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## EXCERPTS FROM THE *HEXAEMERON* OF GEORGE OF PISIDIA IN NERSĒS LAMBRONATS'Ī'S *COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS*

**Abstract.** This article examines passages from George of Pisidia's *Hexaemeron* (7<sup>th</sup> century) as they appear in the Commentary on the Book of Psalms by the Armenian exegete Nersēs Lambronats'ī (1153–1198), one of the leading figures of medieval Armenian scholarship. The study aims to determine whether Nersēs Lambronats'ī used the Greek original or the Armenian translation of the poem and to analyse his method of integrating these sources into his exegetical practice. The research is based on the fully preserved 13<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript 1526 from the Matenadaran, Yerevan, which represents a major example of Armenian palaeography and contains a complete, previously unpublished commentary on the Psalms. A textual and palaeographic analysis demonstrates that Nersēs Lambronats'ī consistently relied on the Armenian translation of the *Hexaemeron*. The commentary incorporates direct quotations, paraphrases, and distinctive narrative and imagistic elements absent from the Greek original. This reliance is particularly evident in the interpretation of Psalm 135, where literal and allegorical exegeses are intertwined, integrating the translated text with patristic sources. Nersēs Lambronats'ī creatively reworks the translation, preserving its semantic and stylistic framework while adding his own exegetical commentary. Based on several examples, it is shown that Nersēs Lambronats'ī used not the Greek original but the Armenian translation of the poem — specifically the complete translation, rather than the later abridged version that has come down to us in the Venetian manuscript. These findings demonstrate the systematic use of the Armenian translation of George of Pisidia's *Hexaemeron* in Nersēs Lambronats'ī's commentary, highlighting both direct quotations and nuanced paraphrases. By examining lexical choices, narrative motifs, and imagery, the study shows that Nersēs Lambronats'ī creatively integrated his Byzantine source into the Armenian exegetical tradition. This analysis not only clarifies the author's textual method but also sheds light on broader patterns of Byzantine–Armenian literary transmission, contributing to our understanding of the interaction between translated texts and native exegetical practices in medieval Armenia.

**Keywords:** George of Pisidia, *Hexaemeron*, Nersēs Lambronats'ī, Vardan Arevelts'ī, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Armenian translation, *Physiologus*, Armenian manuscript tradition, textual and palaeographic analysis

**Note.** The material was partially presented during the conference “Text, commentary, and interpretation: Problems of commenting on ancient and medieval texts” (Matenadaran, 2024).

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Статьи

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## ОТРЫВКИ ИЗ «ШЕСТОДНЕВА» ГЕОРГИЯ ПИСИДЫ В КОММЕНТАРИИ НЕРСЕСА ЛАМБРОНАЦИ К КНИГЕ ПСАЛМОВ

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются отрывки из поэмы «Шестоднев» византийского поэта VII в. Георгия Писиды, включенные в комментарий к Книге псалмов армянского экзегета XII в. Нерсеса Ламбронати (1153–1198). Основная цель исследования — установить, пользовался ли Нерсес Ламбронати греческим оригиналом или армянским переводом поэмы, а также проанализировать способы интеграции источника в его экзегетическую практику. Для исследования была использована полностью сохранившаяся рукопись XIII в. из Матенадарана (Ереван), представляющая один из лучших примеров армянской средневековой палеографии и содержащая полный, ранее неопубликованный комментарий к псалмам. Анализ выявил систематическое использование «Шестоднева» в комментарии Нерсеса Ламбронати, включая дословные цитаты, парафразы и отдельные нарративные и образные элементы, отсутствующие в греческом оригинале. Особенно это заметно в комментарии к псалму 135, где автор сочетает буквальное и аллегорическое толкование, интегрируя армянский перевод с патристическими источниками. Исследование демонстрирует, что Нерсес Ламбронати творчески перерабатывал текст перевода, сохраняя его семантическую и образную структуру и одновременно добавляя собственные экзегетические комментарии. На основе нескольких примеров показано, что Нерсес Ламбронати пользовался армянским переводом поэмы — причем полным переводом, а

не поздней сокращенной редакцией, которая дошла до нас в Венецианской рукописи. Полученные результаты не только уточняют методику цитирования и переработки источников у Нерсеса Ламбронати, но и проливают свет на механизм передачи византийской экзегетической традиции в средневековой армянской литературе, показывая сложное взаимодействие перевода и местной экзегетической практики.

**Ключевые слова:** Георгий Писида, Шестоднев, Нерсес Ламбронати, Вардан Аревелци, «Толкование на псалмь», армянский перевод, Физиолог, армянская рукописная традиция; текстологический и палеографический анализ

**Примечание.** Материал статьи был частично представлен на конференции «Текст, комментарий и интерпретация: проблемы комментирования античных и средневековых текстов» (Матенадаран, 2024).

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Numerous exegetic, rhetorical, legal, and canonical works have come down to us under the name of Nersēs Lambronats‘i<sup>1</sup>. We draw information about Nersēs Lambronats‘i from the colophons of his works and those of his students. Father Ghevond Alishan [1885], Bishop Smbat Saatēt‘ean [2014]<sup>2</sup>, Father Garegin Zarbhanalean [1897], Father Nersēs Akinean [1956], and Grigor Hakobyan [1971] have reflected on his life and work. One of Nersēs Lambronats‘i’s colophons mentions that he was equally fluent in Armenian and Greek. According to some sources, he also had a good knowledge of Hebrew, Syriac, Latin, French, and probably Coptic, as well as numerous canonical laws and writings.

