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References to the *Shepherd of Hermas* at the Monastery of Gunda Gundē

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For many decades, the Estifānosite monastery of Gunda Gundē (Āgāmē, Tegrāy) was the only place in Ethiopia Western scholarship associated with the *Shepherd of Hermas*. It was there that a transcription was prepared for Antoine d’Abbadie in 1847¹, the first evidence to arise for the Ethiopic translation. And it was also from there, ca. 1940, that Antonio Mordini acquired the late-medieval copy now in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma, Italy (Parm. 3842)². New finds in the last decade, both of extant textual exemplars and records of lost ones³, have allowed for the emergence of a more balanced picture of the *Shepherd*’s transmission in the Horn of Africa, with the special role formerly allocated to Gunda Gundē accordingly – and rightfully – diminished in the process.

Yet, though obviously a crucial element, manuscripts of the text hardly provide the sole basis for discussing its history in sub-Saharan Africa or at Gunda Gundē. The *Shepherd of Hermas* was not merely preserved; it was *read*, at least by a select few, both at this monastery and at others⁴.

* The authors would like to thank James Hamrick for his comments on sections of this article in an earlier form.

1. A. D’ABBADIE, *Hermae Pastor: Aethiopice primum edidit et aethiopica latine vertit* (Abhandlungen des Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, II/1), Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1860, pp. v-vi.

2. A. MORDINI, *Informazioni preliminari sui risultati delle mie ricerche in Etiopia dal 1939 al 1944*, in *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici* 4 (1946 [pub. 1947]) 145-154, p. 153; L. FARINELLI *et al.*, *I manoscritti etiopici di Antonio Mordini alla Biblioteca Palatina*, in *Malacoda* 57 (1994) 11-28.

3. T. ERHO, *A Third Ethiopic Witness to the Shepherd of Hermas*, in *La Parola del Passato* 386 (2012) 363-370; ID., *The Shepherd of Hermas in Ethiopia*, in P. NICELLI (ed.), *L’Africa, L’Oriente Mediterraneo e l’Europa: Tradizioni e culture a confronto* (Africana Ambrosiana, 1), Roma, Bulzoni Editore, 2015, 97-117; ID., *A Fourth Ethiopic Witness to the Shepherd of Hermas*, in M. TOCA – D. BATOVICI (eds.), *Caught in Translation: Studies on Versions of Late-Antique Christian Literature* (Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity, 17), Leiden – Boston, MA, Brill, 2020, 241-266. Further unpublished instances of the *Shepherd* in Ethiopian inventory lists have been more recently identified.

4. The book exerted a significant influence upon hagiographies at Dabra Māryām Qohāyn according to M. VILLA, *Filologia e linguistica dei testi gə’əz di età aksumita: Il Pastore di Erma* (Studi Africanistici – Serie Etiopica, 10), Napoli, UniorPress, 2019, pp. 159-171. Another reference to the book in indigeneous Ethiopian literature appears in

Glimpses of this do not lie within the extant manuscript copies themselves in the form of readers' notes or the like, however, but in references to the book in indigenous works composed both within and outside of the Eṣṭifānosite movement.

I. REFERENCES TO THE *SHEPHERD OF HERMAS* UNIQUE TO GUNDA GUNDĒ

Unlike nearly all of its counterparts in the Horn of Africa in the late medieval and early modern periods, the monastery of Gunda Gundē was a robust centre of compositional literary activity. Judging from the surviving evidence, the majority of the efforts there seem to have lain in the hagiographical sphere⁵, but more general theological works are also attested. So few texts likely composed by this Eṣṭifānosite community are found anywhere else that works unique to the Gunda Gundē library (especially those copied in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century hands) can almost without exception be considered the monastery's own literary products⁶.

Gunda Gundē possesses a sizeable collection of biblical commentaries, all copied in early hands. While the longest of them have each been found elsewhere⁷, a number of shorter ones are unrecorded by Cowley, with no external copies of them presently known. The lengthiest member of the latter group, extant in one partial and two full copies⁸, is a commentary on

the recently published *Ethiopic Apocalypse of Ezra*, where Hermas is counted as a prophet alongside David and Ezra; see GETATCHEW HAILE, *A Short Apocalyptic Text Based on the Prophecy of Ezra (Esdras Salathiel)*, in *Aethiopica* 21 (2018) 28-86, p. 36 l. 16 (text) and p. 37 l. 16 (translation).

