε Βάκχος ἄγειν ἐπὶ δέμνιον Αὔρην, ἢ εἰ μὴ μιν βαρῦδεσμον ἀλυκτοπέδησι πεδήσῃ, ἢ δεσμοῖς Κυπριδίοισι πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ἐλίξας, ἢ ἥ μιν ὑπνώουσαν ὑποζεύξας ὑμεναίοις ἢ παρθενικῆς ἀνάεδνον ὑποκλέψει κορέτην.

<sup>11</sup>*Dion.* 48.628–630 καὶ δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοισι πόδας σφηκώσατο κούρης, ἢ καὶ παλάμαις ἑλικηδὸν ἐπεσφρηγίσσατο σειρήν, ἢ μὴ μιν ἄλυσκάζειεν.

<sup>12</sup>Collart (*supra* n.2) 266; J. F. Schulze, "Zur Geschichte von Dionysos und Aura bei Nonnos," *Wiss. Zeitschr. Martin-Luther-Univ. Halle* 15 (1966) 372–374; R. F. Newbold, "Discipline, Bondage, and the Serpent in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*," *CW* 78 (1984) 89–98; Schmiel (*supra* n.5) 479; Gerlaud (*supra* n.9) 107 ("sans doute ... d'origine religieuse"); Vian (*supra* n.8) 208, 213 and n.85.

jectured that it was connected with Zeus' rape of Demeter in the Orphic rhapsodies, where the couple mate in the form of serpents in a "Heracleote knot."<sup>13</sup> This is closer, but still, I believe, not exact.

Aura and Nicaea are both raped by Dionysus after being made drunk by a river of wine. We know that this motif occurred in an earlier form of the Nicaea legend, as transmitted by the historian Memnon of Heraclea.<sup>14</sup> It is not attested in what seems to be the earlier form of the Aura story.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps its presence in the Aura story is Nonnus' own modification, but its place in the Nicaea story has been modified too, if what Nonnus inherited was the version as preserved in Memnon. For in Nonnus, the river of wine happens to exist already: it is a miracle that Dionysus has performed after his victory over the Indians in battle the day before (14.411ff). Nicaea just stumbles upon a pre-existing wine-stream, which turns into a convenient but originally unintended ruse (16.250ff). On the other hand, it is a motif that occurs in other stories set in Phrygia. First, it occurs in the story of Agdistis as told by Arnobius from a source which may be as early as the third century B.C.<sup>16</sup> Here, Liber undertakes to deal with a bisexual monster who is menacing the

<sup>13</sup>Orph. fr.58 Kern; cf. M. L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford 1983) 195, 220.

<sup>14</sup>FGrHist 434 F 28.9; Chuvin (*supra* n.3) 149; Gerlaud (*supra* n.9) 50. Jacoby places him with a query in the first century B.C. or A.D.

<sup>15</sup>*Etym.Magn.* s.v. Δίνδυμον (p.276.36): Αὔρα γέγονέ τις κόρη εὐοπτος φιλοκύνητος, οἰκοῦσα ἐν τῷ Πόντῳ. ταύτην ποτὲ κυνηγοῦσαν σὺν Ἀρτέμιδι Διόνυσος ἑωρακώς, καὶ βιασάμενος ἐποίησεν ἔγκυον. ἰδοῦσα δὲ Ἄρτεμις, ἐδίωξεν ἀπειλήσασα. φοβουμένη δὲ τὴν ὀργὴν τῆς θεοῦ ἡ Αὔρα ἔρχεται ἐκ τοῦ Πόντου εἰς Κύζικον· καὶ ἀνελθοῦσα ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος, διδυμα τίκτει· δι' ἃ ἐκάλεσε τὸ ὄρος Δίνδυμον.