Nersēs Lambronats‘i became acquainted with and studied many manuscripts in the monasteries of Black Mountain [Akinean 1956: 131–142]. The commen-

<sup>1</sup> Born 1153 at Lambron, Cilicia; died 1198; son of Oschin II, prince of Lambron, and nephew of the patriarch Nersēs Shnorhali. Ordained in 1169, he was consecrated Archbishop of Tarsus in 1176. Nersēs Lambronats‘i is justly regarded as one of the greatest writers in Armenian literature. He deserves fame as poet, prose writer, and translator. He wrote an elegy on the death of his uncle and many hymns. His prose works include an oration at the Council of Hromkla; Commentaries on the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Book of Wisdom, and the Minor Prophets; an explanation of the liturgy; a letter to Leo II and another to Uskan, a monk from Antioch; two homilies etc. He translated into Armenian the Rule of St. Benedict; the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great as well as a life of this saint; the letters of Lucius III and Clement III to the patriarch Gregory. From the Syriac he translated the *Homilies* of Jacob of Serugh and, probably from the Coptic, the *Lives of the Desert Fathers*. Some writers ascribe to him an Armenian version of a commentary of Andreas of Caesarea on the Apocalypse.

<sup>2</sup> This work was the thesis of one of the first students of the Armash Seminary, defended in 1896 and first published in 1981.

tary on the Book of Psalms that will be discussed further on was compiled in 1182. Explanations of some psalms are also found in his commentary on the Divine Liturgy [Nersēs Lambronats'ı 1847].

Some authors mention that Nersēs Lambronats'ı also composed a commentary on the Book of Genesis [Alishan 1874: 242<sup>3</sup>; 1885: 90; Zarbhanalean 1897: 657; Hakobyan 1971: 330, 342–343]. Since no fragmentary examples of this work have survived, this is probably the reason some scholars believe that he commented on Genesis orally [Akinean 1956: 236; Hakobyan 1971: 342]. Nevertheless, in his commentary on the Book of Psalms Nersēs Lambronats'ı repeatedly used excerpts from commentaries on Genesis by Church Fathers. Thus, we should give preference to the works and colophons written by Nersēs Lambronats'ı's contemporaries and disciples, to the testimony of historian Step'anos Orbelean (13<sup>th</sup> century), and to other historical data, according to which Nersēs Lambronats'ı wrote commentaries on the Books of Genesis, Daniel and Job.

The oldest copy of Nersēs Lambronats'ı's *Commentary on the Book of Psalms of David* is kept in the St. Lazzaro Library in Venice [Chemchemean 1996: 871–876]. For our research, we used manuscript 1526 from Matenadaran, Yerevan (1293–1294, place: Yovhannavank', scribe: Priest Yerets', commissioner: Hamazasp Mamikonean, Bishop of Yovhannavank', material: paper, dimensions: 50 × 33.5cm, 907 p.)<sup>4</sup>. At times, it has been compared with MS M3796. In the passages under consideration, no misreadings are attested. This is the reason why we have used the earliest manuscript of the Matenadaran. After the prologue, the scribe left more than half of the second column blank, which was later filled by Vardan Vardapet Baghishets'ı with a depiction of David playing the lyre (fig. 1). MS M1526 is one of the finest examples of Armenian paleography, written in cursive script with uncial letters (mixed *erkat'agir-bolorgir*) [Stone et al. 2002: 320], and the oldest surviving complete commentary composed in the Armenian language. From its colophons, we learn that Nersēs Lambronats'ı had a habit of visiting the Saghru Monastery<sup>5</sup> on Sundays, where he often explained difficult passages from the Psalms to the Brotherhood members. During that period, at the request of his teacher Yovhannes of Lambron acting in the Saghru Monastery, Nersēs Lambronats'ı wrote a commentary on the Psalms [Saatēt'ean 2014: 112; Akinean 1956: 27, 135]. The sources for his commentary<sup>6</sup> are the works of Philo of Alexandria, Cappadocian Fathers, Dionysius the Areopagite, and Cyril of Alexandria [Akinean 1956: 75–77]. He also refers to the lives of the Egyptian Fathers.

<sup>3</sup>The author of the article is not indicated in the journal *Baznavēp*; the attribution is based on information provided by Suren Shtikyan [1991: 522].

<sup>4</sup>For a detailed description of the manuscript, see [Yeganean 2009: 323–330].

<sup>5</sup>Monastery in Cilicia, Lambron Province [Hakobyan et al. 1998: 484].

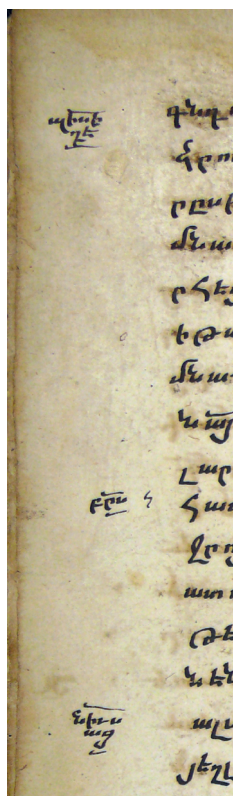
<sup>6</sup>Incidentally, Nersēs Lambronats'ı's autograph copy of the Book of Commentaries and the Book of Treasures by Cyril of Alexandria is kept in the St. Lazzaro Library [Chemchemean 1998: 283–290].



