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An Ethiopic ‘Homily on Peter’ attributed to Ephrem

AARON MICHAEL BUTTS, University of Hamburg, TED ERHO, University of Hamburg and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, and
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In a recent volume, S. P. Brock has edited twenty-five Syriac stanzaic poems (*maḡrāšē* and *soḡyātā*) attributed to the Syriac poet Jacob of Serugh (d.521).¹ Included among these is a *soḡitā* on Peter’s denial of Christ.² An edition of a different recension of the Syriac text was published long ago by T. J. Lamy.³ In the present article, we present an edition, with English translation, of the Ethiopic version of this text, which is attributed to the Syriac poet Ephrem (d.373).⁴

The poem is attested in several medieval West Syriac liturgical manuscripts, including the following:

- MS London, British Library (hereafter: BL), Add. 14,520 (eighth to ninth century), where it is attributed to Ephrem;⁵
- MS London, BL, Add. 17,190 (893), where it is attributed to Jacob of Serugh;⁶
- MS London, BL, Add. 14,506 (ninth to tenth century) and MS London, BL, Add. 14,501 (eleventh century), where it is without attribution;⁷ and

¹ Brock 2022. For Jacob and his thought, see Forness 2018. For the Ethiopic reception of Jacob, see Tedros Abraha 2015, Tedros Abraha 2019; Uhlig 1999, 19; ‘Jacob of Serugh’, *E Ae*, III (2007), 262a–263b (W. Witakowski). Butts and Erho are currently completing a monograph on the Ethiopic reception of Jacob, which focuses on Ethiopic homilies attributed to Jacob that circulate in homiliary and homiletical-hagiographical manuscripts (to be submitted to Brepols for their series *Eastern Christian Cultures in Contact*).

² Brock 2022, 135–157. See also the discussion in Brock 2010a, 48–49.

³ Lamy 1882–1902, IV, cols 737–746.

⁴ For the Ethiopic reception of Ephrem, see the overview in ‘Ephrem’, *E Ae*, II (2005), 331a–332b (S. Weninger). Butts and Erho are in the final stages of preparing an article on Ethiopic homilies attributed to Ephrem.

⁵ Wright 1870–1872, I, 364.

⁶ Wright 1870–1872, I, 112–113.

⁷ Wright 1870–1872, I, 248 and I, 270–271.

- MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter: BnF), Syr. 161 (tenth to eleventh century), where it is without attribution in the main text, but attributed to Balai (d.436) in the margin.⁸

Medieval liturgical manuscripts such as these form the basis for the West Syriac liturgical collection known as the *Fenqitho*.⁹ The text under consideration appears in the Mosul *Fenqitho* attributed to Ephrem, as in MS BL Add. 14,520.¹⁰ Interestingly, the first three stanzas of the text are also found in an East Syriac liturgical collection, the *Hudrā*, where they are anonymous.¹¹

Lamy accepts the attribution of the text to Ephrem.¹² Brock is, however, hesitant of this attribution,¹³ as are we, especially given the different attributions found in the Syriac witnesses combined with the propensity of this tradition to attribute texts to that most esteemed poet. Moreover, as Brock also points out, the text is almost certainly not by Jacob of Serugh, to whom it is attributed in MS BL Add. 17,190, since Jacob explicitly polemicizes in one of his homilies against the idea, conveyed in this poem, that Peter's denial was predestined by Christ's foretelling of it.¹⁴ Most likely, therefore, we are dealing with an anonymous poem subsequently attributed to different authors. This anonymous poem will have existed relatively early in the Syriac tradition, since it is attested in both East and West Syriac transmission.¹⁵

The Syriac witnesses to the poem on Peter's denial of Christ attest sizeable textual variation: not only variants at the word or even phrase level, but differing numbers of stanzas in varying sequences. A comprehensive study of the Syriac

⁸ Zotenberg 1874, 116.

⁹ For texts in later liturgical collections that are attributed to Ephrem, see Brock 1997, 497–501; Butts 2017.

¹⁰ The Mosul *Fenqitho* was printed by the Dominican Press in seven volumes in 1886–1896. This text is found in *Breviarium juxta ritum Ecclesiae Antiochenae Syrorum* 1886–1896, V, 212–213.

¹¹ Bedjan 1886–1887, II, 368; Darmo 1960–1962, II, 501.

¹² Lamy 1882–1902, IV, cols 737–738 fn. 1.

¹³ Brock 2010a, 48–49.

¹⁴ Brock 2022, 135; see also 1.

¹⁵ So already Brock 2022, 35. The East Syriac tradition refers to the Church of the East (lamentably called Nestorian; see Brock 1996) along with its later Uniate continuations, such as the Chaldean Catholic Church. Texts present in both the East Syriac tradition and the West Syriac tradition, which includes among others the Syriac Orthodox Church, tend to go back to their earlier common heritage, except when transferred from one to the other through later contact (see Van Rompay 1995).

version, based on the full manuscript attestation and accounting for the textual variation, remains a *desideratum*.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the following preliminary remarks can be made. Two main recensions can at present be distinguished: a long recension represented by Brock's edition, based primarily on MS BL Add. 14,520 with 'some use' of MS BL Add. 14,506, and a short recension represented by Lamy's edition, based on MS BnF Syr. 161 and the Mosul *Fenqitho*. The long recension, at least in Brock's edition, has forty stanzas, whereas the short only twenty-five. Twenty-two of the twenty-five stanzas of the latter are present in the former (though occasionally with different sequences), but three are not (Stanzas 22, 24, and 25 of Lamy). The Ethiopic version is in general much closer to the long recension as represented by Brock's edition than the short as represented by Lamy's. Without a critical edition of the Syriac text, it is difficult to say more, but it should be noted that for Stanza 37 the Ethiopic version aligns with MS BL Add. 14,520 against some other witnesses of the long recension, such as MS BL Add. 14,501 and MS BL Add. 14,506, which have a completely different text.¹⁷ It is not, however, certain which Syriac text form is original and hence whether this commonality between the Ethiopic version and MS BL Add. 14,520 should be understood as a shared *Leitfehler* or independent retentions from the archetype.

Between the Syriac original and the Ethiopic version undoubtedly stood an Arabic version of this homily.¹⁸ Nevertheless, a search of Graf's *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (1944–1953) as well as of various manuscript catalogues and databases has not (yet) uncovered an Arabic exemplar of the text.

