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THE HOMILY “ON FASTING” BY RĒTU‘A HAYMANOT (CAE 6587). EDITION AND TRANSLATION²

INTRODUCTION

This article provides an editio princeps and a translation of the homily “On fasting” by Rētu‘a Haymanot (CAe 6587³). In addition to providing the critical text and translation, some hypotheses regarding its author, together with some elements of its content, will also be discussed.

THE MANUSCRIPTS

Three Gə‘əz manuscripts collectively referred to as *codices trigemini*⁴, EMMML 1763, EMMML 8509, and BritLib Orient. 8192 have long been objects of inte-

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3 Whenever possible, I provide text IDs according to the Clavis Aethiopica (CAe), a repertory of textual units attested in Gə‘əz literature that have been developed within the digital research environment Beta maṣāḥəft. It allows one to refer univocally to a specific text with its CAe number. All textual units can be found at <https://betamasasheft.eu/works/list>.

4 According to Bausi (2019: 67), this concept was introduced in Proverbio 2001: 518. It stresses the antiquity (by Ethiopian standards) of the three codices, as well as both the similarity and uniqueness of their contents. It must be taken into account that the manuscript EMMML 8509 is, as of today, not accessible to scholars and our main source on it is a rather dated article (Sergew 1988).

rest to scholars of Ethiopian literature⁵. They can all be dated to the first half of the 14th century (EMML 1763 with certainty due to the colophon, whereas the other two rely on their palaeographical features).

The codices contain homilies arranged according to the liturgical calendar of the Ethiopian Church. Homilies written by patristic authors (such as John Chrysostom, Jacob of Sarug, and Ephrem the Syrian) appear in these codices alongside texts attributed to Ethiopian authors; however, unfortunately, none of these can be identified with certainty. Their importance for the study of Gə'əz literature cannot be overstated, precisely because they preserve some of the earliest (if not the earliest) testimonies of indigenous Ethiopian theological writing.

THE AUTHOR

The three above mentioned manuscripts preserve a number of homilies attributed to an author using the pen name Rətu'ā Haymanot. They are as follows, listed in the order in which they appear in EMML 1763:

- On John the Baptist (CAe 6600): EMML 1763 f. 3r–9v, BnF d'Abb. 54 f. 110r–117r, EMML 8509 f. 1ra–4b, MS Eth. Windsor 2 f. 33r–51v, Ms. Lucchesi 2, f. 16ra–24rb
- On the two Sabbaths (CAe 1269): EMML 1763 f. 37v–48v, Berlin SBB 41 f. 71r–88v, Vat. Borg. aeth. 2 f. 177r–185v, EMML 8509 f. 164ra–171va
- For the Nativity (CAe 6550): EMML 1763 f. 90v–96v, EMML 8509 f. 30rb–34vb
- On St. Stephen (CAe 6579): EMML 1763 f. 106r–110r, EMML 8509 f. 39va–42va
- For Epiphany (CAe 6580): EMML 1763, f. 114v–121v, EMML 8509 f. 45ra–50ra
- For the Sunday in Lent (CAe 6582): EMML 1763 f. 139v–148v, BritLib Orient. 8192 f. 5v–17v, EMML 8509 f. 59ra–62vb
- On fasting (CAe 6587): EMML 1763 f. 162r–164r, BritLib Orient. 8192 f. 31v–34r, EMML 8509 f. 71ra–73ra
- For the Palm Sunday (CAe 6588): EMML 1763 f. 182r–184v, BritLib Orient. 8192 f. 46r–50r, EMML 8509 f. 80vb–82va
- For Easter (CAe 6589): EMML 1763 f. 190r–199r, BritLib Orient. 8192 f. 56v–69r, EMML 8509 f. 87ra–91rb

5 For the catalogue descriptions, see Getatchew 1981: 218–231 (for EMML 1763) and Strelcyn 1977: 89–91 (for BritLib Orient. 8192).

- For the Ascension (CAe 6590): EMLL 1763, f. 240v–245v, EMLL 8509 f. 118vb-124rb
- For Pentecost (CAe 6585): EMLL 1763 f. 247r–258r, BritLib Orient. 8192 f. 99r–107, 113r–119v, EMLL 8509 f. 126ra-133rb
- For the commemoration of the assembly of the Saints that occurs in Nāḥase and on the 28th of Ṭərr (CAe 6586): EMLL 1763 f. 264v–268r, EMLL 8509 f. 146ra-151ra
- On St. Mary (CAe 6583): EMLL 1763 f. 268r–270v, BritLib Orient. 8192, f. 136r-140r

Of these, only the “Homily on the two Sabbaths” has to date been the subject of a critical study (Lusini 1988), and none have been critically edited. As can be seen from the above list, the homilies cover some of the most important occasions in the liturgical year.

The identity of the author of the homily still remains elusive at this time. This is largely due to two facts. Firstly, Rətu‘a Haymanot is a precise calque-like translation of the Greek ὁρθόδοξος, and as such, is an epithet attributed to many religious figures, both Ethiopian and foreign. Secondly, Ethiopian authors who, for one reason or another, chose not to disclose their identity, would use this epithet as a pen name.