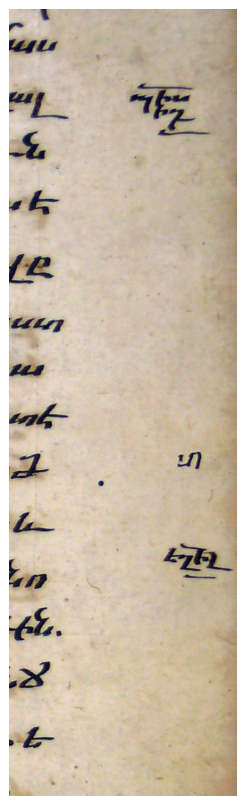
**Fig. 1.** MS M3796 (*Nersēs Lambronats'i's Commentary on the Book of Psalms*), fol. 4<sup>v</sup>.  
*The Prophet David depicted by the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Armenian chronicler David Vardapet Baghishets'i*

When studying medieval works, especially those of a theological nature, several circumstances should be taken into account. It should come as no surprise that the most important doctrinal tenets of the church may be repeated in the same form by authors of different centuries. This is natural, since the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church has preserved and transmitted its doctrine unchanged for two millennia. Alongside the purely theological content, those works contain numerous philosophical, cosmological, natural scientific, historical, geographical, lexicological, and other teachings. It is also important to consider the fact that science (secular and spiritual) developed within the Church, under the patronage of the Church, and through the clergy. Given all this, it is quite natural that one can detect the influence of early medieval exegetes, which has come down to us in the works of authors of later centuries. One of the most striking proofs of the above is Nersēs Lambronats'i's complete commentary on the Book of Psalms.

The date of the Armenian translation of *Hexaemeron*, a poem by the 7<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine author Georges of Pisidia, is debatable: scholars' opinions vary between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries [Tashean 1901: 321–326]. The reception of this work in Armenian exegetical literature has not yet been sufficiently studied. In their commentaries on the Six-Day Creation, Armenian authors mainly used the Armenian translations of the writings by Philo of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, and Ephrem the Syrian. Before the time of Nersēs Lambronats'i, there existed commentaries on the Book of Genesis by Yeghishe (5<sup>th</sup> century), Step'anos Syunets'i (8<sup>th</sup> century), Archimandrite Timot'eos (10<sup>th</sup> century), and Priest David (10<sup>th</sup> century), which, along with the works of other Church Fathers, were used by Vardan Arevelts'i (c. 1198–1271) in his commentary (catena) on the Book of Genesis (MSs M7452, M2604). Vardan Arevelts'i also cited the Armenian translation of George of Pisidia's *Hexaemeron* as indicated by the author's notes in the margins of the manuscripts (figs. 2, 3).



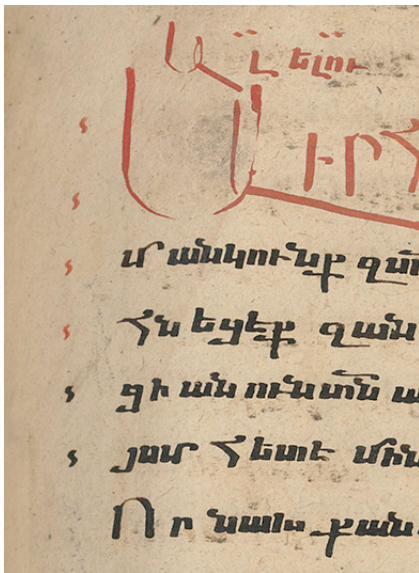
**Fig. 2.** MS M7452, fol. 8<sup>v</sup>. A passage from Vardan Arevelts'i's commentary on the Pentateuch, in which he indicates in the margin the author of each citation, including George of Pisidia



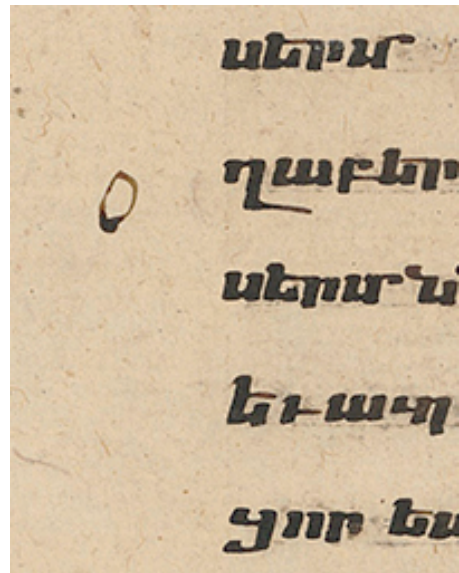
**Fig. 3.** MS M7452, fol. 27<sup>r</sup>. A passage from Vardan Arevelts'i's commentary on the Pentateuch, in which he indicates in the margin the author of each citation, including George of Pisidia

In these two images, we observe the manner in which the names of the authors of cited passages are indicated next to the quotations. In the first image, the names of George of Pisidia, Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nyssa are recorded, while in the second image the names of George of Pisidia and the 5<sup>th</sup>-century Armenian author Yeghishe appear.