<sup>16</sup>Arnob. *Adv.gent.* 5.5ff, cf. also Paus. 7.17.10–12. Arnobius cites it from Timotheus, *non ignobilem theologorum virum*, who himself claimed it came *ex reconditis antiquitatum libris et ex intimis ... mysteriis*. Timotheus is usually identified with the Eumolpid priest who lived under Ptolemy I: O. Weinreich, "Timotheus 19," *RE* 6A (1937) 1341–1342. Cf. M. J. Vermaseren, *The Legend of Attis in Greek and Roman Art* (Leiden 1966) 3–6; H. Hepding, *Attis: Seine Mythen und sein Kult* (Giessen 1903) 37–45, 103–111.

gods, and he does so by first turning the fountain from which the creature is accustomed to drink into wine, and then arranging for its castration. The story is set on the river Sangarius, around mount Agdus and the city Pessinus. Secondly, it occurs in the story of Midas and Silenus, which seems to have been set in Asia, if not Phrygia itself, from at least the sixth century.<sup>17</sup> Silenus here is captured by or on the orders of Midas, who has the water of his fountain (sources use the word κρήνη, and do not speak of a river) mixed with wine, then subjects the unwilling captive to questioning. Xenophon sets the story in Thymbrion, and Pausanias near Ancyra, also beside Pessinus.<sup>18</sup> In this version, however, Dionysus is not usually involved: only in Ovid does he play a part, and even then he is not responsible for the original trick (*Met.* 11.85–145).

The fountain or river of wine, then, is an element of Phrygian myth which has entered the Aura story, either directly from the story of Nicaea, or from Nonnus' wider familiarity with Phrygian themes and motifs. But it also belongs in a very much wider category of stories in which a formidable opponent must be overcome by guile—put to sleep, and rendered powerless. Typically, this is an enemy of the gods, a monster, or giant, or a divine being which is then compelled to divulge its wisdom.<sup>19</sup> Slumber may be brought on by spells, or it may be a natural sleep (as with Homer's Proteus); not all such stories employ wine as the intoxicating agent, although many do. Silenus, Picus and Faunus, and then a host of later European demi-deities from German hobgoblins to Merlin all fall victim to curious humankind through their taste for an unfamiliar, unmanageable

<sup>17</sup>L. Roller, "The Legend of Midas," *CA* 2 (1983) 299–313, esp. 303–307. The first literary source is Hdt. 8.138.2–3, who locates it in Macedon; but vase paintings from the mid-sixth century onwards seem to imply an Asian setting by the oriental dress and Phrygian caps of the human actors.

<sup>18</sup>Xen. *An.* 1.2.13; Paus. 1.4.5. Both speak of a κρήνη Μίδου, which Midas mixed with wine; cf. also Philostr. *VA* 6.27.

<sup>19</sup>K. Meuli, *Odyssee und Argonautika* (Berlin 1921) 71–73; Stith Thompson, *Motif-index of Folk-literature* K 776, "Capture by intoxication (or narcotic)."

drink.<sup>20</sup> Polyphemus and the mighty Samson succumb to drink; in the Orphic Rhapsodies, Cronus is made drunk, on honey ("because wine did not yet exist"), before being castrated by Zeus.<sup>21</sup> With Aura and Nicaea, the motif takes on a Dionysiac cast; the god of wine makes the river flow, and indeed, in classical vase-painting of Dionysiac scenes it is a common trick for satyrs to try to overcome Maenads who are sleeping off the effects of a debauch.<sup>22</sup>

However, it is interesting that both Phrygian stories, those of Silenus and Agdistis, also involve binding or chaining. Literary sources do not often speak of the chaining of Silenus, but it is shown in art, where his captors await him with chains, or where (more often) he is led in chains or bonds to Midas.<sup>23</sup> Later literary doublets of the same situation involve chains: the capture of Faunus and Picus on the Aventine by Numa,<sup>24</sup> of Vergil's Silenus by shepherd-boys and a nymph;<sup>25</sup> so does that of Proteus by Aristaeus.<sup>26</sup> In the Agdistis story, the binding is more

<sup>20</sup>See the literature cited by F. Bömer on *Ov. Fast.* 3.291 (*Die Fasten* II [Heidelberg 1958] 165–166).