5. Edited and translated works of this type include A. CAQUOT, *Les Actes d'Ezrā de Gunda-Gundē*, in *Annales d'Éthiopie* 4 (1961) 69-121; A. FERENC, *Les Actes d'Isaïe de Gunda-Gundē*, in *Annales d'Éthiopie* 10 (1976) 243-294; GETATCHEW HAILE, *A History of the First Eṣṭifanosite Monks* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 635-636; Scriptorum Aethiopicum, 112-113), Leuven, Peeters, 2011; TEWELDEBERHAN MEZGEBE DESTA, *Gädlä Abāw wä-Aḥaw [Fourth Part]: Edition and Annotated Translation with Philological and Linguistic Commentary*, Dissertation, Addis Ababa University, 2019.

6. The one evident outlier is Hippolytus' *Treatise on the Antichrist*, published by A. CAQUOT, *Une version ge'ez du traité d'Hippolyte de Rome sur l'Antichrist*, in *Annales d'Éthiopie* 6 (1965) 165-214.

7. For example, the Copto-Arabic gospel catena covering all four gospels is found not only in the two-volume set of GG 104 and GG 122, but in single codices in two collections in Goḡḡām (EMDA 91 and Ṭānāsee 30). Pace R.W. COWLEY, *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation: A Study in Exegetical Tradition and Hermeneutics* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications, 38), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 443, this version differs so much from the two others limited to the Gospel of Matthew that it should be classified as a discrete work. A fourth witness to only the commentaries on Matthew and Mark was microfilmed as EMMML 8327.

8. GG 111 ff. 30v-71r (16th c.); GG 112 ff. 97r-125v (15th/16th c.); and GG 124 ff. 43r-48v (16th c.).

Ezekiel, which loosely cites the *Shepherd of Hermas* in the explanation to Ezek 40,19b-20a⁹:

ወአብአኒ ፡ መንገለ ፡ ሰሜን ፡ ወናሁ ፡ ደዴዴ ፡ ይኔጽር ፡ መንገለ ፡ ሰሜን ፡ ሰሜን ሰ¹⁰ ፡
አሕዛብ ፡ ውእቱ ፡ ወደዴዴ ፡ ክርስቶስ ፡ ውእቱ ፡ በከመ ፡ ይቤ ፡ ሄርማ ፡ አንቀጽሰ ፡
ወደዴዴ ፡ ክርስቶስ ፡ ውእቱ ፡ ዘይኔጽር ፡ ሰሜን ፡ ዘይቤ ፡ ዘተሰብከ ፡ ስሙ ፡ ውስተ ፡
ምድረ ፡ አሕዛብ ፡ በከመ ፡ ይቤ ፡ ኤርምያስ ፡ ፅህርት ፡ ይነድድ ፡ ወገጹ ፡ መንገለ ፡
ሰሜን ፡ ወሰፈሮ ፡ ኑጉኒ ፡ ወግድሙኒ ፡ እምላፊ ፡ ሥልስ ፡ ዝኒ ፡ ሥላሴሁ ፡
እምዓለም ፡ እስከ ፡ ለዓለም ፡

And he brought me to its north. And behold, the courtyard was looking to the north (Ezek 40,19b-20a). As for *the north*, it is the (GG 111 adds: earth's) nations. And *the courtyard*, for its part, is Christ. As Hermas (cf. *Sim.* IX,12,5 [89,5]) says, "As for the gate and the courtyard, it is Christ". The one *looking (to) the north*, it means the one whose name was proclaimed to the earth's nations. As Jeremiah (1,13) says, "A caldron burns and its face is to the north". *And he measured it, both its length and its breadth; this was three per side* (Ezek 40,20b-21a). (It is) his Trinity forever and ever.

While the only place where this commentary references the *Shepherd* by title, other passages might well allude to the book more obliquely, and the publication of this text as a whole is a *desideratum*.

One of the three manuscripts to preserve the commentary on Ezekiel contains further material relating to the reception of *Hermas* within the Gunda Gundē community. Located between commentaries on the Song of Deborah (ff. 129v-134v) and Numbers 19 (ff. 135v-140v) is a short section in GG 111 (ff. 134v-135v) with a series of abbreviated interpretations of various images and rare words from Genesis, 1 Esdras, Zechariah, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, 1 *Enoch*, Job, Joel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. The largely random selection and ordering of these books, lack of discernable underlying themes for the passages included, and mixture of interpretation of imagery and glosses for difficult words all suggest some form of notes compiled by one of the monastery's teachers. While not all elements are sensible or readily identifiable within the books denoted, which may be due to mistakes by both the copyist and the author, its general character is apparent from the first half of the section, wherein all of the references to the *Shepherd* lie¹¹:

9. Text principally following GG 112 f. 120r; a slightly variant textual form occurs in GG 111 f. 64rv, though resulting in almost no translational difference.