¹⁶ Such a study is currently in progress by Sebastian Brock, whom we thank for discussing his work with us.

¹⁷ We are grateful to Brock for sharing this insight.

¹⁸ There is not a single established case in which a Syriac text moved *directly* into Ethiopic. Rather, Syriac texts are transmitted into Ethiopic via Arabic (for this trajectory, see Butts 2020; for a preliminary inventory of such texts, see Butts 2011). The only known exception is a recently identified Ethiopic version of the *Life of Abraham of Qidun* (CPG 3937), which seems to have moved from Syriac into Ethiopic via Greek (Butts and Erho are currently preparing an article; until then, see the lecture of Aaron Butts, in collaboration with Ted Erho, 'The Ethiopic Version of the *Life of Abraham of Qidun* [CPG 3937]: A New Trajectory in the Ethiopic Reception of Syriac Literature' at the Text and Transmission Joint Research Seminar [TeTra] on 21 September 2023). The case of the Ethiopic version of the *Life of Abraham of Qidun* is, however, the proverbial exception that proves the rule: Arabic is the bridge by which Syriac texts are transmitted into Ethiopic. The hesitancy of Tedros Abraha (2015, 467) in this regard is unwarranted.

Thus, the Ethiopic version serves as an important indirect witness (*Nebenüberlieferung*) for the Arabic version of this homily, not only for its existence, but also that in at least one Arabic manuscript it may have been attributed to Ephrem, as also in Syriac in MS BL Add. 14,520 and in the *Fenqitho*.¹⁹

This is far from the only case in which the Ethiopic translation of a text bespeaks the presence of a seemingly lost Arabic intermediary. Others derived from Syriac include a *soḡitā* commemorating Mary and a rare *erotapokriseis* of Basil and Gregory.²⁰ To these can be added the better-known cases of Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* 5 and 8.²¹ As with 'On Peter' edited here, only a single Ethiopic copy of the last of these is known, but this pair hardly represents all instances of this precise scenario, with both Jacob of Serugh's prose homily for the Fast and fragment 43 of Philoxenus of Mabbugh's *Commentary on the Gospels* serving as additional examples.²² The broader phenomenon is, however, not restricted to materials emanating from Syriac, as demonstrated by the homily on the Re-

¹⁹ The alternative possibility that the attribution to Ephrem occurred independently in Syriac and then again in Ethiopic is rendered especially doubtful by the extreme scarcity of such authorial changes in the latter tradition; this topic was treated by Erho in a paper at the conference 'Misattributions and Forgeries in Middle Eastern Manuscript Traditions Workshop', convened by Sabine Schmidtke, George A. Kiraz, and Grigory Kessel, in Vienna on 16–17 May 2024; a published version will appear eventually in the proceedings.

²⁰ For the former, see, e.g., MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. or. fol. 117, fols 143r–147v. The Syriac original is edited, with a German translation, in Beck 1959, I, 199–203 (Syriac), II, 186–188 (German). An English translation of the Syriac version is available in Brock 2010b, 83–86. For the latter, see Erho 2025, 399 fn. 20.

²¹ The Ethiopic versions of these *Demonstrations* were respectively edited in Pereira 1906 and Cerulli 1964, with the first identifications of the texts as belonging to Aphrahat's *oeuvre* in Zotenberg 1877, 248 and Baarda 1981.

²² For the former, see the homily on fasting attributed to Jacob the metropolitan in MS Dabra Ṣayon 'Abuna 'Abrēhām, C₃-IV-174, fols 52r–53v. An Arabic version is not recorded in Alwan's comprehensive study of the Arabic reception of Jacob (Alwan 2019); the Syriac original was edited, with a French translation, in Rilliet 1986, 568–585. This stands as one of the many new entries for the updated inventory of homilies of Jacob of Serugh being prepared by Butts and Erho (see fn. 1 above). For the second text, see MS Ḥayq 'Ēṣṭifānos, EMMI 1763, fols 129r–132v. The Syriac is edited, with an English translation, in Watt 1978, 40–47 (Syriac), 34–41 (English). De Halleux (1963, 144) records no version of this fragment apart from the Syriac despite thoroughly accounting for Arabic and Ethiopic evidence for other texts attributed to Philoxenus in his masterful volume. The connection of this Ethiopic 'homily' to Philoxenus's commentary was first made and presented by Erho in a paper at the Syriac Studies section of the 2024 Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting.

surrection attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem (CPG 3598), which was instead composed in Coptic.²³ In this area—amongst others—the Ethiopic tradition therefore stands as a vital and underutilized source for the study of medieval Christian Arabic literature.

The unique Ethiopic witness to ‘On Peter’ was photographed within one of several piles of principally medieval *membra disiecta* at ‘Urā Qirqos in Tigray as MS Ethio-SPaRe UM-046, fols 148v–151v.²⁴ It originally stood as the nineteenth, and likely penultimate, homily in a fourteenth-century manuscript containing a collection of texts entitled *Dərsāna Panṭaqʷasṭe* (‘Homiliary for Pentecost’), one of the most widely disseminated volumes of patristic writings in medieval Ethiopia. As can be determined by a comparison with its other fragmentary witnesses and by the notation on the final page of MS Gunda Gunde, GG 50 (fol. 145v) specifying that this homiliary contained only seventeen homilies, ‘On Peter’ does not, however, comprise a core member of this collection. Rather, for reasons unknown, it was uniquely included in this manuscript following Jacob of Serugh’s homily on the Ascension, the final text of *Dərsāna Panṭaqʷasṭe* proper. When and from where the Ethiopic version of ‘On Peter’ migrated there remains unclear.

A comparison of the Ethiopic version of ‘On Peter’ edited here with the Syriac text published by Brock reveals a number of differences. It is often difficult to ascertain where in the transmission process certain of these arose, especially without the Arabic intermediary, but at least the following *loci* are possible: transmission in Syriac (locus 1), translation from Syriac to Arabic (locus 2), transmission in Arabic (locus 3), translation from Arabic to Ethiopic (locus 4), and transmission in Ethiopic (locus 5).²⁵

Given the diversity in the Syriac tradition itself, some differences between the Ethiopic version and the Syriac text published by Brock probably originated already in the text’s transmission in Syriac (locus 1). One possible example involves Brock’s Stanza 17, which is not present in the Ethiopic version and also not in the short Syriac recension witnessed by MS BnF Syr. 161. Even though

²³ For the identification of CPG 3598, for which no Arabic version is listed, in Ethiopic, see Erho 2024, 321.