Getatchew Haile, who has devoted much attention to disentangling the problem of the identity of numerous authors using the pen name Rətu‘a Haymanot, concluded in relation to the author of the homilies preserved in EMLL 1763 etc., that he “flourished during the Aksumite period⁶” (Getatchew 2010: 382). The author of the only edition of one of his texts suggests that he was a “personalità di spicco della Chiesa etiopica del suo tempo” (Lusini 1988: 209).

There should, however, be no doubt that whoever wrote this homily was an Ethiopian and that the homily is an original composition, not a translation. This is also evident in the language of the homily because it is devoid of any traces that might suggest a foreign-language Vorlage (syntactic calques, transcriptions of non-native words, etc.).

6 This time span covers the period from the adoption of Christianity by the rulers of the city-state Aksum in today’s northern Ethiopia in the first half of the 3rd century until its demise in the 7th century. After the decline of Aksum, the production of new texts and the reworking of those already existing was resumed only after the year 1270.

THE HOMILY

The contents of the homily are perhaps not of supreme importance, but the subject matter is certainly not irrelevant. As is well known, fasting plays an important role in the spirituality of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians (see, e.g., Fritsch 2000: 107-111), and this homily may well be the first indigenous Ethiopian text to address the theological issues related to fasting⁷. The author provides some biblical examples of the benefits of fasting and admonishes that proper Christian fasting is not only about abstaining from food but also about moral conduct and sexual purity.

PRINCIPLES OF THE EDITION

The methodology of editing Gəʻəz has undergone a long evolution (for a useful summary, see Bausi 2016). In the case of the homily “On fasting”, the editorial technique has been chosen on the premises that a) the text has reached us from just two witnesses, which b) come from roughly the same time, and c) display little variation.

As a rule, I have reproduced the text of EMMML 1763. However, when the readings of BritLib Orient. 8192 were judged as being more correct, they were incorporated into the main text. The spelling of Gəʻəz has been normalized according to August Dillmann’s *Lexicon linguae aethiopicae*. Regular, though also non-standard, spellings not accounted for in the apparatus are: ኢኃወ: for ኢኅወ: (AB); ኣኮ: for ኣኮ: (A); ሰዐት: for ሰዓት: (A); ኃበ: for ኅበ: (B).

ON THE TRANSLATION

The English translation follows the Gəʻəz original as closely as possible, even at the expense of the elegance of the language.

I render ኢጣሊኣብሔር: as “the Lord” and ኢምላክ: as “God”.

The frequently occurring word ጸም: is translated as either “fast” or “fasting”.

Proper names are given in their anglicized form, since they all refer to well-known biblical personages.

The division into numbered paragraphs has been introduced by the editor to facilitate the reading of and comparison between the original and the translation.

7 It might be interesting to reflect on what normative texts concerning fasting were circulating in Ethiopia before the first half of the 14th century (which, as already stated, is the terminus ante quem of our homily). Certainly, at this time an Ethiopian translation of *Traditio apostolica* (CAe 2478) already existed. Regulations concerning fasting are found in paragraphs 19, 30 and 37. Cf. Bausi 2011.

EDITION

A EMMML 1763, f. 162r–164r

B BritLib Orient. 8192 f. 31v–34r

[1] [A162r][B31v]ድርሳን፡ ዘርቱ፡ ሃይማኖት፡ ዘበእንተ፡ ጸም፡ ሞገሱ፡ ለእግዚእነ፡ ወመድኅነት⁸፡
ኢየሱስ፡ ከርስቶስ፡ ወፍቅረ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወትድምርተ፡ መንፈስ፡ ቅዱስ፡ የሀሉ፡ ምስለ፡ ኩልከሙ⁹።

[2] አኅዊነ፡ ፍቁራን፡ ዘታአምሩ፡ ንዜንወክሙ፡ ወንዜክረከሙ¹⁰፡ በእንተ፡ እላንቱ፡ መዋዕል፡ ቅዱሳት፡
አጽዋሙ፡ ፋሲካ፡ ንዑ፡ አንትሙ¹¹፡ አኅዊነ፡ ንስምዖ፡ ለብፁዕ፡ ዳዊት፡ እንዘ፡ ይብል፡ [A162v]ተቀነቶ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡
በፍርሀት፡ ወተሐሠቶ፡ ሎቱ፡ በረዓድ፡ ወነያ¹²፡ ዕለተ፡ መድኅነት¹³፡ ወጊዜ፡ ሥምረት፡ በጽሐ፡ ቅዱስ፡ አጽዋሙ፡ ፋሲካ፡
ፍቅዱ፡ እንከ፡ አንትሙ¹⁴፡ አኅዊነ፡ በጸም፡ ወበጸሎት፡ ታስተበቀኅዎ¹⁵፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ እንዘ፡ ትብሉ፡ ምርሐኒ፡
እግዚአ፡ ፍኖተ፡ እንተ፡ ባቲ፡ አሐውር፡ እስመ፡ ኅቤከ፡ አንቃዕዶኩ፡ ነፍሱየ፡ ወፍቅዱ፡ እንከ፡ አኅዊነ፡ ከሙ፡ ተሀሉ፡
ነፍስከሙ፡ ኅባ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወጸሙ፡ ዘምስለ፡ ጸሎት¹⁶፡ ወስእለት።