10. GG 111 reads instead **ሠሚንሰ ፡ ምድረ**.

11. Longer passages relating to Isaiah and Ezekiel follow after that of Joel. The paragraphing given here has been introduced to facilitate easier understanding of this material, and does not appear in the manuscript itself, in which GG 111 ff. 134v-135v stands as a single, undivided unit. Punctuation, however, has been transcribed exactly, despite the often odd usage of full stops (#).

ዕፀ : ሳቤቅ : በኦሪት : ኢሎያ ። በሄርማ ።
 ወይን : ኦሪት : ጽድቅ : ወንጌል ። አንስት [:] ነፋሳት ። ዘሩባቤል : ወልድ ።
 አእዋም : ነቢያት ። ነገር : ዘዕዝራ ።
 ልገመ : ፈረስ : ቅንዋት ። ፪ አድባር : ኦሪት : ወነቢያት ። ፬ አፍላግ : ፬ ወንጌላዊያን ።
 ሆሴዕ : አዳም ። ሰፎንያስ : ወዮሴዴቅ : ካህን : በየማነ : ወልድ ። ተቅዋመ :
 ማሳቶት : ማርያም ። መሰውር : ነቢያት ። ፯ ማሳትው : ፯ መዓርገ : [ክ]ህነት :
 ፯ አዕይንት : ፯ አብያተ : ክርስቲያናት ። መዓጽድ : ኑጉ : ፳ ራሳቡ : ፳ ጸመት :
 ዘይቤ : ወንጌል : ወኦሪት ። አንስት : ጸለ : የሐውራ : ውስተ : በቢሎን : ሰማርያ :
 ወኢየሩሳሌም ። ነፋሳት : ሰይጣን : በማእከለ : መክሊተ : ዐረር : ትነብር : ብእሲተ :
 ባቢሎን ። ነገር : ዘዘ : ካርያስ :
 ሮዲ : ቤተ : ክርስቲያን ። መተርኣስት : ዘዓጌ : ማርያም ። ዕፅ : ዘኢይትነገፍ :
 ቈጽላ : ማርያም ። ሰያብ : ርእስ : ወልድ ። ዘሄርማ :
 ፲ ወ ፬ ጸለ : ኢይትነገፍ : አቀጽሊሆሙ : ፲ ቃላት : ዘምስለ : ፬ ወንጌላዊያን ።
 ዘሄኖክ :
 ደመና : መስዕ : ሀገር ። ወርቅ : ማርያም ። ወአጥበጢ : ጸጎሊሆሙ : ሐዋርያት ።
 ዝማማት ። ልባብ ። ሕልባት ። አምባር ። ሕርመት¹² : መስቀል ። አመ¹³ : ዳዕሮ :
 ወርካ ። ዘኢዮብ :
 ዕፄ : ነቢያት ። አንበጣ : ሐዋርያት ። ደገብያ : ፫፻፲ ወ ፳ ርቱዓነ : ሃይማኖት ።
 አናዮዕ : መምህራን ። ሠርፅ : አሕዛብ ። ዘኢዩኤል ።