²⁴ The precise contents of all the medieval material in these piles have been identified and the original manuscripts reconstructed by Erho, who will soon publish this information in an article entitled ‘The Urā Masqal Homiliaries Reconstructed’.

²⁵ These options are laid out and exemplified in Butts 2020.

the Ethiopic version aligns more closely with the long Syriac recension edited by Brock, the fact that a Syriac witness omits Stanza 17 raises the possibility that this stanza was not present in the Syriac recension to which the Ethiopic ultimately goes back via Arabic.²⁶

Other differences between the Ethiopic version and the Syriac original arose during the text's transmission in Ethiopic (locus 5). Most obviously, approximately half of the material found in Stanza 19 of the Syriac text seems to lack in the Ethiopic manuscript due to an erasure. Moreover, some difficulties in the Ethiopic text are best explained as scribal errors involving graphically similar words in Ethiopic. Stanza 36, for instance, begins **ምንት፡እምድጎሬክ** [...] ('what is after you [...]'), which though grammatically clear is contextually difficult. The Syriac here reads 'What should you have chosen between these two [...]' (**ܡܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ**), suggesting that the Ethiopic may have earlier read **ምንት፡እምጎሬክ** (= **እምጎሬይክ**)²⁷ [...] ('What would you have chosen [...]'). Another difference that seems to have arisen during the text's transmission in Ethiopic can be found at the end of Stanza 33, which in Syriac reads 'If he is going to kill me, I will not keep away from him, for this is my Master's House' (**ܐܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**). For the last clause, the Ethiopic version has the syntactically difficult **እስመ፡ውስተ፡ቤተ፡እግዚአ** ('for in his Master's house'). Again, we seem to be dealing with a scribal error involving graphically similar words in Ethiopic: An emendation of **ውስተ** ('in') to **ውእቱ** ('he, that') would give 'for it is his Master's house' (**እስመ፡ውእቱ፡ቤተ፡እግዚአ**), which would be quite similar to the Syriac (**ܐܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܝܬܐ**). Differences such as these will have arisen during the text's transmission in Ethiopic (locus 5).

²⁶ Since contamination (or: horizontal transmission) is unlikely in this case, the primary alternative would otherwise have to be polygenesis: Stanza 17 would have to have been lost independently in two different streams of transmission of the text, in Syriac and then again independently in Ethiopic.

²⁷ While monophthongization is more common in III-w roots, e.g., **ገሎት** for **ገለውት**, it is also rarely attested for III-y roots (Butts 2022, 18 [paradigm 36] based on earlier grammars). For just two examples, see **ወደት** for **ወደይት** in MS Paris, BnF, Éth. d'Abbadie 55, fol. 22r^c, ln. 4, and **አርኤት-ከሙ** for **አርአይት-ከሙ** in MS Lālibalā Beta Giyorgis, EMM 7078, fol. 34v, ln. 8 (on the latter manuscript, including some linguistic and orthographic peculiarities, see Karlsson 2024, 137–144). In the same way, the emended **ጎሬክ** here would be for **ጎሬይክ**.

Yet other differences between the two surviving versions undoubtedly arose during the translation processes from Syriac to Arabic (locus 2) and then from Arabic to Ethiopic (locus 4), as well as probably also during the transmission of the text in Arabic (locus 3).²⁸ Nevertheless, these *loci* are difficult, if not impossible, to establish given the (present) lack of an Arabic exemplar.

The following edition is based on the unique Ethiopic witness. Punctuation adheres to that found in these leaves, but the division into paragraphs, along with their numbering, follows Brock's edition of the Syriac text. The orthography of the text has been normalized, following field-standard conventions.²⁹ In particular, fourth-order vowels after gutturals have been changed, as necessary, to the first order, and gutturals and sibilants have sometimes been adjusted based primarily on Dillmann 1865 and Leslau 1991. Two irregular verbal forms should be highlighted: **ḡnḡḡ** (1) is written for standard **ḡnḡ**, and **ḡḡ** (38) for standard **ḡḡ**. The normalization of the language is not reflected in the apparatus. To facilitate comparison between the Syriac and Ethiopic, our English translation here follows Brock's translation of the Syriac as closely as possible, so long as it does not do damage to the meaning of the Ethiopic. The following text critical symbols are used in the edition:³⁰

< ... > conjectural addition

[...] completion for physical damage

²⁸ At locus 2, the Syriac poetic text will have been changed into an Arabic prose text, and of course the Ethiopic text published here is in prose, following its Arabic *Vorlage*.

²⁹ See Bausi 2016.

³⁰ Maas 1960, para. §23.

Text

| ድርሳን፡ ዘአባ፡ ኤፍሬም፡ ዘበእንተ፡ ጲጥሮስ ።

fol. 148v^a

[1] አጎዊየ፡ በውስተ፡ መጻሕፍት፡ ረከብኩ፡ ወአጎዘኒ፡ ማሕምም፡ አመ፡ ይሰቅልዎ፡
ለመድኅኒነ፡ ኬፋ፡ በከየ፡ ፩፡ በእንተ፡ ዘተሰቅለ፡ እግዚእነ። ወካዕበ፡ በእንተ፡ ዘክሕደ፡
5 እንዘ፡ ይበኪ፡ ወያስተበቅሶ፡ እንዘ፡ ይብል፡ ጻማየ፡ ሐጐልኩ፡ እስመ፡ ክሕድክዎ፡ ለ
እግዚእየ።