[3] ወትፈቅዱኑ፡ እንግርክሙ፡ ኅይላ፡ ለጸም፡ ብፁዕ¹⁷፡ ሙሴ፡ ጸዊሞ፡ ፍቁረ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ተሰምዖ፡
ወሕገ፡ እምኅቤሁ፡ ተመጠወ፡ ወብፁዕ፡ ኤልያስ፡ ጸዊሞ፡ እሳተ፡ እምሰማይ፡ አውረደ፡ ወአውዐዮሙ፡ ለአማልክተ፡
ግብት፡ ወቅዱሳን፡ ሠለስቱ፡ ደቂቅ፡ ጸዊሞሙ፡ አሙ፡ ይወድይዎሙ፡ ውስተ፡ እቶነ፡ እሳት፡ ሜጠ¹⁸፡ እሳት፡ ፍጥረቶ፡
ወገብእ፡ ከሙ፡ ነፋስ፡ ቈሪር፡ በትእዛዘ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወብፁዕ¹⁹፡ ዳንኤል፡ ጸዊሞ²⁰፡ ወጸሊዮ፡ አሙ፡ ይወድይዎ፡
ው[B32r]ስተ፡ ግባ፡ አናብስት፡ ለአናብስትኒ፡ መሀሮሙ፡ ጸዊሞ፡ እስመ፡ አናብስትኒ፡ ጸሙ፡ ኢዕለተ፡ ወኢሌሊተ፡
ኢበልዑ፡ እንዘ፡ ሀሉ፡ ዳንኤል፡ ኅቤሆሙ²¹፡ ኢበልዕዎ²²፡ በትእዛዘ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወብፁዕ²³፡ ዮሐንስ፡ መጥምቅ፡
ጸዊሞ²⁴፡ ጸገዎ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ጸጋ²⁵፡ ወይቤ፡ ኢተወልደ፡ እምአንስት፡ ዘየዐቢዮ፡ ለዮሐንስ፡ መጥምቅ።

8 om. A

9 ምስለ፡ ኩልከሙ።]ምስሌከሙ፡ A

10 ንዜንወክሙ፡ ወንዜክረከሙ።] ንዜንክረከሙ፡ A

11 አንትሙኒ፡ B

12 ወነዋ፡ B

13 መድኅነት፡ B

14 አንትሙኒ፡ B

15 ታስተበቀኅዎ፡ A

16 ጸሎት፡ ወስእለት፡] ስእለት፡ ወጸሎት፡ B

17 ወብፁዕ፡ B

18 ሜጠ፡ እሳት፡ ፍጥረቶ፡] ሜጠ፡ እሳተ፡ ፍጥረቱ፡ B

19 ወብፁዕ፡ B

20 ጸዊሞ፡ ወጸሊዮ፡] om. B

21 ምስሌሆሙ፡ B

22 ወኢበልዕዎ፡ B

23 ወብፁዕኒ፡ B

24 om. A

25 ጸጋ፡ ጸዊሞ፡ A

[4] ርእዩ፡ አኅዊነ፡ ኅይላ፡ ለጾም፡ እንተ፡ ምስለ፡ ጸሎት፡ ወምጽዋት፡ ወዘንተ²⁶፡ ይቤ፡ እግዚእነ፡ በወንጌል፡ ወእንተሰ፡ ሰባ፡ ትጾውም፡ ኅፅብ፡ ገጸከ፡ ወዘ²⁷፡ ዘይቤ፡ ኅፅብ፡ ገጸከ፡ ከመ፡ ኢንጾም፡ ለገጸ፡ ሰብእ፡ ወንኅሥሥ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ ወዘኒ፡ ሰአልነ፡ ንነሥእ፡ በኅቤሁ፡ ወዘ፡ ውእቱ፡ ተኅፅቦ፡ ገጸ፡ ከመ፡ ትርከቡ²⁸፡ ግህደተ፡ በኅብ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ በጾም፡ ወበጸሎት፡ እንዘ፡ ትትመሀለሉ፡ ቅድሜሁ፡ በአዕይንተ²⁹፡ ልብክሙ፡ ወርእዮ፡ ምግባራቲነ፡ ይምሕረነ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወአርእየክሙ፡ አኅዊየ፡ ምንት፡ ውእቱ፡ ምሕረቱ፡ ንስም³⁰፡ ለእግዚእነ፡ እንዘ፡ ይብል፡ ዘገበርክሙ³¹፡ ለአሐዱ፡ እምእሉ፡ ንኡሳን፡ ሊተ፡ ገበርክሙ፡ ትምሕር፡ ለነዳይ³²፡ ወእግዚአብሔር፡ ተለቃሑ፡ ይከውን፡ እምኅቤክ፡ ወዘንቱ፡ ውእቱ፡ መዐዛ³³፡ ሠናይ፡ መዐዛ፡ ዘይከውን፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡

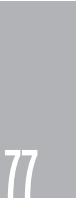
[5] ወካዕብ፡ እነግረክሙ³⁴፡ አኅዊነ፡ ዘከመ፡ ተጸዋዕ[A163r]ክሙ፡ ከመ፡ ኢይኩን፡ ፅሩዐ፡ ጾምከሙ፡ አከመ³⁵፡ ከርሥ፡ ከመ³⁶፡ ዘይጸውም፡ ባሕቲቶ³⁷፡ እሙብል[B32v]ዕ፡ አላ፡ ኢዳዊክሙኒ፡ ይጾም³⁸፡ እምከሉ፡ ግብር³⁹፡ እኩይ፡ አላ፡ ይሰፍሐ፡ ለጸሎት፡ ወለምሒረ⁴⁰፡ ነዳይ፡ ወእገሪክሙ⁴¹፡ ይጾም⁴²፡ ከመ፡ ኢይሩጽ⁴³፡ ለከዒወ፡ ደም፡ ወአዕይንቲክሙ⁴⁴፡ ይጾማ፡ ከመ፡ ኢይርአዮ፡ ከንቶ፡ ወከመዛ⁴⁵፡ አጾሙ፡ ከሎ፡ መለያልየክሙ⁴⁶፡ ከመ፡ ይኩን፡ ሥሙረ፡ ምግባሪክሙ፡ በኅብ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡

26 ወዘንተ፡ ይቤ፡] ወዘይቤ፡ B
 27 ወዘ፡ ዘይቤ፡ ኅፅብ፡ ገጸከ፡] om. A
 28 ትርከብ፡ B
 29 በአዕይንተ፡ ልብክሙ፡] በአዕይንት፡ ልብክሙ፡ B
 30 ስምዕም፡ B
 31 ዘገበርክሙ፡ A
 32 ለነይ፡ B
 33 om. B
 34 ንነግረክሙ፡ B
 35 ወአከመ፡ B
 36 ከመ፡ ዘይጸውም፡] om. A
 37 ባሕቲቱ፡ B
 38 ይጾማ፡ B
 39 ገብረ፡ B
 40 ወለሞሒረ፡ B
 41 እገሪክሙኒ፡ B
 42 ይጾማ፡ B
 43 ኢይሩጽ፡ B
 44 ወአዕይንቲክሙኒ፡ B
 45 ወከመዛ፡ አጾሙ፡]ወከመዛ፡ ጾሙ፡ B
 46 መለያልየክሙ፡ B

[6] ወእለሰ፡ ኢያጸውሙ⁴⁷፡ ከመዝ፡ መላዖልዮሙ⁴⁸፡ ዘእንበለ፡ ዳእሎ፡ ከርሃሙ፡ ባሕተቶ⁴⁹፡ እሙበልዕ፡ ኢይሰምዖም፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ወፅሩዕ⁵⁰፡ ይከውን⁵¹፡ ጸሞሙ፡ ወከንቶ፡ ይጸውሙ⁵²፡ ወከመዝ፡ ይብሉ፡ በእፎ፡ ጸምነሂ፡ ወኢርኢከነ⁵³፡ ወአሕመምነ፡ ነፍሱን⁵⁴፡ ወኢያእመርከነ፡ ወይቤሎሙ፡ እግዚአብሔር⁵⁵፡ አኮ፡ ዘንተ፡ ጸመ፡ ዘኅረይኩ፡ እስመ፡ አመ፡ ትጸውሙ፡ ትገብሩ፡ ፈቃደክሙ፡ ወትትላኩዎዩ፡ ወታግዕሩ፡ ነዳዩ⁵⁶፡ ወትትዔገሉ፡ ምስኪና⁵⁷፡ ወትዘብጡ፡ ወታኣወይወ፡ አኮኬ፡ ዘንተ፡ ጸመ፡ ዘኅረይኩ፡ ወአኮ፡ ከመ፡ ዛቲ፡ ዕለት፡ ዘያሐምም፡ ነፍሱ፡ ሰብእ፡ ወኢእመ፡ አቀሃጠጠ፡ ክሳዶ፡ ከመ፡ ሕልቀት፡ ወሰከበ፡ ውሰተ፡ ሠቕ፡ ወሐመድ፡ ኢኮነ፡ ሥሙ⁵⁸፡ በኅበ⁵⁹፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ዝንቱ⁶⁰፡ ጸም፡ ወአኮ፡ ዘንተ፡ ጸመ፡ ዘኅረይኩ፡ አነ፡ ይቤ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ዳእሎ፡ ፍታሕ፡ መአሰረ፡ ዐመ፡ ወዕርቕ፡ ወአርትዕ፡ ከሎ፡ ጠዋዩ፡ ወባልሕ፡ ከሎ፡ ምንዶብ፡ ወአጽግብ⁶¹፡ ርኅብ፡ እምእክልከ፡ ወእመ⁶²፡ ርኢከ፡ ዕሩቀ፡ አልብሰ⁶³፡ ወይገውሕ፡ ሰቤሃ፡ አልባሲከ⁶⁴፡ ወይሠርቕ፡ ፍጡን⁶⁵፡ ብርሃንከ፡ ወየሐውር፡ ጽድ[B333]ቅከ፡ ቅድመ፡ ገጽከ፡ ወሰብሐተ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ይከድነከ፡ ሰቤሃኬ⁶⁶፡ ይሰምዐከ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ በጊዜ⁶⁷፡ አውየውከ፡