Nersēs Lambronats‘i’s commentary on the Psalms is structured in a manner typical of the Armenian exegetical tradition: first he quotes a Biblical verse and then interprets it, intertwining his words with the thoughts of various exegetes. In the manuscript we used, quotations from the Bible (fig. 4) and from the works of commentators are marked with distinctive symbols in the margins. The commentary mixes both literal and allegorical methods of interpretation, with the latter prevailing. In the commentary on Psalm 135 presented below, particular attention is drawn to the passage marked with small circle signs (fig. 5). During the course of our research, we determined that either the author or later scribes marked with these signs the beginning and end of the quoted or paraphrased passage from George of Pisidia’s work.



**Fig. 4.** MS M1526, fol. 643<sup>r</sup>. An excerpt from one of the Psalm commentaries by Nersēs Lambronats‘i, where a marginal mark appears opposite passages quoted from the Bible



**Fig. 5.** MS M1526, fol. 638<sup>v</sup>. The other symbol — the small circle — indicates passages quoted from the works of Church Fathers. However, this marker does not appear alongside all such quotations in the manuscript, which likely suggests omissions made by the copyists

Let us consider several examples that highlight Nersēs Lambronats'ı's familiarity with George of Pisidia's *Hexaemeron*. As we have already mentioned, Nersēs Lambronats'ı had an excellent knowledge of Greek<sup>7</sup>; thus, it is necessary to determine whether he used the original Greek text of George of Pisidia's work or some version of the Armenian translation. In various parts of his commentary, Nersēs Lambronats'ı discusses the creative nature of God and the perfection of creation, mentioning the changing seasons, the celestial bodies, the plant and the animal world<sup>8</sup>. Commenting on Psalm 104: 28, "That thou givest them they gather: Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good", he gives the example of a bird to whom God provides food in the mouth of a ferocious beast. When an amphibious crocodile comes ashore and sleeps with its mouth open, a small bird feeds on the remains of meat left between its teeth.

What Armenian sources could Nersēs Lambronats'ı have used when talking about the crocodile? Since the name of Philo is mentioned several times in various parts of his commentary on the Psalms, it is quite likely that Nersēs Lambronats'ı referred to his works. However, Philo only says that the crocodile is a cannibal and an amphibian:

Քանզի մարդակերն և գազանաց չարագոյնն՝ կոկորդէլոսն (For the most ferocious of cannibals and beasts is the crocodile; *De prov. fr.* 2, 65 Colson) [Awgorean 1822: 116].

ՅԵգիպտոս կոկորդէլոսն՝ մարդակեր կենդանին և երկակենցաղ (In Egypt, the crocodile is a man-eating animal that lives on land and in water; *De anim.* 50) [Ibid.: 150].

Comparing this account with Basil the Great's *Hexaemeron*, we see that Basil mentions the crocodile only in passing, in the list of amphibians (7, 1):

Եւ թէպէտ գոն ի մէջ ջուրցն գեռոնք, որ ոնիցին նսս եւ գնացս, եւ ցամաքի անասնոց նման իցեն, իբրեւ զփոկս եւ զկոկորդիլոսս, եւ զձիս ջուրց եւ գորսս, եւ խեցգետինս (And although there are creatures in the water that have legs and walk, and resemble land animals, such as seals and crocodiles, sea horses, frogs, and crabs...) [Muradyan 1984: 219].

The Armenian translation of *Physiologus* (ch. 25 of the first redaction) says that crocodiles sleep with their mouths open on land: "When a crocodile sleeps, its mouth is open" [Muradyan 2005: 147]; then *Physiologus* proceeds with the tale about some animal (ή ἔσθδρος) which climbs into the mouth of a sleeping crocodile and kills it. Nersēs Lambronats'ı not only relates that the crocodile is an amphibian, as Philo and Basil do, and that it sleeps with its mouth open on land, as

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted, however, that the spoken Greek of Nersēs Lambronats'ı's contemporaries was very different from George of Pisidia's classicising language: the majority of "native speakers" of the time would not have been able to read his poems.

<sup>8</sup> Y. T'orosyan has a clear analysis of Nersēs Lambronats'ı's interpretation of this psalm [T'orosyan 1898: 469].

it is recorded in *Physiologus*, but also mentions the bird that feeds on the meat left in the crocodile’s teeth. Of course, the story of the “friendship” between the crocodile and the small bird (usually called τροχίλος) has been told by many Greek authors whose works have not been translated into Armenian (from Herodotus to Timotheus of Gaza; for a list, see [Arnott 2007: 361]). However, numerous textual parallels show that Nersēs Lambronats‘i is based precisely on *Hexaemeron*, and not on the Greek original, but on the Armenian translation. George of Pisidia, like a number of his predecessors, combines two stories: one about a cunning animal that kills the crocodile by climbing into its mouth, and another about a bird that not only pecks food scraps from the crocodile’s teeth, but also wakes it at the moment of danger, saving its life. Nersēs Lambronats‘i uses only the tale about the caring bird, but his dependence on the Armenian version of *Hexaemeron* is undeniable.