The wood of the thicket in the Law (Gen 22,13) is the willow in Hermas (*Herm.* 67,1 [*Sim.* VIII,1,1]).
 Wine (1 Esdr 3,10.17-23) is the Law. Truth is the gospel (1 Esdr 3,12; 4,33-41). Women (1 Esdr 3,12; 4,14-32) are the winds. Zerubbabel (1 Esdr 4,13 and *passim*) is the son. The forests are the prophets. The word of Ezra.
 The horse's bridle (Zech 14,20) is the nails. The two mountains (Zech 6,1) are the Law and the Prophets. The four rivers are the four evangelists. Joshua (Zech 3,3.6.8-9) is Adam. Zephaniah (Zech 6,10.14) and Jehosedak (Zech 6,11) (and) the priest on the right (Zech 6,13) are the son. The lampstand (Zech 4,2) is Mary. The funnels (Zech 4,2) are the prophets. The seven lamp(s) (Zech 4,2) are the seven ranks of the [pri]esthood. The seven eyes (Zech 4,10) are the seven churches. The sickle whose height is 20 (and) whose width is 20 cubits (Zech 5,2) is that of which the gospels and the Law speaks. The women going to Babylon (Zech 5,9-11) are Samaria and Jerusalem. The winds (Zech 2,6; 6,5) are Satan. She sitting in the midst of the talent of lead (Zech 5,7) is the woman of Babylon. The word of Zechariah.
 Rhoda (*Herm.* 1,1 [= *Vis.* I,1,1]) is the church. The cushion of linen (*Herm.* 9,4 [= *Vis.* III,1,4]) is Mary. The tree whose leaves do not fall off (cf. *Herm.* 52,3 [= *Sim.* III,3]) is Mary. The grey-haired head is the son. Of Hermas.
 The fourteen whose leaves do not fall off (*I En.* 3,1) are the Ten Commandments and the four evangelists. Of Enoch.
 The cloud of the north (Job 37,22) is the city. Gold is Mary. And their young ones suckled are the apostles. Halters (Job 40,20) are a harness. Nostril (Job 40,21) is a bracelet. Awl (Job 40,21) is the cross. The sycamore tree (Job 40,17) is a sycamore. Of Job.

12. Not found in Job, so presumably ጎርወት (40,21) is intended.
 13. Read አመ.

The caterpillar (Joel 1,4) is the prophets. The grasshopper (Joel 1,4) is the apostles. The locust (Joel 1,4) is the 318 orthodox ones. The young locust (Joel 1,4) is the teachers. The shoot is the nations. Of Joel....

Though exceedingly cursory, the quartet of interpretations for the *Shepherd of Hermas* represents the only known commentary on the text in Ethiopic. Moreover, its inclusion alongside Old Testament books in this context might imply that the commentator considered *Hermas* canonical, despite the lack of strong evidence for such a status elsewhere¹⁴.

II. THE *SHEPHERD OF HERMAS* IN THE HOMILIARY OF RETU‘A HÄYMĀNOT (FOURTEENTH CENTURY)

Tucked into the beginning of a Psalter, GG 136, is a single leaf, folded in half, containing a section of the homily of Retu‘a Hāymānot on Jesus before Pilate. A bifolium from the same manuscript containing parts of homilies for the second and third Sundays of Lent was also photographed at Gunda Gundē in 2006 within GG 208, and these now constitute the surviving remains of a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century copy of the homiliary of Retu‘a Hāymānot, for all three sermons are unknown in any other context¹⁵. Given this homiliary’s wide circulation throughout late-medieval Ethiopia, it is unsurprising that the monastery possessed a full copy, such a reconstruction being far more plausible than the later transplantation of a few leaves.

Despite being the earliest surviving major indigenous Ethiopian theological compendium, this homiliary has been almost entirely neglected by Western scholarship for nearly two centuries, perhaps due in part to Conti Rossini’s erroneous identification of the author of some of the homilies as John Chrysostom¹⁶. This particular use of the pen name Retu‘a Hāymānot (“the Orthodox”), commonly used by Ethiopian writers in the medieval period, instead likely derives from the fourteenth century, though further details about the otherwise anonymous author are wanting¹⁷. It is not yet

14. Cf. ERHO, *The Shepherd of Hermas in Ethiopia* (n. 3), pp. 106-117.

15. An account of the seventeen major witnesses to the homiliary is not included here since this will shortly appear in comprehensive form along with an edition and translation of Retu‘a Hāymānot’s homily on Peter’s denial, the first publication of any member of the author’s corpus, in T. ERHO, *New Evidence for the Apocalypse of Peter in Ethiopia?*, in D. MAIER – J. FREY – T. KRAUS (eds.), *The Apocalypse of Peter in Context*, Leuven, Peeters, forthcoming.

16. C. CONTI ROSSINI, *Notice sur les manuscrits éthiopiens de la collection d’Abbadie*, in *Journal Asiatique* ser. 11, vol. 2 (1913) 5-64, p. 15.