[7] ርእዩኬ፡ አኅዊነ፡ ዘከመ፡ ጸሙ፡ አበው⁶⁸፡ ቅዱሳን፡ ወአሥመርዖ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ ወአንትሙኒ⁶⁹፡ ተመሰልዎሙ፡ ለእሉ፡ በአሚን⁷⁰፡ ወትልወ፡ ኢሥሮሙ⁷¹፡ እስመ፡ ይብል⁷²፡ ጳውሎስኒ፡ ተመሰልዎሙ፡ ለእሉ፡ በአሚን፡ ወበትዕግሥት፡ ወረሱ፡ ተስፋሆሙ፡ ወአንትሙኒ፡ ፍቁራንዮ፡ ኢሕምምዖ፡ ለነፍሱክሙ፡ እስመ፡ ይቤ፡ በብዙኅ፡

47 ኢያጸውሙ፡ B
 48 om. B
 49 ባሕተቱ፡ B
 50 ወፅሩዕ፡ B
 51 om. A
 52 ወከንቶ፡ ይጸውሙ፡] om. A
 53 ወኢሰማዕከነ፡ A
 54 ነፍሱ፡ B
 55 om. B
 56 ነዳዩ[ነ]፡ B
 57 om. A
 58 ኅሩቁ፡ B
 59 በቅድመ፡ B
 60 ዝንቱ፡ ጸም፡] before በኅበ፡ B
 61 ወአጽግብ፡ ርኅብ፡] ወአጽግብ፡ ለርኅብ፡ B
 62 ወለእመ፡ B
 63 አልብሰ፡ B
 64 ብርሃንከ፡ and አልባሲከ፡ interchanged in A
 65 after ብርሃንከ፡ B
 66 ወሰቤሃ፡ B
 67 ጊዜ፡ B
 68 አበው፡ ቅዱሳን፡]ቅዱሳን፡ አበው፡ B
 69 ወአንትሙኒ፡ B
 70 ለእሉ፡ በአሚን፡] om. A
 71 አሰሮሙ፡ B
 72 ይቤ፡ B



ሕማም፡ [A163v] ሀለወነ፡ ንባእ፡ ለመንግሥተ፡ እግዚአብሔር። ዝውእቱ⁷³፡ ሕማም፡ ለዝ፡ ዓለም፡ ከመ፡ ኢትግብሩ፡ ፈቓደ፡ ሥጋከሙ፡ እስመ፡ ዓለሙኒ፡ የኅልፍ፡ ወፍትወቱኒ፡ ወዘሰ፡ ይገብር፡ ፈቓደ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ይነብር፡ ለዓለም። ወኢጥርስኒ፡ ይቤ፡ ኅዳጣ⁷⁴፡ ሐሚመክሙ⁷⁵፡ ውእቱ፡ ይፌጽም⁷⁶፡ ለክሙ፡ ወያጸንዐክሙ፡ ወያሌብወክሙ።

[8] ወርእዩ፡ አኅዊነ፡ ከመ፡ ኅዳጥ፡ እማንቱ፡ ኩሉ⁷⁷፡ መዋዕሊን፡ ዘነሐዩ፡ ውስተ፡ ምድር፡ እምሕይወት፡ ዘነሐዩ፡ ውስተ፡ መንግሥተ፡ ሰማያት። አርእየክሙ⁷⁸፡ እንከ፡ ተጋደሉ፡ አኅዊነ፡ ኣሐተ፡ ሰዓተ፡ ከመ፡ ትረሱ⁷⁹፡ ሕይወተ፡ ዘለዓለም። እስመ፡ ይብል፡ ሕማምክሙ፡ ዘለሰዓት፡ ኩብረ፡ ወሰብሐተ፡ ይገብር፡ ለክሙ⁸⁰። ወርእዩ፡ አኅዊነ፡ ሰዓቱ፡ ⁸¹፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ ፲፯⁸²፡ ዓመት፡ በቅድሚኡ፡ ከመ፡ ዕለት፡ እንተ፡ ትማልም፡ ኅለፈት፡ ወሰዓተ፡ ሌሊት። ወርእዩ⁸³፡ አኅዊነ፡ ከመ፡ ኅዳጣት⁸⁴፡ እማንቱ፡ መዋዕሊን፡ [B33v] እስመ፡ አልቦ⁸⁵፡ ዝዩ፡ ዘየሐዩ፡ ወአልቦ፡ ዘሐይወ፡ ወኢመኑሂ፡ ሰብእ፡ ኣሐተ፡ ዕለቶ⁸⁶፡ ለእግዚአብሔር።

[9] ወካዕባ፡ ንነግረክሙ⁸⁷፡ አኅዊነ፡ አንጽሑ፡ ርእሰክሙ፡ በእላንቱ⁸⁸፡ መዋዕል፡ ኅዳጣት⁸⁹፡ እስመ፡ ይቤ፡ አንጽሑ፡ ርእሰክሙ፡ ለጌሰም፡ እስመ⁹⁰፡ ጌሰም፡ ይገብር፡ ለክሙ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ መድምሙ። እስመ፡ አመ፡ ይቀርብ፡ ሰብእ⁹¹፡ ይባእ፡ ኅብ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ያንጽሕ፡ ርእሶ፡ እምአንስት፡ ወከመዘ፡ ሰበኩ፡ ለነ፡ ቅዱሳት⁹²፡ መጻሕፍት። ወከማሁ፡ አንትሙኒ⁹³፡ እለኒ⁹⁴፡ ብክሙ⁹⁵፡ አንስተ፡ እሱራን፡ በሰብሳብ፡ አንጽሑ፡ ርእሰክሙ፡ ታስተርክቡ፡ ለጸሎትክሙ። ወእለሂ፡ አልብክሙ፡ ሰብሳብ⁹⁶፡ አንጽሑ፡ ርእሰክሙ፡ እምዝሙት፡ ወአስተርክቡ፡ ለጸሎትክሙ።