[2] አሌሊተ፡ ጸርሐ፡ በሕዋረ፡ ቀያፋ፡ እስመ፡ ኮንክዎ፡ ነኪረ፡ ለወልድ፡ በዘ፡ | ክሕ
ድክዎ፡ ኩኩሐ፡ ሰመየኒ፡ ወኮንኩ፡ ይእዜ፡ ጐጻ። ወቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ኢየሐንጽ፡ ዲ
በ፡ ጐጻ።

fol. 148v^b

10 [3] ብፅዓተ፡ ወሀበኒ፡ ሶበ፡ አእመርኩ፡ መኑ፡ አቡሁ፡ ወእቤ፡ አንተ፡ ውእቱ፡ ወልደ፡
እግዚአብሔር።

[4] ጸውዐኒ፡ ወዲበ፡ ማዕበለ፡ ባሕር፡ አንሶሰውኩ፡ ከመዘ፡ ውስተ፡ ላዕለ፡ ሳሌዳ።
ወማዕበለ፡ ባሕር፡ ዛሕን፡ በቅድሜየ፡ ዓሣ፡ ወሀበኒ፡ ዲናረ፡ አሀብ፡ ለቄሳር። ወእም
ድ<ጎ>ረ፡ አእምር፡ ዘርኢኩ፡ ክሕድክዎ።

15 [5] አሌሊተ፡ እስመ፡ ይክሕደኒ፡ ወአንሰ፡ በቅንአትየ፡ መተርኩ፡ እዝነ፡ በመጥባሳ
ት፡ ወከመ፡ አስተዋደዩኒ፡ ነሥአ፡ ወአጥበቃ፡ ውስተ፡ መካና። ዐቀበኒ፡ ከመ፡ ጌር፡
ወአንሰ፡ በሕርትምናየ፡ ክሕድክዎ፡ | ወምንተ፡ እገብር፡ እምይእዜሰ፡ ኮንኩ፡ እምኔ
ሁ፡ ነኪረ፡

fol. 149r^a

[6] ዓዲ፡ መንበረ፡ አሰፈዎሙ፡ ለዐሠርቱ፡ ወክልኤቱ፡ ሐዋርያት፡ መነሃ፡ እንጋ፡ ያ
ነብር፡ ዲበ፡ መንበርየ፡ እስመ፡ አነ፡ ጽልመተ፡ ኮንኩ፡

[7] ጽልሑትየ፡ አቅደመ፡ ርኢየ፡ ወይቤ፡ ዘክሕደኒ፡ በቅድመ፡ ሰብእ። አነሂ፡ እክ
ሕዶ፡ በቅድመ፡ አቡየ፡ ዘበሰማያት። አንሰ፡ እቤ፡ ከመ፡ ኢእክሕደክ፡ ወሶበሰ፡ ክሕ
ድክዎ፡ በማሕላ፡ አሌ፡ ሊተ፡ እስመ፡ ይክሕደኒ፡

[8] ዕፃ፡ በጽሐ፡ ለክልኤነ፡ ለአስቆሮታዊ፡ ወሊተኒ፡ ከመ፡ ንፃእ፡ እማኅበረ፡ ሐዋር
ያት፡ ንኩን፡ መክፈልተ፡ እሳት። *ውእ(in rasura*)ቱ፡ ለ፴ብሩር፡ ሢጦ፡ ወአነ፡ በማ
ሕላ፡ ለውእቱ፡ ሐብ*ል፡ ጎነቆ። ወአንሰ፡ ኢ(in rasura*)እግበር፡ አነ|ሂ፡ ከማሁ፡ እስ
መ፡ መሓሪ፡ ውእቱ፡

fol. 149r^b

[9] አስተበቅሶየ፡ ለዮሐንስ፡ ዘረፈቀ፡ ዲበ፡ እንግድዓሁ፡ ከመ፡ ይስአል፡ ሊተ፡ ዘእን
በለ፡ ኢይጎድጎኒ፡ ሕዝብ፡ እለ፡ ቦኡ፡ ከመ፡ ይኩንንዎ። እበውእ፡ ለርእስየ፡ ወእስግ
30 ድ፡ ሎቱ፡ ወያአምረኒ፡ ሰብእ፡ ከመ፡ ሐሳዊ፡ አነ፡ እስመ፡ ክሕድክዎ፡ በቅድሜሁ፡

Translation

Homily of Abba Ephrem on Peter.

[1] My brothers, in the scriptures I found (something), and that which causes pain seized me, when they were crucifying our Savior: Cephas wept, first, because our Lord was crucified, and second, 5 because he had denied (Him), weeping and imploring, saying, ‘My toil I have lost, because I have denied my Lord.

Mt 26:57 [2] ‘Woe to me’, he cried out in the courtyard of Caiaphas, ‘for I have become a stranger to the Son, in that I have denied Him. He
Mt 16:18 named me rock, and I have now become sand, and He will not build 10
Mt 7:26 the church on sand.

[3] ‘He gave me blessings, when I came to know who His Father is, and I said, “You are the Son of God”.

Mt 14:19 [4] ‘He called me, and on the waves I walked, as if on a board. The waves were calm before me, and the fish gave me money, so that I 15
Mt 17:27 might give to Caesar. Even after I understood what I had seen, I still denied Him.

[5] ‘Woe to me, for He will deny me. In my zeal, I cut off an ear with a sword. As they accused me, He took and fastened it in its place. He preserved me, being Himself good, but I in my wretchedness denied 20 Him. What shall I do now that I have become a stranger to Him?

Lk 20:30 [6] ‘Moreover, He promised a throne to His twelve disciples. Whom will He seat on my throne, now that I have become darkness?

[7] ‘My deceitfulness He saw ahead of time, and He said, “Whoever has denied me before people, him I will deny before my Father in 25
Mt 10:23 heaven”, and I said, “I will not deny You”. But, when I denied Him
Mt 26:35 under oath, woe to me, for He will deny me!

[8] ‘The lot has fallen to the two of us, to Iscariot and also to me, that we should leave the company of the disciples and become a portion 30 of the fire. He sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, and I (did so) with
Mt 27:5 an oath. That one, the rope strangled. May I not do likewise, for He is merciful.

Jn 13:23 [9] ‘Let me beseech John, who lay upon his chest, to intercede for me so that the people who have entered to judge Him do not hinder me. I will enter myself and prostrate before Him, and then the people 35 will know that I am a liar, since I denied Him before them.