17. GETACHEW HAILE, *Religious Controversies and the Growth of Ethiopic Literature in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, in *Oriens Christianus* 65 (1981) 102-136, pp. 109-116; GETACHEW HAILE – W.F. MACOMBER, *A Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilmed for the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa, and for the Hill*

clear how many writers may be represented in the fullest form of the homiliary, especially since not all of the texts are explicitly ascribed to Retu‘a Häymānot, but the three homilies that reference *Hermas* each open with such an attribution, suggesting a shared origin¹⁸.

The homily on the four heavenly creatures is the best known of the trio, being one of only a few texts from the collection to be excerpted and appear in other contexts¹⁹. It reflects on the nature of the different kinds of angels in contrast with humankind and God. The angels are understood to have seven chiefs, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, Afnin, Phanuel, and Raguel, under whom there are various kinds of angels, including the four beasts, one group of the cherubim, bearers of God’s throne in the visions of Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10 and in Rev 4,6-8, and the twenty-four tribes of the seraphim. These beings are understood to be made of fire and water, two of the four platonic elements, and do not have flesh, although they may have wings, as well as eyes and other human features. They exist continuously in the presence of the deity, offering prayers on behalf of human beings. In the same way, God is described as having a head, hair, ears, eyes, etc., which, despite being reflective of how humankind was made in his image, is not revealing of his essence, something not for creation to fathom. However, God is also revealed through non-human

Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegetown, Vol. 6: Project Numbers 2001-2500, Collegetown, MN, Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, 1982, pp. 451-452.

18. Independently of the authors of this article, VILLA, *Filologia e linguistica* (n. 4), pp. 147-154 has recently identified and published two of the three references to the *Shepherd of Hermas* from Retu‘a Häymānot. As the authors of this article had identified all three and undertaken significant preparations for the publication of this set of material prior to the release of the aforementioned volume, and since Villa, focusing on the comparison of the “citations” to the text of the Ethiopic translation of the *Shepherd*, offers little context for these passages within their respective homilies in his work, a full contextual discussion still seemed warranted. The Ethiopic texts and translations presented here were compiled without any recourse to his work on the basis of collations and analyses of between eight and fifteen witnesses for each, including five or six fourteenth- to sixteenth-century exemplars. Villa’s alternate approach of providing a somewhat corrected transcription of EMMML 2375, an eighteenth-century copy transmitting a version clearly subject to some editing, seems rather questionable in the light of so much available earlier and textually superior evidence, some pieces of which have long been known in scholarship. See, for example, E. HAMMERSCHMIDT – V. SIX, *Äthiopische Handschriften*. Vol. 1: *Die Handschriften der Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, 20.4), Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1983, pp. 269-271. Indeed, A. BAUSI, *On Editing and Normalizing Ethiopic Texts*, in ID. (ed.), *150 Years after Dillmann’s Lexicon: Perspectives and Challenges of Gə‘əz Studies* (Supplement to Aethiopica, 5), Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2016, 43-102 has rightly criticized the base manuscript method, and the fact that only excerpts are being treated hardly justifies its application in this instance.

19. E.g. in EMMML 2087 ff. 160v-181v; EMMML 3516 ff. 3r-11v; EMMML 4800 ff. 92v-98v; EMMML 6892 ff. 3r-20r; EMMML 7636 ff. 189r-194v; EMMML 7840 ff. 33r-47r; EMMML 8136 ff. 120v-127r; EMMML 8373 ff. 67r-77v; British Library Or. 619 ff. 95r-105v. VILLA, *Filologia e linguistica* (n. 4), p. 152, n. 25 notes several others in the still often inaccessible archives of the Ethio-SPaRe project.

features, and the willow tree in the *Shepherd of Hermas* is cited as evidence for this within a very lengthy list of examples: "...milk and honey in the land of inheritance; the willow tree in Hermas (*Herm.* 67,1 [*Sim.* VIII,1,1]); and the foreigner in Abraham; and the bound lamb in Isaac; and the struggle in Jacob..." (ሐሊብ : ወመዓረ : በምድረ : ርስት ። ዕፀ : ኢጦያ : በሄርግ ። ወነግደ : በኦብርሃም ። ወበግዑ : እሱረ : በይስሐቅ : ወተጋዳሌ : በያዕቆብ ።)²⁰. The homily concludes by noting that although these features are understood to be real, they must also be recognized as separate from God's essence, which does not change when he is revealed in different ways: his essence must be clearly separate from any understanding of that of angels or humankind.