73 ወዝውእቱ፡ B
 74 ዘሌሎዳጥ፡ B
 75 ሕማምክሙ፡ B
 76 ዘይፌጽም፡ B
 77 አማንቱ፡ ኩሉ፡] ውእቱ፡ A
 78 ርእየክሙ፡ A
 79 ትርክቡ፡ B
 80 ይቤ፡ add. B
 81 ሰሐቶ፡ A
 82 ዓሥርቱ፡ ምእት፡ B
 83 ርእዩ፡ B
 84 ሕዳጥ፡ B
 85 አልቦ፡ ዝዩ፡ ዘየሐዩ፡ ወአልቦ፡ ዘሐይወ፡ ወኢመኑሂ፡ ሰብእ፡] አልቦ፡ ሰብእ፡ ዘሐይወ፡ ወኢመኑሂ፡ B
 86 ዕለቱ፡ B
 87 ኢነግረክሙ፡ B
 88 በእላቱ፡ A
 89 ሕዳጣን፡ B
 90 እስመ፡ ጌሥመ፡] om. B
 91 after ርእሶ፡ B
 92 ቅዱሳት፡ B
 93 አንትሙኒ፡ B
 94 እለ፡ B
 95 ብክሙ፡ አንስተ፡] om. B
 96 አንትሙኒ፡ add. B

[10] ወካዕበ፡ ሰበ፡ ትጾልዩ፡ አኅዊነ፡ ወትኅግሩ፡ ስእለተክሙ፡ ኅበ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ ኅድጉ፡ አበሳ⁹⁷፡ ለቢጽክሙ፡ ዘተሐይስዎሙ፡ እምልብክሙ፡ አኮ⁹⁸፡ በከናፍር፡ አላ፡ እምልብክሙ። በከመ፡ አዘዘነ፡ እግዚእነ፡ ከመ፡ ውእቱኒ፡ ይኅድግ፡ ለነ፡ አበሳነ፡ ወጌጋዩነ። ወእመሰ፡ ኢኅደግነ፡ ለዘ፡ አበሰ⁹⁹፡ ለነ፡ ለነኒ፡ ኢዮኅድግ፡ ለነ፡ አበሳነ። ኅድጉ፡ እንከ፡ አበሳ፡ ለቢጽክሙ¹⁰⁰፡ ከመ፡ ንጹሐ፡ አ[164፣17]ምኃ፡ ታብኡ፡ ለእግዚአብሔር፡ ፍሬ፡ ከናፍሪክሙ፡ በጸሎት፡ ወስኢል፡ ኅበ፡ ኅኔ¹⁰¹፡ እምላክ፡ እስመ፡ ማዕተቦ፡ ኅደገ¹⁰²፡ ለከሙ፡ ከመ፡ ትትልወ፡ አሠረ¹⁰³፡ ዚአሁ፡ በከመ፡ ውእቱ፡ ኢጉብረ፡ ኅጢአተ፡ ወኢተረክበ፡ ሐሰት¹⁰⁴፡ ውስተ፡ አፉሁ። ወእንዘ፡ ይዩእልዎ፡ ኢፀአለ፡ ወእንዘ፡ ያሐምምዎ¹⁰⁵፡ ኢተቀየመ¹⁰⁶፡ ዳእሙ፡ ኅደጎሙ፡ እስመ¹⁰⁷፡ መከግን፡ ጽድቅ። ወከማሁ፡ አንትሙኒ¹⁰⁸፡ [B34፣1] ተመስልዎ፡ አኅዊነ፡ ለእግዚእነ፡ በሕማሙ፡ በከመ፡ ጸሐፍ። እመሰ፡ ዐረይነ፡ ሕማሙ፡ ንዔሪ፡ ክብረኒ¹⁰⁹፡ ወባሕቱ፡ ሐልይዎ፡ ለዛቲኒ፡ አኅዊነ፡ እስመ¹¹⁰፡ ኢኮነ፡ መጠነ፡ ሤጣ፡ ለእንታክተ፡ ክብር፡ ወስብሐት፡ እንተ፡ ለዓለም¹¹¹፡ ሕማሙ፡ ለዘ¹¹²፡ ዓለም።