George of Pisidia’s <i>Hexaemeron</i> , v. 967 sq. [Gonnelli 1998: 180–182]	Armenian translation, v. 977 sq. [Tiroyea 1900: 104]	Nersēs Lambronats‘i, <i>On Psalms</i> , MS M1526, fol. 598r
Καὶ μικρὸς ὄλλος ὕγροχέρσῳ θηρίῳ φθορὰν ἐφιστᾷ τῇ τομῇ τῶν ἡπάτων· λάθρα γάρ αὐτῷ προσβαλὼν κεχηνότι, διατρέχει τὰ σπλάγγνα σωλήνος δίικην, τεμὼν δὲ κρυπτήν ἐξ ὀπισθοῦ θύραν φονεὺς διαδράς οἴχεται σεσωσμένος. Ἄλλη δὲ τις πέφυκεν ὀρνέου φύσις, ἣ τοὺς ὀδόντας βόσκειται τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοῖς περιττοῖς ἐστιᾷται λειψάνοις...	Եւ փոքրիկն հիւղոս <u>գերկակեցիկ գազանն</u> <u>կրոկոդիդոս</u> ապականէ, կոտորեալ զաղիսն, քանզի ի քուն <u>գոյով բաց ունի գրերանն</u> ուտէ զաղիսն և որպէս ընդ խողովակ ընդ նստոյն տեղին արտաքս ելանէ ողջ: <u>Բսկ այլ հաւ</u> <u>իմն</u> բնատրեալ (որում անուն է տրորիդոս) սս <u>կերակրի ի մնացեալ</u> <u>մտոյ յատամուսնս</u> <u>գազանին...</u>	վասն զի <u>կրոկոդիդոս</u> <u>գազան</u> գոյով ծովային և ցամաքային <u>երկակեցաղ</u> , ելանէ ի ցամաք և ննջէ և է ստեղծուած նորա, զի ի <u>ննջելն քանի բերանն</u> , <u>իսկ ունի ի թռչնոց</u> զայն ունի իւր սահմանեալ <u>կերակրոյ</u> յԱստուծոյ, զի ի ննջելն զայ մտանէ ի բերանն <u>և ի մնացուածոյ</u> <u>յատամուսնս մտոյ</u> <u>կերակրի...</u>

The Armenian translation of *Hexaemeron* has come down to us in the complete version represented by the manuscripts A (Bzommar, 1701)<sup>9</sup>, C (Antelias, 1307), Y (Yerevan, 1853–1854)<sup>10</sup> and in excerpts preserved in the Venetian manuscript M (13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> c.). Since the passage about the crocodile is absent from M, we can be sure that Nersēs Lambronats‘i was familiar with the full text of the translation.

<sup>9</sup>The MMS of the Armenian translation are presented using the conventional sigla given by Gabriella Uluhogian in her unpublished dissertation [Uluhogian 1957] and in later contributions [Uluhogian 1962; 1991].

<sup>10</sup>This manuscript, which until now remained unknown to scholars, will be discussed in a separate article.

Among many other evident parallels, it is worth noting that Nersēs Lambronats‘i uses the word “meat” (միս), which is absent in the Greek original of *Hexaemeron* but present in the Armenian translation. Let us also focus on the word “crocodile”, which also does not appear in the Greek original (the poet prefers the paraphrase “the amphibious beast”), but stands in the Armenian translation (in the variants կրոկոդիղոս<sup>11</sup> = *crocodighos* and կրկրիղոս = *cocordighos*; Nersēs Lambronats‘i’s text has կրկրիղոս = *cocordeghos*). In some Greek manuscripts of *Hexaemeron*, there are small subheadings, written mainly in the margins; in the above-mentioned passage, several of them have margin titles such as *περὶ τοῦ ὑγροχέρσου θηρίου τοῦ κροκοδήλου* [sic] [Gonnelli 1998: 180]. In the Armenian translation, this marginal heading served as the source of a gloss that found its way into the text. It is interesting that in manuscript C of the translation (fig. 7), in the passage about the crocodile, one can discern some marginalia which, unfortunately, are not very clearly visible due to damage to the manuscript. It is presumably written “on the *crocodighos*” or “...*crocodighos*” (fig. 6).

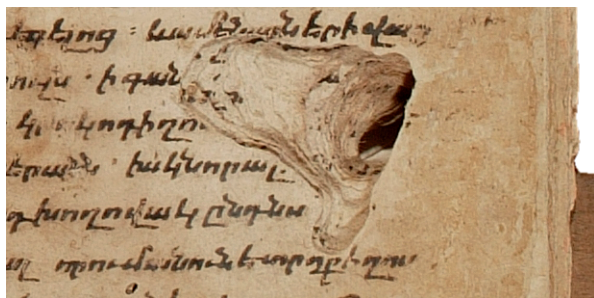


Fig. 6. *Antelias 20, fol. 119r*. The passage on the crocodile from the *Antelias* manuscript of *Hexaemeron* (C), in which an illegible heading is highlighted in the margin