A much more substantial reference involving Hermas appears in Retu'a Hāymānot's homily for the start of the Lenten fast. It aims to bring together qualities of righteousness in threes, which it calls "trinities" because they come from the same source and have "one father and mother", such as silence, patience, and humility, and petition, pleading, and prayer. When any of these is separated from its counterparts, the homily teaches that they produce death.

According to the text, fasting is not simply abstaining from food, but remembering and fearing the creator, submitting to his love, delighting in him, and assisting those who turn to him. Fasting, moreover, includes reading the scriptures and following their commandments with joy and willingness, honouring the sabbath and appointed festivals, and obeying the judgements of the king and his nobles. Positive examples of those who fasted are given, among them Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles. Isaiah 58 is cited as teaching that true fasting is about meeting the needs of the poor and needy, and keeping one's mouth from speaking evil. Hermas likewise, according to the writer, was taught that a fast requiring no sacrifice was without value, only one that benefitted the poor. After referencing Hosea, someone who sacrificed all his possessions, as the concluding member of this trio of examples, many ways in which different parts of the body can fast are listed, the most important being the mind and abstaining from evil thoughts. A final major argument showing how humility, silence, and patience also constitute a "trinity" concludes the homily, wherein humble and arrogant biblical and post-biblical figures are given as contrasting examples: Pharaoh drowned whereas Israel was saved; Jezebel died whereas Elijah was taken up to heaven; Sennacherib vs. Hezekiah; the Philistines vs. Samson; the devil vs. the heavenly one (Jesus); Diocletian vs. the martyrs; etc.

Though rooted in the discussion about fasting and its subsequent elucidation in *Herm.* 54 and 56 (*Sim.* V,1 and 3), the passage attributed to *Hermas* in this homily does not hew closely to the Ethiopic text of the

20. VILLA, *Filologia e linguistica* (n. 4), p. 153 provides a longer, but not complete, citation from the list with an Italian translation.

book, but rather constitutes a loose paraphrase of elements most important to the argument being advanced²¹:

ሰማዕኬ ፡ ዘይቤ ፡ ሄርማ ፡ እንዘ ፡ ይጸውም ፡ በውእቱ ፡ መዋዕል ፡ መጽእ ፡ ኅቤየ ፡
 መልእክ ፡ ዘይኖዝዘኒ ፡ ወትረ ፡ ወይቤለኒ ፡ ሄርማ ፡ ታኣምርኑ ፡ ግዕዛ ፡ ለጸም ፡
 ወእቤሎ ፡ ኢያአምር ፡ ወይቤለኒ ፡ እፎ ፡ ትጸውም ፡ ዘኢታኣምር ፡ ግዕዛ ፡ ለጸም ፡
 ወእቤሎ ፡ ምንት ፡ ውእቱ ፡ ግዕዛ ፡ ለጸም ፡ ወይቤለኒ ፡ ቦጸም ፡ ዘይበቀሶ ፡ ወቦጸም ፡
 ዘኢይበቀሶ ፡ ወእቤሎ ፡ መሀረኒኪ ፡ ጸመ ፡ ዘይበቀሶ ፡ ወይቤለኒ ፡ ኣምሳኒ ፡
 ትጸውም ፡ ኣስተዋጽእ ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ምሳሐክ ፡ ወሀብ ፡ ለርኑባን ፡ ለሰዕለቱ ፡ ወእንተሰ ፡
 ሰርክ ፡ ትደረር ፡ ዛቲኪ ፡ ጸም ፡ ትበቀሶክ ፡ ወእመሰ ፡ ኣንበርክ ፡ ምሳሐክ ፡
 ለድራር ፡ እንዘ ፡ ሀሎ ፡ ርኑብ ፡ በቅድሜክ ፡ ከንቶ ፡ ጸምክ ፡ በከመ ፡ ይቤ ፡
 እግዚእ ፡ ባዕልሰ ፡ ይጸውም ፡ እኮ ፡ በእንተ ፡ እግዚአብሔር ፡ ኣላ ፡ ከመ ፡
 ይትወቅብ ፡ ንዋዩ ፡ ወሰብ ፡ ሰማዕኩ ፡ እምኒሁ ፡ ዘንተ ፡ እቤሎ ፡ በቋዕከኒ ፡ እግዚእየ ፡
 እስመ ፡ መሀርከኒ ፡ ጸመ ፡ ዘታሐዩ ፡ ርእዩኪ ፡ ከመ ፡ ኢትበቀሶ ፡ ጸም ፡ ዘእንበለ ፡
 ምጽዋት ፡ ወከማሁ ፡ ምጽዋትኒ ፡ ኢይበቀሶ ፡ ዘእንበለ ፡ ጸሎት ፡ ወዘሰ ፡ ይብል ፡
 ይመጸውት ፡ ኩሎ ፡ ንዋዩ ፡ ወይብል ፡ ለምንት ፡ ሊተ ፡ ጸሎት ፡ ዝሰ ፡ ይመስል ፡
 ከመ ፡ ዘያመልክ ፡ ንዋዩ ፡