[11] ጹሙ፡ እንከ፡ ወተጋደሉ፡ አኅዊነ፡ ወጽንዑ፡ በእግዚእነ፡ ወበጽንዑ፡ ኅይሉ፡ ወልበሱ፡ ወልታ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ በዘ፡ ትክሉ፡ ተቃወሞ¹¹³፡ ለመናግንተ¹¹⁴፡ ሰይጣን፡ እስመ፡ ሰይጣን፡ ፀርክሙ፡ ውእቱ፡ ከመ፡ አንበሳ፡ ይጥሕር፡ ወይመሥጥ፡ ወዮኅሥሥ¹¹⁵፡ እመቦ፡ ዘይረክብ¹¹⁶፡ ዘይውኅጥ፡ አጽንዑ፡ ቀዊመ፡ በሃይማኖት¹¹⁷፡ ወእግዚአብሔር፡ ይቀጥቅጦ፡ ለሰይጣን፡ ፍጡነ፡ በታሕተ¹¹⁸፡ እገሪክሙ፡ ወለክሙሰ፡ መዊእ፡ ወትዕግሥተ፡ ጸጋሁ፡ ለእግዚእነ፡ ኢዮሱስ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ የሀሉ¹¹⁹፡ ምስለ፡ ኩልክሙ፡ ለዓለመ፡ ዓለም¹²⁰፡ አሜን።

97 om. B

98 አኮ፡ በከናፍር፡ አላ፡ እምልብክሙ፡] om. B

99 ዘአበሱ፡ B

100 ቢጽክሙ፡ A

101 om. B

102 ዮኅድግ፡ B

103 በአሰረ፡ B

104 ሐሰተ፡ B

105 ዩሐምምዎ፡ B

106 ኢተቀየሞሙ፡ B

107 om. B

108 አንትሙኒ፡ B

109 ኩብረኒ፡ B

110 ከመ፡ B

111 እንተ፡ ለዓለም፡] om. A

112 ለዘ፡ B

113 አጥፍኦቶ፡ B

114 ለመናግንተ፡ ሰይጣን፡] ለመናግንተሁ፡ ለሰይጣን፡ B

115 om. B

116 om. B

117 በሃይማኖትክሙ፡ B

118 ታሕተ፡ B

119 om. A

120 ለዓለመ፡ ዓለም፡] om. A

TRANSLATION

[1] Homily by the Orthodox concerning fasting¹²¹. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Lord and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

[2] Our beloved brothers¹²², I announce to you and remind you what you [already] know concerning the holy days, the Easter fast. Come brothers so that we can listen to what the blessed David says: „Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling”¹²³. Behold, the day of our salvation and the time of benevolence has come – the Easter fast¹²⁴. Therefore our brothers desire to supplicate to the Lord by prayer and fasting saying: „Guide me, oh Lord, on the road that I am going, for to you my soul looks out”¹²⁵. Desire our brothers that your souls be with the Lord, fast in prayer and supplication.

[3] Do you wish that I tell you the power of fast? The blessed Moses after fasting was named the Lord’s beloved and received the law from him¹²⁶. The blessed Elijah after fasting made fire fall from the sky and burned the new gods¹²⁷. The three holy youths after fasting, when they were thrown into a fiery furnace, the fire changed its character and returned like a cold wind by the order of the Lord¹²⁸. The blessed Daniel after fasting and praying, when he was thrown into the lions’ den, he taught the lions to fast, for the lions fasted, they did not eat nor during the day nor in the night when Daniel was among them and they did not eat him by the order of the Lord¹²⁹. The blessed John the Baptist after fasting, the Lord granted him grace and said: “Nobody was born from a woman who is greater than John the Baptist”¹³⁰.

[4] Observe our brothers the power of fasting which is together with pray-

121 According to the indications in the three manuscripts, the homily is designed to be read on the fourth Sunday of Lent. The fourth Sunday of the Lent is called, in the Ethiopian tradition, *ዘደብረ፡ ዘይጎ*: “of the Mount of Olives” referring to Matthew 24: 1-35 (Habtemichael 1997: 97). The other text intended for the same day is a homily attributed to John Chrysostom (CAe 6698).

122 I am rendering the frequently occurring phrase *አጎዊ፡* literally as “our brothers”, despite the fact that it may sound somewhat awkward in English. The use of such a form of address may suggest that the homily was written for a monastic audience.

123 Ps. 2:11.

124 Plural in the original

125 Ps. 143:8.

126 Cf. Ex. 34:28, Deut. 9:9.

127 Perhaps an allusion to. 1 Kings 18, although fasting appears only in the subsequent chapter, unrelated to the fire that descended from the sky through Elijah’s prayer.

128 Cf. Dan. 3: 8-100.

129 Cf. Dan. 6: 17-25.

130 Matt. 11:11.

er and almsgiving. This said our Lord in the Gospel: “When you fast, wash your face¹³¹”. What he said “wash your face” is so that we do not fast for the faces of men [but] so that we search the Lord and so that we receive from him what we asked for. This washing of face [is in order that] that you receive courage¹³² with the Lord through fasting and prayer, when supplicating before him with the eyes of your heart. Having seen our deeds, the Lord shall lead us. I am showing you my brothers what mercy is - let us listen to our Lord who says: “Whatever you have done to one of those little ones, you have done to me”¹³³. Show mercy to a poor man and the Lord will be your debtor. This is the holy perfume which belongs to the Lord.

[5] Furthermore I am telling you, our brothers, that you have been summoned so that your fasting is not in vain. Not only your belly fasts from food but also your hands should fast from doing any evil deed, [instead] they should be extended in prayer and showing mercy to the poor. Your legs should fast so as not to run towards bloodshed. Your eyes should fast so that you do not see for nothing and in this way force all your members to fast so that your deed is pleasing to the Lord.