<sup>21</sup>Polyphemus: A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra on *Od.* 9.346–352 (*Commentary* II [Oxford 1989] 32); Samson in Judges 16; Cronus in *Orph. fr.* 154 K. (*ap. Porph. De antr. nymph.* 16); cf. Stith Thompson G 521 "Ogre made drunk and overcome." A local tradition of Tanagra has a hostile Triton overcome in this way (Paus. 9.20.4).

<sup>22</sup>*LIMC* VIII.1 Suppl. s.v. "Mainades" no. 64 (with further material). Very like them is a scene in which Dionysus approaches a half-naked and sleeping Ariadne, *LIMC* III.1 Add. s.v. "Ariadne" no. 7.

<sup>23</sup>For vase-painting, see Roller (*supra* n.17) 304–305. In literature, binding is mentioned by *Ov. Met.* 11.91 *vinctum coronis* (v.l. *catenis*); Servius Auct. *ad Verg. Ecl.* 6.13 (Theopomp. *FGrHist* 115 F 75b), according to whom Midas' shepherds *dormientem vinxisse*; later the *vincula* miraculously burst.

<sup>24</sup>Valerius Antias fr.6 Peter; *Ov. Fast.* 3.293, 306–308 (not explicit in *Plut. Num.* 15.4).

<sup>25</sup>Verg. *Ecl.* 6.19, 23.

<sup>26</sup>Verg. *G.* 4.396; *Ov. Fast.* 1.370–372; *Hor. Serm.* 2.3.71. In Homer, *Od.* 4.416, 454–455, 459, Odysseus and his companions just grasp Proteus with their hands and hold him fast.

complicated.<sup>27</sup> When Liber has made the creature intoxicated, he arranges a complicated noose around his feet which is tied to his genitals in such a way that when he awakes and moves, he automatically castrates himself. The morphology of the story creates an interesting parallelism between the bisexual monster, who is bound to be castrated, and the anomalously masculine Aura, bound to be raped.

The combination becomes more interesting when one considers that the motif of the tying-up of a divine enemy before his dispatch by a god can be traced back to the Bronze Age in Anatolia. For this same motif occurs in the famous Illuyankas stories found at Boğazköy, which deal with a combat between the Storm God and a stronger serpent and probably stem ultimately from the Old Hittite period. After an initial defeat, the Storm God must think of a ruse, and so, in the first version, he arranges for a banquet to which the serpent is invited. A mortal man, Hupasiya, is brought in to help.

The serpent and [his offspring] came up, and they ate and drank. They drank up every vessel, so that they became drunk. Now they do not want to go back down into their hole again. Hupasiya came and tied up the serpent with a rope. The Storm God came and killed the serpent, and the gods were with him.<sup>28</sup>

The binding motif (though without intoxication) appears in Greek reflexes in the archaic and classical myths about Typho.<sup>29</sup> Calvert Watkins analysed the Anatolian myth in the context of

<sup>27</sup> Arnob. *Adv. gent.* 5.6; perhaps also Paus. 7.17.10 θεοὶ δὲ Ἄγδιστιν δείσαντες (δήσαντες Schubart/Walz, adopted by Rocha-Pereira) τὰ αἰδοῖά οἱ τὰ ἀνδρὸς ἀποκόπτουσιν. K. Meuli, "Die gefesselten Götter," in *Gesammelte Schriften* II (Basel 1975) 1057, included Agdistis in a category of fettered "Pfeilergöttinnen" or "Säulengöttinnen" of Asia Minor.

<sup>28</sup> Transl. H. A. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths* (Atlanta 1991) 12; cf. also ANET<sup>3</sup> 125–126 (transl. A. Goetze); W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley 1979) 7–9.