Listen, therefore, to what Hermas says! “While fasting on those days, the angel perpetually comforting me came to me, and he said to me, ‘Hermas, are you aware of the custom of fasting?’ And I said to him, ‘I know (it) not’. And he said to me, ‘How are you, who knows not the custom of fasting, fasting?’ And I said to him, ‘What is the custom of fasting?’ And he said to me, ‘There is fasting which is beneficial and there is fasting which is not beneficial’. And I said to him, ‘So then teach the fasting which is beneficial’. And he said to me, ‘As long as you are fasting, pay out every meal and give (it) to the hungry each day! But in the evening, you dine: this fast therefore benefits you. If you set up your meal for dinner since you are hungry, your fast is without purpose. As the Lord said, “Every owner fasts, not for the sake of God, but so that his goods might be preserved”. And when I heard this from him, I said to him, ‘You benefitted me, my lord, for you taught me fasting which enlivens’. See, therefore, that fasting without almsgiving is not beneficial, and likewise almsgiving is not beneficial without prayer! But the one who gives alms (totaling) all his goods and says “Why pray?” is like he who retains his goods.

Judging from his “quotations” of a plethora of other works, such paraphrases or loose citations from memory are quite common in Retu‘a Hāymānot’s writing²². Therefore, despite its distance from the source material, the passage above shows the active engagement of this writer with the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and his late-medieval Ethiopian understanding of the book as theologically significant.

Not previously recorded despite being located in one of the few texts found in all seventeen major witnesses to the Retu‘a Hāymānot

21. A slightly different Ethiopic text with an Italian translation was published *ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

22. Cf. ERHO, *New Evidence for the Apocalypse of Peter* (n. 15).

homiliary is a third reference to the *Shepherd*, contained within the homily concerning footwashing and the Last Supper. Taking inspiration from Jn 13,1-20, though also drawing creatively on various other biblical and non-biblical writings, its author seeks to affirm that the bread and wine are truly the flesh and blood of Christ and that taking the Eucharist is essential for salvation, as well as to reflect on the act of footwashing both as part of Jesus' salvific work and as an example for believers to follow.

The first portion of the homily is an imaginative expansion of Jn 13,6-11, with Peter questioning Jesus following the former's refusal to have his feet washed. The questions contrast Jesus' washing of feet with creative, judgmental, or salvific actions associated with water, including the Deluge, the gathering of waters during creation, the baptism in the Jordan, Jesus walking on water, and many others, with the longest discussion relating to the parting of the Red Sea. By this means, an argument is developed that it was not appropriate for one who performed such mighty acts to wash Peter's feet, while also laying the foundation for a later comparison of the actions of the chief apostle and Judas. This section concludes with a prophecy purportedly given to Pharaoh's mother that he would be destined for Gehenna. The same prophecy describes the corners of Gehenna as occupied by Pharaoh, Herod who slaughtered the innocents, Herod who murdered John the Baptist, and Diocletian, with Judas at its centre. Jesus' reply to Peter, denying him a share with Christ if unwashed is also extended, where after mentioning aspects of his crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension, the former questions whether washing Peter's feet would constitute a greater act than these.

The next section focuses on the washing of feet by Jesus as an example of humility, a crucial criterion for believers who seek to enter the kingdom of heaven. Abraham, who washed the feet of the three visitors in Genesis 18, is held up as the originator of the custom of honouring people through this practice, and an example to be emulated. Such humility constitutes an essential quality of God for bringing about salvation, and a necessary quality for believers to receive salvation according to Retu'a Hāymānot.

The text then transitions to emphasize the importance of taking the Eucharist following self-examination and repentance. The *Shepherd of Hermas* is quoted as indicating the destiny of believers who do not repent: their baptism secures them, and they will repent in Gehenna.