[6] Those who do not make [other] members fast but only their belly from food do not hear the Lord and their fasting is in vain and they fast for nothing. They say thus: “Why [is it that] we fasted and you did not see us? We made our souls suffer and you did not take notice of us”. The Lord replied them: [You do not fast] the fast I have chosen, for when you fast you do according to your will, you quarrel with one another, you cause the poor to moan, you oppress the destitute, you beat [them] and you make [them] wail. It is not the fast that I have chosen and it is not that this day causes suffering to a man’s soul and even if one makes one neck slender as a ring and lies on sackcloth and dust, this fast will not be pleasing to the Lord. [You do not fast] the fast I have chosen, says the Lord. Rather untie the bonds of injustice and business deals and straighten what is crooked, liberate all the tormented and satiate the hungry with your food. And if you see the naked, dress [them] and your clothes shall grow light and your light shall rise quickly and your righteousness shall go before your face and the praise of the Lord shall cover you and then the Lord shall hear you in the time of your misery¹³⁴.

131 Matt. 6: 17.

132 I render ከሙ፡ ትርክቡ፡ ግህደት፡ tentatively as “that you receive courage” through analogy with Sap. 5: 1 where the ጭረ ግህደት፡ is equivalent to the Greek παρρησία. The overall intended message seems to be that fasting and prayer prepares one to confront God.

133 Matt. 25: 40.

134 በጊዜ፡ አውየውኩ፡ The verb used here can be reconstructed as አውየው፡ and it is not attested. I assume it is derived from the exclamation ወይ፡ “woe!” through adding a causative marker አ- and a third syllable ወ.

[7] Observe our brothers how the holy fathers fasted and it pleased the Lord and you should resemble them in faith and follow their traces. For Paul said: “Be similar to those who through faith and endurance inherited their hope”¹³⁵. And you, my beloved, should cause suffering to your souls for he said: “Through much affliction we have entered the kingdom of the Lord”¹³⁶. This is the affliction of this world that you do not do the will of the flesh, for the world will pass and so [will] also its desire. But whoever does the will of the Lord will remain for eternity. Peter said: “That you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”¹³⁷.

[8] Observe our brothers that all the days we live on earth are less numerous than the life we shall live in the Kingdom of Heaven. I am therefore showing you, our brothers: strive for one hour so that you may inherit eternal life. For he says: “Your pain of this hour will bring glory and praise to you”¹³⁸. Observe our brothers, one hour of the Lord is ten thousand hours before you like the day of yesterday passed and the night hour. Observe our brothers that our days are few for no one here will live or has lived one hour of the Lord.

[9] Furthermore we are telling you our brothers, purify yourselves in these few days for he said: “Purify yourselves for tomorrow, as tomorrow the Lord will do a wonder for you”¹³⁹. For when a man draws near to coming back to the Lord he purifies himself from women and thus preach the holy books to us. Likewise you who have wives bound by marriage purify yourselves by paying attention to your prayers. You who are not married purify yourselves from adultery and pay attention to your prayers.

[10] Moreover, when you pray, our brothers, and when you say supplications to the Lord, forgive the transgressions of your fellow men who scold you from your heart, not [only] with lips but from the heart, just like our Lord ordered us, just like he should forgive us our transgressions and trespasses. If we do not forgive those who transgress against us, he will not forgive us our transgressions. Therefore forgive the transgressions of your fellow men so that you may return to the Lord, the good God, with a pure kiss of the fruit of your lips in prayer and supplication. For he left you sealed by the cross, that you may follow his traces, just like he [never] committed sins and there [never] was a lie in his mouth. When they hated him

135 Hebr. 6:12.

136 Acts 14:22.

137 1 Peter 5:10.

138 Not identified, although there is a somewhat similar phrase in James 1:3.

139 Joshua 3:5.

he did not hate, when they caused him pain he did not take vengeance, instead he forgave them, for [he is] the prince of peace. Similarly you, our brothers, be similar to our Lord in his pain, like it is written. If we are equal with the suffering, we will be equal with glory but think about this [glory] our brothers, for there is no measure of price to this glory, for suffering in this world [is] praise for eternity.

[11] Therefore our brothers fast, strive and be strong through our Lord and through the strength of his power, and wear the shield of the Lord, so that through this you may stand against the devices of Satan, for Satan is your enemy and like a lion he will roar and tear [you] in pieces and pursue [you] and whoever he finds he will devour¹⁴⁰. Be strong in standing with faith and the Lord will smash Satan quickly under your feet and to you [there will be] victory and endurance. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all for eternity. Amen.

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140 1 Peter 5:8.

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THE HOMILY “ON FASTING” BY RĒTU‘A HAYMANOT (CAE 6587). EDITION AND TRANSLATION

SUMMARY

This article provides an editio princeps and a translation of a Gə‘əz homily, “On fasting” (CAe 6587), attributed to the author known under the pen name Rətu‘a Haymanot. The edition is based on two manuscript witnesses from the 14th century: EMMML 1763, f. 162r–164r and BritLib Orient. 8192 f. 31v–34r. One can assume that the homily is an indigenous Ethiopian work. The homily focuses on the ethical aspects of Christian fasting and teaches that, in order for the fast to be valid, abstaining from food must be accompanied by proper moral conduct.

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