[10] ወይእዜ፡ አዕይንትዮ፡ ኢታዕርፍ፡ እንተ፡ ታውሕዝ፡ አንብዐ፡ እስመ፡ ኢወሬዛ፡
አነ፡ ዘክሕድኩ፡ በፍጥረትዮ፡ ለሚበትዮ፡ ጎፍረት፡ ወድቀት፡ ውስተ፡ እሳት። አሌ፡
ሊተ፡ እስመ፡ ኮንኩ፡ ስላቀ፡ ለሕፃናት፡

[11] ክብርዮ፡ አንዛህለለ፡ መኑ፡ ዘኢይበኪየኒ፡ ወጥበብዮ፡ ለስሐ፡ ወአፍአ፡ ይትገደ
5 ፍ፡ ወእምሰብእ፡ ይትከየድ፡ ወማኅበረ፡ ወራዙት፡ ይሳለቁ፡ ላዕለ፡ ሚበትዮ። አሌ፡
ሊተ፡ ምንት፡ በጽሐ፡ ላዕሌዮ፡

fol. 149v^a

[12] ኦአኅዊዮ፡ አርድእት፡ ብክዩ፡ ላዕለ፡ ሕርትምናዮ፡ ዘክሕድክዎ፡ ለእግዚእዮ፡ ወ
ህየ<ን>ተ፡ ረድእ፡ ኮንኩ፡ ከሓዴ፡ ለእመ< > ኢተወክፈኒ፡ አስተበቅኦ፡ ጥቀ፡
ከመዝ፡ እንበር፡ ዲበ፡ መንበርዮ፡ ወኢይኩንነኒ፡ በዕለተ፡ ደይን።

[13] ብፁዓን፡ አንትሙ፡ ፲፡ እስመ፡ እመንሱት፡ ድኅንክሙ። አሌ፡ ሎቱ፡ ለይሁዳ፡ እ
10 ስመ፡ እምድኅረ፡ አበሰ፡ ተኅንቀ፡ ወስእለተ፡ ህየንቴሁ፡ ኢያስተብቅኦ፡ እስመ፡ መ
ፍቀሬ፡ ነሳሕያን፡ ውእቱ።

[14] ማኅተም፡ ይእቲ፡ ንስሓ፡ ለማኅበረ፡ ወራዙት፡ ወብርሃን፡ አእሩግ፡ ለሕፃናት፡
ማኅተም፡ ተሰብረ፡ ወብርሃን፡ ጸልመ። አሌሊተ፡ እስመ፡ ማሰነ፡ ሠናይ፡

[15] በእንብዕ፡ ውኑድ፡ ኅደገ፡ አበሳሃ፡ ለዘማ፡ ወበዘ፡ አኅዘት፡ እገሪሁ፡ ሠጠጠ፡
15 መጽሐፈ፡ ዕዳሃ። ወእፎ፡ ፈድፋድ፡ ይሰሪ፡ ሊተ፡ ይሬኢ፡ ፈለገ፡ አንብዕዮ፡ ወለእመ፡ እ
ቤ፡ ከመ፡ አህሉ፡ ማእምረ፡ ኅቡኣት፡ ውእቱ።

fol. 149v^b

[16] አነ፡ በእንተ፡ ካልአን፡ ዘእስእል፡ ካልአን፡ ይስእሉ፡ ሊተ፡ እፈቅድ፡ *lacuna*። አ
ሌሊተ፡ ዘለ*ርእ(in rasura*)ሱ፡ ኢይስእል፡ ስርየተ፡

[18] ካልአንዮ፡ አርድእት፡ ይወፅኡ፡ እምኅበ፡ ተኅብኡ፡ እስመ፡ እግዚአሙ፡ ተን
20 ሥእ፡ እምዉታን፡ ወአነ፡ ውስተ፡ ጽልመት፡ *lacuna*እሄሉ፡ ለእመ፡ ይሜንን፡ አንብ
ዕዮ።

APPARATUS | 6 ምንት] MS ምንተ 13 ማኅተም] MS ማኅተመ 16 አህሉ] perhaps read ኢህሉ (cf. Syriac ܐܡܝܐ ܐܠܗ)

³¹ Literally ‘my creation’. Something like በፈጣሪዮ (‘my creator’) would be closer to the Syriac ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܐ (‘the one who created me’).

³² The sentence is difficult. An emendation of አህሉ (‘Let me be’) to ኢህሉ (‘he is not’) (cf. Syriac ܐܡܝܐ ܐܠܗ) is tempting, perhaps allowing for an understanding ‘Should I say that He who knows hidden things is not here?’, which would be closer to the Syriac (in Brock’s translation): ‘Shall I say that He who knows hidden things is not close at hand?’ (ܐܠܗ ܝܫܪܐܐܝܝܠ)

[10] ‘Now, may my eyes have no rest from weeping tears, for it was not as a young man that I denied my nature.³¹ On my old age (I brought) shame and a fall into the fire. Woe to me, for I have become a mockery for children.

[11] ‘My weighty reputation has proved wanton. Who will not weep 5
for me? My wisdom has become insipid. It is cast outside and
trodden on by people. A band of youth mock my old age. Woe to me!
What has happened to me?

[12] ‘O my brothers, disciples, weep for my wretchedness, that I denied our Lord. Instead of a disciple, I became a denier. If He does not accept me, I will strongly beseech Him like this, “Let me sit on my throne!” May He not judge me on the day of judgment.

[13] ‘Blessed are you, the ten, because you have been saved from temptation. Woe to Judas, for, after he sinned, he was strangled, and he did not beseech (further) supplication instead of it, for He is the one who loves the penitent. 15

[14] ‘Penance is the seal for the band of youth, and the old are a light for the young. The seal has been broken, and the light has gone out. Woe to me, for the beautiful has been destroyed.

Lk 7:47

[15] ‘With just a few tears, He forgave the transgression of the sinful woman, and because she took hold of His feet, He ripped apart the contract of her sin. How much more will He pardon me? Will He see the flood of my tears? If I say, “Let me be (there)”, He is the one who knows hidden things.’³²

[16] ‘I who used to intercede for others want others to intercede for 25
me. Woe to me who does not ask for forgiveness for myself!

[18] ‘My fellow disciples will come out from where they were hiding, for their Lord has been resurrected from the dead, but I will remain in the dark, if He rejects my tears.

ܠܝܢܢܐ ܕܢܚܝܢܐ). But, such an emendation is not without problems, especially how to understand the initial **ܠܢܢܐ**—perhaps a misunderstanding of a putative **ܠܢܢܐ** ('inna, 'behold, truly') in the Arabic intermediary as **ܠܢܢܐ** ('in, 'if')—and the final **ܐܢܢܐ** (though note the Syriac text continues with **ܐܡܢ**).