<sup>29</sup> See C. Watkins, *How To Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (New York/Oxford 1995) 454–459; Pind. *Pyth.* 1.27 and fr.92 Maehler; lashing (ιμάσσας) in Hes. *Theog.* 857.



a wider study of the Indo-European motif of dragon-slaying; but of course, as he says, the combat motif is hardly confined to Indo-European. The Babylonian epic of creation, the *Enuma Elish*, begins with the struggle between the first and second generation of gods, in which Ea overcomes the primordial deity and his adviser, Apsu and Mummu, who are plotting to eradicate the younger gods. Ea devises a spell to send the older god to sleep and fetter him:

He recited it and made it subsist in the deep,  
 As he poured sleep upon him. Sound asleep he lay.  
 When Apsu he had made prone, drenched with sleep,  
 Mummu, the adviser, was powerless to stir.  
 He loosened his band, tore off his tiara,  
 Removed his halo (and) put it on himself.  
 Having fettered Apsu, he slew him.  
 Mummu he bound and left behind lock.  
 Having thus upon Apsu established his dwelling,  
 He laid hold on Mummu, holding him by the nose-rope.<sup>30</sup>

In the Babylonian myth it is a god himself who overcomes Apsu; in the Anatolian one, it is a mortal man brought in to help the god after an initial defeat. The Agdistis myth corresponds rather more closely to the latter pattern, where Liber is brought in to help the gods when they lack the means to deal with a threatening enemy. Viewed from this perspective, the stories of Nicaea and Aura present a simplified structure in which Dionysus is both divine combatant and strategist.

In short, one possibility is that the binding of Aura's feet (and, in Nonnus, hands as well) derives from an old myth, attested in Anatolia and elsewhere, concerning the binding of a theomachic monster. It is not incredible that Nonnus should have had access to such material, since there are other signs that the *Dionysiaca* reflects very ancient Anatolian traditions.<sup>31</sup> And

<sup>30</sup> ANET<sup>3</sup> 61 lines 63–72, transl. E. A. Speiser.

<sup>31</sup> Watkins (*supra* n.29) 451, dealing with *Dion.* 1.408–409, which seems to reflect a Hittite text.

above all, it is quite in character for Aura, whose theomachic character—and indeed, more-than-occasional similarity to Typho himself—is evident throughout the book.<sup>32</sup>

However, there is another possibility, related to the first. One of the similarities between the Nicaea and Aura narratives is that Dionysus is counselled about, or spurred onto, each rape by a quasi-adviser-figure. In the story of Nicaea, an ancient Ashtree intervenes to goad Dionysus (*Dion.* 16.228–245), and in the story of Aura, a Hamadryad tells him what to do next (48.519–528). In both cases, we might have expected each counsellor-figure to suggest the specific ruse of the river of wine, but in neither case does this happen. The river of wine already exists in the Nicaea story, so that the Ashtree instead utters some vague and not very to-the-point remarks about Zeus' amorous transformations, which suggest, if anything, that Dionysus should metamorphose himself.<sup>33</sup> She does not tell him what to do next. In the Aura story, however, the Hamadryad does not say anything about a river of wine, but does specifically counsel Dionysus either to tie Aura up or rape her in her sleep.

This is clearly modelled on sequences like those in the myth of Proteus, in which a would-be captor is advised how to overcome an otherwise unmanageable semidivine being of the type I have just been discussing. An article by Schulze grasped this

<sup>32</sup>Krafft (*supra* n.6) 106–107; Vian (*supra* n.8) 206, 207. Note, for example, the desire to see virgin goddesses wed (Aura: *Dion.* 48.357–358, 799–807; Typho: 1.468–471, 2.209–211, 231–236, 305–313, and *passim*; also Actaeon: 5.433–437, 513–519; Pentheus: 44.174–179); the fact that in book 48 Nemesis lives near Cydnus and Taurus, once home of Typho (375–377; Koehler [*supra* n.2] 93). When Dionysus rapes Aura, he removes her bow and arrows and hides them in a cleft rock, just as Cadmus in the first book duped Typho, stole back Zeus' sinews—and hid them in a cleft rock (48.626 κατέκρυψε κοιλάδι πέτρῃ = 1.515).