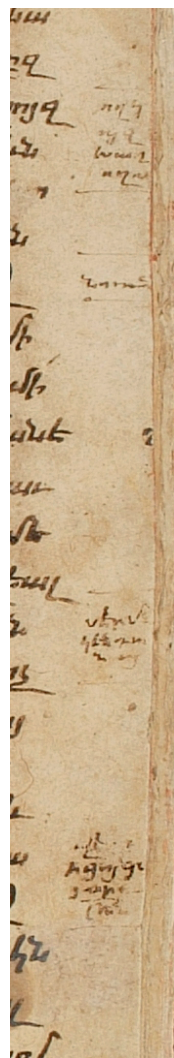


Fig. 7. *Antelias 20, fol. 120r*. A fragment of marginal headings from C

The passage we have analysed is by no means unique: Nersēs Lambronats‘i’s commentary provides many direct and paraphrased quotations from George of Pisidia’s work. In particular, the commentary on Psalm 135 contains a large excerpt from *Hexaemeron*, where words, phrases, and even sentences coincide with the Armenian translation.

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the manuscript used by Tiroyean reads կրոկոդիղոս = *krokodighos*’ (A fol. 274r = C fol. 119r), whereas his edition has կրկրիղոս = *krokoghidos* [Tiroyean 1900: 104].

George of Pisidia's *Hexaemeron*, v. 134–137, 139–140, 225–226, 235, 239–271, 196–197, 358–361 [Gonnelli 1998: 124, 130, 132, 134, 128, 140]

στολίζεται δὲ τὸν χιτῶνα τὸν μέγαν,  
τὸν ἄερα κλωσθέντα κερκίδι ξένη·  
χυτὸν διαυγῆ λεπτὸν ἠραιωμένον,  
εἰς πᾶσαν εἰσοδύοντα σωματουργίαν.

λαβὼν διαυγεῖς μαργαρίτας ἀστέρας·  
ἔχει δὲ πρὸς τὰ στέρνα λυχνίτην ἓνα <...>

ἀρκεῖ δὲ πᾶσι τῇ βοπῆ τῆς ἀτμίδος,  
φθάνει δὲ μέχρι τοῦ βυθοῦ τῶν τερμάτων <...>

τοῖς ἀνθελιγμοῖς συγκρατεῖται τοῦ τάχους <...>

Ἔ τὴν ἀμυδρὰν τῆς σελήνης λαμπάδα  
ἐκ τοῦ πυραυγοῦς ἕωσπυρώσας ἥλιου.  
κιχρᾶς γὰρ αὐτῇ γλαυκὸν ἔξ αὐτοῦ σέλας  
οὐκ οἶδα πῶς λέγουσιν, ἀλλ' ὄμως τάχα  
οὐχ ὡς δεηθεὶς φαύσεως ἄλλοτρίας,  
– τὸ φῶς γὰρ αὐτὸς καὶ πρὸ ἥλιου βρούεις –,  
ἀλλ' ὥστε ῥυθμὸν ἐντεθῆναι τῇ κτίσει  
καλῆς ἀνάγκης, καὶ σποφῆς ἔξουσίας,

Armenian translation, v. 135–138, 140–141, 228–229, 238, 242–274, 199–200, 365–368 [Tiroyea 1900: 26, 36–40]

Զգէնու պատմուճանն մեծ՝ զօղ, կրկեալ կրկոցաւ  
սրանչելեալ, հեղեալ,  
ճաճանչեղ և նուրբ հոսմամբ,  
սահեալ մտեալ յամենայն  
մարմնեղէնս <...>

Առեալ մարգարիտ պայծառ  
զաստեղս, ունի և ի լանջսն  
կարկեեան մի <...>

բաւական է ամենեցունց  
ակնարկութեամբ շոգոյն<sup>12</sup>  
հասանէ մինչև ի խորութիւնս  
տղմոց, <...>

հակառակ շրջադարձեանն  
երագութեամբ շարակալեալ  
լինի <...>

Ո՛ր որ գաղաւտ ջահն լուսնի  
յարեգական հրափայլութենէ  
կենդանախարուկեալ,  
տուեալ ի նա լոյս: Ոչ զիտեմ  
զիարդ ասեն, սակայն ուրեմն  
ոչ իբր թէ կարօտ գորով լուսոյ  
օտարի, (քանզի դու զլոյս և  
նախ քան զարեւ բղխես)<sup>12</sup>  
այլ որպէս զի կարգ դնել  
ստացուածոցս գեղեցիկ  
կարեաց և իմաստուն  
իշխանութեան: Ձոսն լինել  
կարօտ ջահին՝ զխոնաւարար  
պաշտպանութիւնսն ածել  
ի ներքս: Քանզի կարօտ է  
խոնաւուտ բաղկացութեանն՝

Nersēs Lambronats'i, *On Psalms*, MS M1526, fol. 792v–793r

<...> սրանչելապէս  
զգեցուցեալ նմա գաղ  
որպէս զպատմուճանն եւ  
զճանճանչս նորա հեղեալ  
քնդ նոյն նրբապէս լուսաորբէ  
զամենայնէքս, <...>