[19] ጎለፍ፡ ሰይ*ጣን፡ እምድጎሬየ፡ (in rasura*) እምኔየ፡ ዕቅፍትየ፡ አንተ፡ ይቤለ
 ኒ፡ ወሚመ፡ እንጋ፡ ዝንቱ፡ ዘክሕድኩ፡ ለእመ፡ ያአምር፡ ከመ፡ ኢይበቀዕ፡ ዝንቱ፡
 lacuna|*lacuna* እመ፡ ኢይቤለኒ፡

fol. 150r^a

5 [20] ወሚመ፡ ከመ፡ ኢይሒሱ፡ *ቃሉ፡ (super linea*) ውእቱ፡ ዘክሕድኩ፡ ዘእንበ
 ለ፡ ፈቃድየ፡ እስመ፡ እምድጎረ፡ ክሕድኩ፡ ነቀወ፡ ዶርሆ፡ ወእንዘ፡ ይእጎዝዎ፡ ተመ
 ይጠ፡ ወነጸረኒ፡ ወሶቤሃ፡ ተዘከርኩ፡ ቃሉ፡ ዘይቤለኒ፡ ሥልሰ፡ ትክሕደኒ፡ ዘእንበለ፡
 ይነቁ፡ ዶርሆ፡

[21] አይቱ፡ ሀለወት፡ እሙ፡ ከመ፡ *እሐ(in rasura*)ር፡ ጎቤሃ፡ ወእስአል፡ ከመ፡ ታ
 ስተብቀሥ፡ ለፍቁሬ፡ ወትበሎ፡ ለእመ፡ ኢክሕደ፡ እምተሐሰወ፡ ቃልከ፡ ዘትቤሎ፡
 10 ወይእዜኒ፡ ምንት፡ ጌጋዩ፡ ዘክሕደ፡ ዘትቤ፡

[22] ጽሑፍ፡ ከመ፡ ይትቀሠፍ፡ ኖላዊ፡ ወይዘረወ፡ አባግዐ፡ መርዔቱ፡ ናሁ፡ ተቀ
 ሥፈ፡ ኖላዊ፡ ወተዘርወ፡ አባግዐ፡ መርዔቱ፡ ወእነ፡ ዘኢጐየይኩ፡ ክ|ሕድክዎ፡ ወእ
 ምኔሰኒ፡ ሶበ፡ ጐየይኩ፡ ወኪያሁ፡ ኢክሕድኩ፡

fol. 150r^b

15 [23] ከመ፡ አርእይ፡ ፍቁርየ፡ ፈድፋድ፡ እምካልአን፡ አርድእት፡ ፈቀድኩ፡ ወኪያ
 ሆሙ፡ አስተሕሠምኩ፡ በዘ፡ ጎደግዎ፡ ወጐዩ፡ ወመነንኩ፡ ዘጽሑፍ፡ ወኢጐየይኩ፡
 ወበዘ፡ ኢጐየይኩ፡ ምስለ፡ ካልአንየ፡ ናዋ፡ ክሕድኩ፡

[24] ወእለኒ፡ ጐዩ፡ ካልአንየ፡ ኪያሁ፡ ኢክሕዱ፡

20 [25] ሶበ፡ ይወፅኡ፡ ካልአንየ፡ እንዘ፡ ክሡት፡ ገጽሙ፡ ለአርባዕቱ፡ አጽናፈ፡ ምድር፡
 ወይእጎዙ፡ መጥባሳተ፡ ዘመንፈስ፡ ወይሰብኩ፡ ገጽሙ፡ እንዘ፡ ይብሉ፡ ተንሥኡ፡ እግ
 ዚእነ፡ እምነ፡ መቃብር፡ ወምንተ፡ እብል፡ አነ፡ እቤ፡ ከመ፡ ተንሥኡ፡ እግዚ|እየ፡ አ
 ላ፡ ክሕድክዎ፡ እንዘ፡ <እብል፡ > ኢያአምሮ፡ ለውእቱ፡ ብእሲ፡ ወኢርኢክዎ፡

fol. 150v^a

[26] ወይእዜኒ፡ ሶበ፡ እዜኑ፡ ስሞ፡ ውስተ፡ ምድር፡ መኑ፡ ይሰምዖ፡ ለከሓዲ፡ እስመ፡
 ክሕድክዎ፡ በማሕላ፡

APPARATUS | 14 ፍቁርየ] perhaps read ፍቅርየ (cf. Syriac ,ܩܩܪܝ) 22 ስሞ] MS ስሙ

³³ Two and a half lines of Ethiopic, spanning fols 149v^b and 150r^a, have been erased. The Syriac here reads (in Brock’s translation): “‘You are a stumbling block to me’”, a short

Mt 16:23 [19]*“Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me”, is what He said to me. Maybe this (meant) that I would deny Him? If He knew that this was not advantageous, [...] ³³ then He would not have said it to me.

[20] ‘Maybe it was so that that word of His should not prove false 5
that I denied against my will, for after I had denied, the cock crowed,
and while they were laying hold of Him, He turned around and
looked at me—and then I recalled the word that He had said to me.

Mt 26:34 “Three times will you deny me before the cock crows”.

[21] ‘Where is His mother? So that I might go to her and beg that she
supplicate her Beloved and say to Him, “If he had not denied, Your
word that You said to him would have proved false. Now what is his
crime, for he has denied, as You said!”’

[22] 'It is written that the Shepherd will be smitten, and the sheep of
Mt 26:31 His flock will be scattered. Behold, the Shepherd has been smitten, 15
and the sheep of His flock have been scattered. But I who did not
flee have denied Him. It would have been better for me if I had fled
and not denied Him.

[23] ‘I wanted to show my Beloved³⁴ more than the other disciples. I considered them disgraceful for having abandoned Him and fled. I rejected what was written and did not flee, and because I did not flee with my companions, alas, I have rejected (Him).’ 20

[24] ‘and my companions who fled have not rejected Him.

[25] ‘At the time when my companions go forth with confidence to the four corners of the earth, (when) they grasp the sword of the Spirit and proclaim confidently,³⁵ saying, “Our Lord has risen from the grave!”, what should I say? Should I say, “My Lord has risen”?’