<sup>33</sup>Keydell (*supra* n.2) 400: “in der Nikaia-geschichte ist es die alte Melie, die zwar nicht ausdrücklich, aber doch durch Anführung von Beispielen deutlich genug, ihm List zu brauchen rät” (my emphasis). This minimises the gap between what is expected, and what is in fact said: but it deserves more emphasis.

point, but his focus was too close. He thought that the parallel was specifically with Ovid's account of the binding of Thetis (*Met.* 11.251–252), in which Proteus counsels Peleus how to deal with this troublesome shape-shifter:

*Tu modo, cum rigido sopita quiescet in antro,  
Ignaram laqueis vincloque innecte tenaci.*

and that this was another piece of evidence that Nonnus read Latin and knew Ovid.<sup>34</sup> It does not need to be, for this is in fact a type-scene with many analogues: Nonnus could easily have derived it from a Greek source. Cyrene advises Aristaeus how to force his secrets from Proteus, just as Eidothee in the *Odyssey* had advised Odysseus how to overcome him, the nymphs had advised Heracles how to overcome Nereus, and Chiron (in the usual version of the story) advises Peleus about Thetis.<sup>35</sup> Waiting till the creature sleeps, or sending him to sleep, then binding him up, is a standard component of the wisdom of such advisers—often in myths of tricky water-spirits and shape-shifters.<sup>36</sup> There is no adviser-figure in the myths of Midas and Silenus, nor of Agdistis. But another myth that contained one, and that did not concern a water-spirit or shape-shifter, was that of the castration of Cronus, as told in the Orphic Rhapsodies. Here, Nyx advised Zeus to make Cronus drunk on honey, and then bind him (*Orph. fr.*154 K.):

εὐτ' ἂν δὴ μιν ἴδῃαι ὑπὸ δρυσὶν ὑπικόμεοισιν  
ἔργοισιν μεθύοντα μελισσάων ἐριβόμβων,  
δῆσον ...

<sup>34</sup>Schulze (*supra* n.12) 372–374.

<sup>35</sup>Cyrene and Aristaeus: Verg. *G.* 4.387ff; Ov. *Fast.* 1.367–370. Eidothee and Odysseus: *Od.* 4.382ff. The nymphs and Heracles: Pherecydes *FGrHist* 3 F 16a; [Apoll.] 2.5.11; probably from Stesichorus' *Geryoneis*, cf. Stesichorus S16(a) Davies (*PMGF* I). Chiron and Peleus: [Apoll.] 3.13.5; Tzetz. *ad Lycoph. Alex.* 178.

<sup>36</sup>Only in the myth of Thetis is it not explicitly a case of waiting till she sleeps: this seems to be Ovid's innovation in his revision of the story.

It is a close analogue to the Aura narrative. The key point is binding up, the key verb δεῖν.<sup>37</sup> While the fragment breaks off here, one might expect that, her advice once dispatched, Night disappeared back into her secret dwelling. In just the same way, other advisers exit without ceremony; Nonnus' Ashtree and Hamadryad disappear back into the trunks of their coeval trees.<sup>38</sup>

Vian has recently argued that the Orphic poems underpin the whole arrangement of the double rape of Nicaea and Aura, as well as individual details in each episode. He suggested that the bonds that Dionysus applied to Aura were derived from the serpent coils in which Zeus mated with Demeter. If they do not derive from Anatolian legend, I wonder whether Aura's bonds in fact derive, not from this mating, but from an earlier episode in the Orphic poem—Zeus' castration of his father. Certainly, the adviser figure points to Greek literary precedent. It is Night who delivers the advice in the Orphic poem, and the Hamadryad who delivers it here. The malign being has to be overcome by stealth, sent to sleep and bound up, in order for its power to be neutralised; a counsellor points the way. As in the Agdistis story, there is a curious parallel between the themes of castration (Cronus) and defloration (Aura). To put it another way, there is an interesting slippage between the categories of virgin bride and divine adversary, or theomachic monster. This slippage is much more conspicuous in the story of Aura, where binding occurs, than that of Nicaea, where it does not.