որպէս ակն կարկեեան  
ի լանջօ զլուսնն. եւ  
սփիռ տարածեալ  
որպէս շարս մարգարտի  
նկարակերտեալս զաստեղս:  
<...> սրանչելիս այս ակն  
տունջեան և իշխան  
յարաջ գալ որպէս փեսայ  
յարագաստ ճնճայ որպէս  
սկա խորխտալով ի յնթացս  
մշակ է հրոյ հեղմամբ  
զտարերսղ լուսաորբէ  
նշողիցն ճագմամբ զգալիս  
բաւակա ն է ամենեցունց  
ակնարկութեամբ  
շոգոյն հասանէ մինչև  
ի խորութիւնս տղմոց  
հակառակ շրջադարձեանն  
երագութեամբ շարակալեալ  
լինի, զի թէ ոչ էր բարեկարգ  
քնթացիք, այլ շեղեր  
զաշխարհ ամենայն ի  
խտտորելն իւրով փաղաղէր.  
այլեւ լուսնն, զոր աղաւտ  
ջահ տնարիինեաց արարիչն  
իշխան լինել զիշերոյ  
յարեգականն փայլմանէ  
կենդանախարուկեալ, որ  
տա ի նա լոյս, այլատարագ  
որակաւ, ոչ իբր թէ կարաւտ  
է Արարիչն լուսոյ աւտարի.  
քանզի նա զլոյս և նախքան  
զարեգակն բղխէ, այլ  
որպէս զի գեղեցիկ իմն  
կարգ կալցին արարածքս.  
քանզի լուսնն խոնաւ է և  
արեգականն ջերմ, ա թր.  
զխոնանն ջերուցանէ նորա

<sup>12</sup> Tiroyea prints շոզոյն; this is his own conjecture, based on the reading ἀκτίνοϛ accepted in the edition of the Greek text he used [Querci 1860: 1451]. Since then, however, Fabrizio Gonnelli has shown that the large part of the tradition gives ἀτμίδος, which better fits the context [Gonnelli 1998: 130]; accordingly, շոզոյն, the reading of all the manuscripts, does not need to be corrected.

καὶ τὴν μὲν οὖσαν ἐνδεῆ τῆς  
λαμπάδος,  
τὰς ὑγοποιοὺς ἀντιλήψεις  
εἰσάγειν  
– δεῖται γὰρ ὑγρᾶς συμπλοκῆς  
ἢ θερμότης –,  
τὸν δὲ ζέοντα τῆς φλογός τῆ  
προσχύσει  
τὰς ἐντεθείσας ἐκνοτίζειν  
ἰκμάδας,  
ὅπως γένηται μῖξις ὥσπερ ἐν  
γάμῳ  
καὶ συζυγέντων πρὸς τὸ  
τίκτειν τῶν δύο  
εὐτεκνα δεῖξῃ τῶν σπαρέντων  
τὰ βρόφη  
λαβοῦσα θερμὸν ἢ σελήνη  
νυμφίον.  
ᾠ μὴδὲν ἐχθρὸν μὴδὲ πρὸς  
μάχην κτίσας,  
ἀλλ' ὡς ἀδελφὰς  
οἰκοδεσπότης πατήρ  
εἰρηνοποιῶν τὰς ἐναντίας  
φύσεις,  
τάξιν δὲ δεικνὺς τῆς ἀτάκτου  
τετράδος,  
ὅπως ὁ κόσμος οὗτος ὡς οἶκος  
μέγας  
ἄρρηκτος ἔσται τεττάρων  
κρίων δίκην,  
λαβῶν ὑποστήριξιν  
ἀνταθουμένην.  
οὕτως συνάπτεις τὰς  
ἀσυμβάτους φύσεις  
πείθεις δὲ ταύτας ἐν συνοικίᾳ  
μένειν,  
εἰς ἐν θέλημα συμπνεούσης  
τῆς μάχης,  
ὡς λοιπὸν αὐταῖς κοινὸν εἶναι  
τὸν δρόμον,  
καὶ τὰς συνήθεις ἐκτελεῖν  
λειτουργίας,  
καὶ τὴν μὲν ἔργων ἀερόστημον  
πλέκειν,  
ὑφασμα λεπτὸν εἰς ἀναπνοὴν  
βίου,  
τὴν δ' αὖ πρὸς νήθουσαν  
ἄρραγεῖς μίτους,  
χιτῶνα ποιεῖν εἰς τὸ θάλψαι  
τὴν φύσιν <...>

λειμῶνα πολλῶν ἐμφοτεύσας  
ἀστέρων,  
καὶ νύκτα κοσμῶν καὶ  
στολιζῶν ἡμέραν <...>

ջերմութիւն, զի ջերմոցից  
բոցոյն հեղումն ի ներքս  
էղեցելովքն հիւթովք  
խոնաւեցուցէ, որպէս զի  
լիցի խառնումն ինչ որպէս  
յամուսնութեան: <...>  
Ի մի կամս գուգափչման  
մարտին, որպէս զի  
յայնմհետէ հասարակաց  
գոյ նոցա գրնթացն և  
գտովորականս կատարել  
գալաշտամունս: Եւ ումեմն  
գործ օրադէ մանելով  
նիւթ նորք գտորնաք  
շնչոյ կենցաղոյս: Իսկ այլ  
սմն ագրունս հրոյ նիւթելով  
անկտրելիս, պատմուճանս  
հենեալ անկանի ար ի  
ջերմուցանել գրնութիւնս:

բոցոյն հեղումն և լինի  
խառնումն ընդանութեան  
ներհանց ևութեանց,  
որպէսզի հասարակաց  
ընթացիք պաշտպանեացն  
արարածոցս, զի սմն գալա  
գիծին որպէս գառէջ սմանէ  
նորք և այլ սմն հրային  
ազդամբ գնոյն յարմարեալ  
պատմուճան գեցուցանեն  
կենդանեաց, որպէս  
որդեկաց գտորնաք շնչոյն  
կենդանութեան:

Բուրաստան տնկեալ  
աստեղաց բազմաց, զգիշեր  
գարդարեցուցեալ <...>

Իսկ աստերք իբրև  
գրորաստան իսն  
տնկեալ ի յերկինս զգիշեր  
գարդարեն և խիտ ընդ  
խիտ միմեանց կացեալ  
զհայեցուածս տեսողացն  
գուարձացուցանեն:

<sup>13</sup> In the *New Dictionary of the Armenian Language* [NBHL (1): 6; s. v. ագրն] this passage from Nersēs Lambronats'ı is quoted with the correct reading ագրամբ instead of ազդամբ.

ἢ τίς τὸν αὐτὸν εὐσυνόπτως  
 ὅστέρα,  
 καὶ φωσφόρον γνοῖς καὶ  
 σκοπίαςας ἔσπερον,  
 οὐκ οἶδεν αὐτὸν ἐργάτην  
 διπλοδρόμον,  
 κήρυκα νυκτὸς καὶ προφήτην  
 ἡμέρας:

Կամ ո՞վ գնդն  
 գեղեցկատեսիլ ասող  
 լուսաբեր ծանուցեալ  
 մթացուցեալ երեկ, եւ  
 ոչ ծանիցէ գնա մշակ  
 երկնրնթաց քարոզ զիշերի և  
 մարգարէ տուեցեան:

Իսկ մուրրականքն ի նոցանէ  
 անուանեալք ի մեջ բազմացն  
 հանապազորոյ ընթացիքն  
 շրջին, եւ որպէս քարոզ  
 թագաւորի ի մեջ զարաց  
 զիրամանս Արարչին  
 Աստուծոյ անբարբառ  
 հնչմամբ աղաղակէն:

The first passage, in particular, illustrates one of the distinctive features of Nersēs Lambronats‘i’s commentary: he interwove the sources at his disposal. Often, quotations from one author may be supplemented with words from another. So, the Armenian translation of *Hexaem.* 140 “taking the stars as bright pearls” (առեսալ մարգարիս պայծառ զաստեղս) corresponds in Nersēs Lambronats‘i’s text to “spread across, designing stars as a string of pearls” (որպէս շարս մարգարսի նկարակերտեսալ զաստեղս). The verb “to design”, which Nersēs Lambronats‘i added to George of Pisidia’s phrase, is found in one of the hymns of his teacher Nersēs Shnorhali: Լուսինն նկարակերտի և աստեղք արեգակնաւանն (The moon designs, and the stars become the sun) [NBHL (2): 429]. As a noun, “designing” (նկարակերտ) is found in the Armenian Bible (*Exodus* 38:23, *Job* 38:36) and in the translation of Philo’s *De Providentia I* [Awergean 1822: 58], although the latter passage is not included in the *NBHL* entry.

When Fr. Jakobos Tashean first suggested in 1901 that Nersēs Lambronats‘i knew and used George of Pisidia’s *Hexaemeron*, he did not have the full text of the Commentary on the Psalms at his disposal. His argument was based on a single quotation from the *New Dictionary of the Armenian Language* [NBHL (1): 1085; s. v. կենդանախարուկեալ, “ignited by living fire”]: “only one example is enough to prove it” [Tashean 1901: 382]<sup>14</sup>. A complete examination of Nersēs Lambronats‘i’s commentary (unfortunately still unpublished) confirms this brilliant conjecture with numerous examples, only some of which were cited above. As is well known, George of Pisidia’s work occupied a special place in Armenian translated literature and inspired a number of authors (Anania Narekats‘i, Grigor Narekats‘i, Nersēs Shnorhali, Vardan Arevelts‘i). Nersēs Lambronats‘i should be added to their list.

<sup>14</sup> Here is the passage: Ո՞ր որ զաղաւտ ջահն լուսնի յարեգական հրափայլութենէ կենդանախարուկեալ, տուեալ ի նա լոյս (Who is it that, by igniting the dim torch of the moon with the sun’s brilliance, gave it light? *Hexaem.* v. 239–241 Gonnelli = 242–244 Tiroyean) / այլև լուսին, զոր աղաւտ ջահ սնարինեաց արարիչն իշխան լինել զիշերոյ յարեգականն փայլմանէ կենդանախարուկեալ, որ տա ի նա լոյս (And the moon, which the Creator appointed as a dim torch to rule the night ignited with the brilliance of the sun that gives it light... — Nersēs Lambronats‘i’s Commentary on the Psalms, MM 1526, f. 793’).

## Abbreviations

NBHL = Awetik'ean, G., Siwrmēlean, Kh., & Awgerean, M. (1836–1837). *Nor Bargirk' Haykazean lezui* [New dictionary of the Armenian language] (Vols. 1–2). I Tparani Srboyn Ghazaru. (In Ancient Armenian).

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