Mt 26:72; But I denied Him, [saying] “I do not know that man” and “I have

Mt 26:74 never seen Him”.

[26] ‘Now, if I proclaim His name on earth, who will listen to the 30
denier? For I denied Him under oath.

while ago He said to me, for had I been diligent, He would not have said this to me, for He never proves false' (אֵלֹהִים לֹא יִכְזֹּב. וְאִם לֹא הָיִיתִי דַּלְתָּהוּ, לֹא הָיִיתִי מְדַבֵּר כֵּן, כִּי אֵלֹהִים לֹא יִכְזֹּב. וְאִם לֹא הָיִיתִי דַּלְתָּהוּ, לֹא הָיִיתִי מְדַבֵּר כֵּן, כִּי אֵלֹהִים לֹא יִכְזֹּב).

³⁴ An emendation to ‘my love’ or the like would bring the text closer to the Syriac.

³⁵ The Ethiopic only has part of the idiom, 'their face', and not the full 'their face uncovered', which occurs earlier in the stanza.

[27] ሶበ፡ ይጌሥጽዎሙ። ካልአንየ፡ ለአጋንንት፡ ወይጎይዩ፡ እምኔሆሙ፡ ምንተ፡
እገብር፡ አነ፡ ዘማዕተቡ፡ ነሥአ፡ እምኔየ፡ ወያአምረኒ፡ ሰይጣን፡ ከመ፡ ዕራቅየ፡ ሀለ
ውኩ፡ ወይሳለቅ፡ ላዕሌየ።

[28] አሌሊተ፡ ለእመ፡ ዐጸወ፡ ጥላተ፡ ምሕረቱ፡ ላዕሌየ፡ በቅድሜየ፡ ይፊኢ፡ ሰይ
5 ጣን፡ ከመ፡ ይስድደኒ፡ ወኢይጸግብ፡ እምኔየ፡ እንዘ፡ ይፈድየኒ፡ ሥቃየ፡ ሣቀይክዎ።
እግዚአ፡ ኢታብሉ፡ ላዕሌየ፡

[29] ለልሳንየ፡ አውፅእ፡ ቃለ፡ ብካይ፡ ወዘብከ፡ አው፡ |ፃእኩ፡ ቃላተ፡ ክሕደት፡ ብ
ከ፡ እዜምር፡ ወእሴብሕ፡ ቃላተ፡ አኩቱት፡ ወዘአንተ፡ ቀሠፍከኒ፡ አንተ፡ ፈውስኒ፡
እስመ፡ መሓሪ፡ አንተ፡ እግዚአ፡

fol. 150v^b

10 [30] ለእመ፡ ታርኑ፡ ሊተ፡ ጥላቶ፡ ለንስሓ፡ ወተወከፍከኒ፡ ወስረይ፡ ሊተ፡ ኅጢአ
ትየ፡ እወፅእ፡ ወእኬልሕ፡ እንዘ፡ እብል፡ ሩጹ፡ ኃጥአን፡ ለንስሓ፡ እስመ፡ ኢየዐጼ፡
ጥላቶ፡ በገጸ፡ ነሳሕያን፡ እስመ፡ ኢዐጸወ፡ በቅድሜየ።

[31] ተጋብሎ፡ ኃጥአን፡ እምአርባዕቱ፡ አጽናፈ፡ ምድር፡ እስመ፡ ርሳው፡ ጥላተ፡
ምሕረቱ፡ ወዘብዙሳ፡ ውእቱ፡ ኅጢአቱ፡ ኢይቅበጽ፡ ንስሓ፡ እስመ፡ አነ፡ ዘክሕድክ
15 ዎ፡ ወስረየ፡ ሊተ። ወይእዜ፡ ኩሎ፡ ዘይስእል፡ ይነሥእ፡ እስመ፡ ከማየ፡ አልቦ፡ ዘአበ
ሰ፡ ወተሣህለኒ፡ መድኅኒ።

[32] ወይእዜ፡ በልሳንየ፡ ወበእደዊየ፡ |እኬልሕ፡ ወእዜምር፡ ስብሐቲሁ። ሕቀ፡ ተዐ
ገሡ፡ ኃጥአን፡ እንዘ፡ ትጎደጉዱ፡ ጥላቶ፡ ወፍጡነ፡ ያርኑ፡ ለክሙ።

fol. 151r^a

[33] ወለእመ፡ ተወክፈ፡ ኪያየ፡ ኮንኩ፡ ርእሰ፡ ነሳሕያን። ወለእመ፡ አበሳየ፡ ገብረ፡
20 ሊተ፡ ወመኑኒ፡ ዲበ፡ ጥላቱ፡ ይቅትለኒ፡ እስመ፡ እምኔሁ፡ ኢይርሕቅ፡ እስመ፡ ውእ
ቱ፡ ቤተ፡ እግዚአ፡

[34] ገብር፡ ሶበ፡ ይኤብስ፡ ወኢይጎይይ፡ ኢይትሜነን፡ ከመዘ፡ ይጎይይ፡ እምእግ
ዚኡ፡ እንዘ፡ ኢይኤብስ። ወለእመ፡ እንዘ፡ ይኤብስ፡ ወይትጫገሥ፡ ቦቱ፡ እግዚአ፡ ይ
ረክብ፡ ስርየተ።

APPARATUS | 7 ለልሳንየ] perhaps read አልሳንየ | ቃላተ] MS ቃለተ 10 ጥላቶ] MS ጥላቱ
11 ጥላቶ] MS ጥላቱ 15 ኩሎ] MS ኩሎ 19 ወመኑኒ] MS ወመኑኒ 20 ውእቱ] MS ውስተ 22 ከመዘ]
MS ከመዘ

[27] ‘When my companions rebuke the demons, and they take flight before them, what shall I do—I from whom He has removed His mark? Satan knows that I am naked and is mocking me.

[28] ‘Woe to me, if He shuts the door of His mercy for me in front of
me, then Satan will see, so that he persecutes me, and he will never
have enough of paying me back the torment with which I tormented
him. O Lord, do not give him power over me!’

[29] 'To my tongue: Bring forth the sound of crying! You by whom I brought forth the words of denial, with you I will sing and praise with words of thanksgiving. You who struck me, (now) heal me, for 10
 Hos 6:1 You, o Lord, are merciful.