There are certainly further parallels with the Orphic poems waiting to be discovered in the Nicaea and Aura episodes. Their anger on being raped could, as Vian suggested, be connected

<sup>37</sup>*Dion.* 48.523–524 βαρύδεσμον . . . δεσμοῖς; 48.628 δεσμοῖς; *cf.* [Apoll.] 2.5.11 ἔδησε (Nereus); Pind. *Pyth.* 1.27 δέδεταί, fr.92 M. δεσμός (Typho). On the binding of Cronus, see further Meuli (*supra* n.27) 1042–1043.

<sup>38</sup>*Dion.* 16.244–245 = 48.527–528. Compare 48.527–528 ὡς φαμένη . . . δυσαμένη with *Od.* 4.425 ὡς εἰπούσ' . . . ἐδύσετο, of Eidothee; *cf.* *Ov. Met.* 11.255 *condidit aequore vultum*, of Proteus.

with Demeter's anger on her rape by Zeus, though there is very little evidence for the way the Orphic poems presented it.<sup>39</sup> Again, Nonnus, as Schmiel has analysed, is obsessed with Aura's breasts, and her unrealised potential as a milk-producer. She will not suckle her children (despite adjurations to do so at 48.817, 833, 858–859), so instead they are first suckled by a panther (913); then, after his twin's murder, Iacchus is nursed by Nicaea (949–951) and Athena herself (955–957), who offers him her manly breast as Aura never did. But is Aura's refusal to nurse her infants connected with the fact that Demeter will not nurse the product of her rape by Zeus, Persephone (albeit out of different motives)?<sup>40</sup> (It is the more ironic in that the role of Persephone in the Orphic myth is here filled by Iacchus, "Dionysus at the breast," who made his nurse, Ceres, heavy-breasted with lactation.<sup>41</sup>) Then again, the to-ing and fro-ing with the divine child is very elaborate. First, Artemis hands Iacchus to Dionysus, Dionysus to Nicaea, then to Athena, and Athena to the Bacchantes of Eleusis. Is this a complicated re-patterning of the Orphic poems' account of the birth, not of Persephone, but of Dionysus from Persephone, in which Dionysus, born from Zeus' thigh, is seized by Hipta and carried off to the Great Mother on Mount Ida?<sup>42</sup>

More important, though, is the wider picture. Both "analyst" and "unitarian" approaches are appropriate to Nonnus. Above all, *Quellenforschung*, and the recognition that Nonnus takes over

<sup>39</sup> Vian (*supra* n.8) 213. Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.13.1 speaks merely of τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς Διοῦς τῆς πρὸς Δία γεγεννημένης, offering it as an etymology for ὄργια.

<sup>40</sup> *Orph.* fr.58 K. . . . διὸ καὶ τὴν Ῥέα ν φοβηθεῖσαν τὸ τῆς παιδὸς τέρας φυγεῖν οὐκ ἐφείσαν αὐτῇ τὴν θηλήν, ἔνθεν μυστικῶς μὲν Ἀθηλᾶ κοινῶς δὲ Φερσεφὸνῆ καὶ Κόρη κέκληται; cf. West (*supra* n.13) 220–221.

<sup>41</sup> *Suda* ι 16, Photius s.v. Ἰακχος, calling him Διόνυσος ἐπὶ τῷ μαστῷ; Lucr. 4.1168 *at tumida et mammosa Ceres est ipsa ab Iaccho*, whence Arnob. *Adv. gent.* 3.10 *ab Iaccho Cererem ... mammosam*, cf. 6.25 *Ceres mammis cum grandibus*. (In *Orph.Hymn.* 52.11, ὑποκόλπιος is one of Dionysus' epithets, but has been suspected.)

<sup>42</sup> *Orph.* fr.199 K.; *Orph.Hymn.* 48–49; O. Kern, "Hipta," *RE* 8 (1913) 1930; West (*supra* n.13) 96.

and transforms inherited sequences and motifs—sometimes heavy-handedly, but at other times intelligently and interestingly—is essential to the understanding of his extraordinary work.

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