ዝኼ : እለ : ሞቱ : <ከ>ሒዶሙ : ሃይማኖተ : ቅድስት : ጥምቀት : አልቦሙ :
 ሐደው :: በከመ : ይቤ : ሄርማ : ለዘ : የብሰት : ዕፅ : ኩለንታሃ : አልቦ : ሳዕሌሃ :
 ለምለመ : ይእቲኬ : ድሉት : ለእሳት :: ወዘሰቦ : ለምለመ : ቁጽለ : ለእመ :
 ወደይዎ : ውስተ : እሳት : ኢይውዒ : አላ : እሳቶ : ያጠፍእ :: ከማሁኬ : ለእመ :
 ሞተ : ክርስቲያኖዊ : ምስለ : ጥምቀቱ : ለእመ : ኢነሰሐ : በዝየ : በህየ : ይኔስሐ :
 በገሃነም : ወተሐጉሎሰ : ኢይትሐጉል :: ዘንተ : ንብል : ለእለ : ቦሙ : አበሳ :

ዘበሕግ : ወእለሰ : አበሱ : ዘእንበለ : ሕግ : ሎሙሰ : ኢንቤ : እንዳፈ :
 እግዚአብሔር : ያአምር : እስመ : መጻሕፍት : ዘዘዚአሆሙ : ይትናገሩ ።

This is those who died having denied the holy faith of baptism: they have no life. As Hermas said, “For the tree which has withered completely – it has nothing verdant upon it – it is therefore deserving of the fire (cf. *Sim.* IV,4 [53,4]). But the one which has verdant foliage, if they put it in the fire, it does not burn, but extinguishes its fire”. Likewise, therefore, if a Christian dies with his baptism, if he has not repented here, he will do penance there, in Gehenna; but he, having perished, will not be destroyed. This we say to those who have made a transgression in the Law. But to those who transgressed without the Law (cf. Rom 2), to them we did not say “Perhaps God knows” because the books each speak to (this).

After this passage, the story of a saint whose soul was rejected by Sheol because he repented and took the Eucharist despite having undertaken only evil deeds is offered as an example for all believers, indicating the supremacy of these two actions over all other deeds of merit. This section concludes with a discussion about the transubstantiation of the bread and wine, one which draws in part on the *Apocryphon of Habakkuk* (CAVT no. 215).

Despite the preceding emphasis on repentance and the Eucharist, bearing fruit via good deeds receives further stress, with the Council of Chalcedon mentioned as evidence of those failing to do so. In addition to the fig tree cursed by Jesus in Mark 11, Judas is held up as the supreme example of an unfruitful life, with his key failure being a lack of repentance despite being offered many opportunities by Jesus. Judas is contrasted with Peter, who denied Christ, but repented and was restored. The homily concludes with a short explanation of Jesus’ apparent expression of fear in the Garden of Gethsemane as a ruse to deceive the devil and his minions.

Since the earliest manuscript containing the homiliary of Retu‘a Hāymānot is dated 1397-1398 CE (EMML 7028), a full half-century prior to the foundation of the monastery of Gunda Gundē, this institution or the Eṣṭifānosite movement cannot have influenced its author. Still, from the many surviving medieval manuscripts and fragments of this homiliary in geographically diverse locales throughout Ethiopia, it was clearly one of the most important theological works circulating when the monastery arose. What bearing, if any, it had upon Eṣṭifānosite theology remains unclear, but as a very prominent work of the era utilising the *Shepherd of Hermas*, it may have inspired the monks at Gunda Gundē to obtain, copy, read, or study this source text²³.

23. While no further texts are presented here, little doubt exists that other allusions to the *Shepherd* are to be or once were found in the Gunda Gundē library, such as in *Ṣoma degg*ā*; cf. VILLA, *Filologia e linguistica* (n. 4), pp. 145-147.

III. CONCLUSION

Despite the scarcity of extant Ethiopic witnesses to the text of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, references in indigenous Ethiopian writings demonstrate that individuals both at Gunda Gundē and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa actively engaged with the book. As already implied by the citations and allusions collected by Villa²⁴, a particular interest seems to have lain in the *Similitudes*, and the new material presented here similarly clusters around that section, with the *Visions* far less represented and the *Mandates* ignored entirely. Rarely do these come close to being strict citations of the text, a possibly disappointing outcome for textual critics. They, however, offer glimpses into a period where the *Shepherd of Hermas* was remembered, contemplated, and discussed, one which would eventually fade away as the book fell into increasing disuse.

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24. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 145-172.