[30] ‘If You should open up for me the door of repentance and receive me, then forgive my sins. I will go out and cry out, saying, “Come running, sinners, to repentance, for He does not close its door in the face of the repentant, for He did not close it in front of me”. 15

[31] ‘Gather, sinners, from the four ends of the earth, for the door of His mercy is open. The one whose sins are many should not despair about repentance, for I denied Him, and He forgave even me. Now He will receive everyone who asks, for no one has done wrong as much as I have, yet our Savior has had pity on me.

[32] ‘Now, with my tongue and hands, I cry out and sing His praise.
Mt 7:7; Show a little endurance, sinners, while knocking on His door, and He
Lk 11:10 will quickly open it for you.

[33] ‘If He receives me, I would become the chief of the penitents. If He does with me (according to) my fault, then let someone kill me at His door, for I will not depart from Him, for it is his Master’s house.’³⁶

[34] ‘When a servant sins and does not run away, he is not treated as badly as one who, not having sinned, runs away from his master. If, after having sinned, he shows patience, through this, his master will find forgiveness.’ 30

³⁶ This understanding, which is in line with the Syriac ܕܗܘܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (‘for this is my Master’s house’), requires an emendation of ܕܗܝܬ (‘in’) to the graphically similar ܕܗܝܬܐ (‘he, that’). The antecedent of ‘his’ is not certain; perhaps the pronominal suffix functions here as a definite article. Without the emendation, the text is perhaps best understood by taking these last words with the next stanza, i.e., ‘When a servant sins in his Master’s house and does not run away [...]’.

[35] እምከመ፡ ሶቤሃ፡ ጸጋ፡ እግዚአብሔር፡ በአርአያ፡ ጸውዐቶ፡ ለስምዖን፡ ወትቤ
ሎ፡ ከኩኸሕ፡ ኢትደንግ፡ እስመ፡ ላዕሌከ፡ የሐንጽ፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ እስመ፡ አኮ፡ በ
ፈቃድክ፡ ክሕድክ፡ አላ፡ በእንተ፡ ቃሉ፡ ዘይቤ፡ ለከ፡ ከመ፡ ኢይትሐሰው፡ ቃሉ፡

fol. 151r^b

[36] ምንተ፡ እምኅሬከ፡ ከመ፡ ትክሐዶ፡ በቅድመ፡ ሕዝብ፡ ወሚመ፡ ከመ፡ የሐሱ፡ እ
5 ግዚእከ፡ ወበእንተዝ፡ ክሕድኮ፡ በከናፍሪከ፡ እንዘ፡ ልብከ፡ ርቱዕ፡ ውእቱ፡ ወውእቱ
ሂ፡ ፍጡነ፡ ሰረየ፡ ለከ፡ ወበልብከ፡ እንዘ፡ ርቱዕ፡ አንተ፡ አልቦ፡ ዘከልአከ፡ ክሔደ፡ በ
ከናፍሪከ፡

[37] ለእመ፡ ኢክሕድከ፡ እምነሥኡከ፡ ወእምሰቀሉከ፡ ምስሌሁ፡ ወዕቅፍተ፡ ወኑ
ፋቄ፡ እምኮነ፡ ውስተ፡ ኩሉ፡ ዓለም፡ ወአልቦ፡ ዘእምአእመረ፡ መኑ፡ ውእቱ፡ ዘአድኅ
10 ኖ፡ ለዓለም፡

[38] ወእንዘ፡ ጥቀ፡ ኢሰቀሉከ፡ ምስሌሁ፡ ቦአ፡ ኑፋቄ፡ ውስተ፡ ዓለም፡ ወመድኅኔ፡
ሰመዮሙ፡ ለብዙኃን፡ ቦዘይቤ፡ አነ፡ ዘጳውሎስ፡ ወቦ፡ ዘይቤ፡ አነ፡ ዘኬፋ፡ ወቦ፡ ዘይ
ቤ፡ አነ፡ ዘአጽሎስ፡ እንዘ፡ አሐዱ፡ ውእቱ፡ ክርስቶስ፡ መድኅኔ፡ ዓለም፡

fol. 151v^a

[39] ወይእዜኒ፡ ኢትቅበጹ፡ ንስሓ፡ ኃጥአን፡ እስመ፡ ህየንተ፡ ዚአክሙ፡ ተሰቅለ፡
15 እግዚእክሙ፡ ዲበ፡ ዕፅ፡ በእንቲአክሙ፡ ሰትየ፡ ብሔኡ፡ ምስለ፡ ሐሞት፡ ወተረግዘ፡
ገቦሁ፡ በኩናት፡ ከመ፡ ይጽምም፡ ቀስለ፡ ዚአክሙ፡

[40] ወለእመ፡ ቦቱ፡ ዘረኩሰ፡ ውእቱ፡ ወአው፡ ክሕደ፡ ከማየ፡ ኢይቅበጽ፡ መድኅኔ
ተ፡ እስመ፡ ሊተኒ፡ ሰረየ፡ ሊተ፡ ወመሠረተ፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ ረሰየኒ፡ ወመራኅተ፡ ሰ
ማያት፡ ወሀበኒ፡ ወይቤለኒ፡ ዘአሰርከ፡ በምድር፡ ይከውን፡ እሱረ፡ በሰማያት፡ ወዘፈ
20 ታሕከ፡ በምድር፡ ይኩን፡ ፍቱሐ፡ በሰማያት፡

fol. 151v^b

እስመ፡ ለ[h]፡ ስብሐት፡ ወአኩቴት፡ ለአብ፡ ወወልድ፡ ወመንፈስ፡ ወይእዜኒ፡ ወዘ
ልፈኒ፡ ወለዓለመ፡ ዓለም፡ አሜን። ወይበል፡ ኩሉ፡ ሕዝብ፡ አሜን።

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Summary

An edition, with English translation, is provided of an Ethiopic ‘Homily on Peter’, attributed to Ephrem the Syrian (d.373), which is uniquely attested in MS Ethio-SPaRe UM-046, fols 148v–151v. This Ethiopic homily ultimately goes back—undoubtedly via Arabic—to a Syriac stanzaic poem (*soḡiṭā*) recently edited by S. P. Brock.