

## **The Lively Practice of Dérsanä Rufaýel (Homily of Raphael) in Ethiopian Healing Tradition**

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**Abstract:** This article focuses on the living practice of Dérsanä Rufaýel in the Ethiopian healing tradition. Homily of Raphael is one of the earliest religious books in the EOTC tradition. The study examines use of Dérsanä Rufaýel in the healing tradition of Ethiopia in liturgical and spiritual practice. Major aim of the study is to identify the applicability of manuscripts of Raphael's homilies in alleviating ailments and other problems and to examine their significance in the Ethiopian tradition. It will be studied based on a critical edition prepared by the author from the main part of his doctoral dissertation. The content analysis of the critical edition of Dérsanä Rufaýel will, together with inter-textually related texts, show its significant impact on the Ethiopian tradition. The study also includes indirect observation of healing services in some of St. Raphael's churches in some parts of Ethiopia. The research shows that the Homily of Raphael is one of the available liturgical books on the motif of healing in the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahédo Church as well as illustrated in Mäséhäfä Sénksar and in the annual and monthly celebrations. Healing is thus particularly associated with the devotion to the glorious archangel Rufaýel, whereby the faithful followers of the EOTC celebrate this day and use the holy water to cure themselves from their ailments and other problems.

**Keywords:** Dérsanä Rufaýel, Healing, tradition.

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## INTRODUCTION

When one looks for liturgical books that offer prayers of healing and liberation from related problems, the faithful of the EOTC have at their disposal various devotional books. Among these liturgical books the Homily of St. Raphael holds the prominent place. This is confirmed by the large number of Churches and monasteries dedicated to the archangel Raphael in various places of Ethiopia.

It is important to take into consideration a unique importance given to the healing power of holy waters associated with the Archangel Raphael. First, there is Holy Water of St. Raphael emerging from different springs in many places in Ethiopia, visited by the EOTC believers and others to receive healings. Second, there are pools of holy water available in churches, monasteries or sanctuaries dedicated to St. Raphael. Third, the faithful has the unique occasion where they receive showers of water from rainfall at the annual festival, on the third day of Pagwémen (September 8); the rainfall is considered sacred (Holy Water), in association with St. Raphael, and is believed to be the source of healing and blessing of the people, cattle, and crops. Many gather in churches on this day and enjoy the celebration. In all localities of Ethiopia, EOTC believers congregate in the nearby rivers on the day of the 3rd Pagwémen Dawn and swimming is a common and unique trend. It must be underlined that the belief in the healing power of rainfall is associated only with the Archangel Raphael in Ethiopian Christianity.

This article aims to examine the unique place of Dérsanä Rufaýel, one of the religious books in the EOTC, in the Ethiopian spiritual practice, worship and healing tradition. The Homily is in Honor of Raphael, one of the seven Archangels. The study will be based on the critical edition prepared in a doctoral dissertation at Addis Ababa

University, in the Department of Linguistics and Philology.

The Ethiopian healing tradition consists of protection, instruction, healing power, casting out evil spirits and reducing the pain during birth giving. These phenomena were consulted in various contexts in Dérsanä Rufaýel. Inspired by the homily in honor of St. Raphael, members of EOTC and others used these healing practices to cure ailments, cast out evil spirits, get sustainable marriage, protect crops and cattle from diseases and pesticides, and have safe childbirth as well. One may compare the practices mentioned in the homily with those realized in concrete situations, giving rise to the following questions:

(1) What are the main influences of Dérsanä Rufaýel in the Ethiopian healing tradition?

(2) To what extent does Dérsanä Rufaýel do anything with healing and solving related problems that are still alive?

To address these questions, one needs to identify the healing narratives in the homily of St. Raphael which are relevant for the study of the living healing practice in Ethiopia.

For the data collection, one of the tools that could be used to obtain information about philological studies named document analysis is employed. It was undertaken to examine the healing traditions of Dérsanä Rufaýel with other inter-textually related manuscripts. It paves the way to discerning whether or not Dérsanä Rufaýel's descriptive practices are still alive.

On the other hand, indirect observations were also made to enforce the ongoing healing practice of Dérsanä Rufaýel. To summarize the results the researcher also discussed in qualitative methods by comparing observational results with some references. Regarding the procedure of the study, various

references were first viewed. Then observation checklists for data collection tools were created. After that, sample areas were selected, and data collected through indirect observation. Based on this collected data and a document analysis, the results were qualitatively discussed.

Hence the article is divided into five sections. The first part of the article presented the background of the study. Under this section, research questions, objectives of the study, and significance of the study were explained. Then inter-textual related texts were reviewed. Data sources and methodology was also explained in the later section. After that, the results and discussions of the study were briefly elaborated. Finally, conclusions were summarized.

## REVIEW OF INTER-TEXTUAL AND RELATED LITERATURE

The term Raphael is a combination of Rapha, meaning "to heal" and El meaning "God" in Hebrew, hence "God has healed." Latin authors such as Gregory the Great (*Evangelia Homiliarum* 34.9) interpreted the name as "medicine of God." In a Coptic text it has the meaning of "cure." CE.2052b-2054b

The *Encyclopidia Aethiopica* (2003: 136-137) Gianfrancesco Lusini confirms that the Ge'ez verb ደረሰ (*däräsä*), which has several Semitic parallels, describes the exegetical or homiletic activity developed by an ecclesiastical interpreter or *därasi* consequently its derivative *Dersan*. (ደርሶን) applies to the written result of this activity, i.e. to a new composition written to explain the sense of the Scriptures. The title *Därsan* (commonly translated as 'homily') usually stands for a text devoted to a specific theological argument. Any treatise or homily of a Church father, including the fathers of the Ethiopian Church, who were mostly anonymous, can be called *Därsan*. The word *Därsan* can designate not only a

separate text, but also a homiliary, i.e. a collection of texts having a religious figure as the main character. In this case, different units composing the collection belong to the hagiographic rather than to the homiletic genre, since they contain mostly narratives of miracles (*Ta'ammər*) performed by a religious figure (*Hagiography*).

The representation of Archangel Raphael in Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahédo Church faith tradition is dominant. (*Encyclopedia Aethiopica* 2003:265) St. Raphael is believed to be the third among the seven Arch Angels. In the many churches dedicated to Arch Angels, the Miracles and a corresponding Homily are read during the celebrations and hymns specific for each Arch Angels are sung.

## 1. Healing and St. Raphael in the Book of Tobit

The archangel Raphael appears for the first time in Tobit (3rd century B.C.), written by a Jew of the Diaspora, probably in Egypt. Here St. Raphael introduces himself as one of the seven angels who presents the prayers of the just to God and who stands in the presence of God (Tb. 12:15). Hence the many guises under which he helps people. Under the symbolic name of Azarias ("the Lord helps"), he accompanies the young Tobias, son of Tobit, on his journey to Raguel of Medes in Ecbatana, where Tobias meets Sarah (Tb. 5:13; 7:7). On the way to Raguel, Raphael frees Tobias from a monstrous fish that attacks him as he is bathing in the river Tigris (6:1-3); he later saves Sarah and Tobias from the snares of the devil Asmodeus, who has killed Sarah's previous seven husbands (6:14;8:3). Finally, as the etymology of his name indicates, he cures the blindness of Tobit, the father of Tobias (11:7-14).

Raphael said to Tobias before he reached his father, 'I give you my word that your father's eyes will open. You must put the fish's gall to his eyes; the medicine will smart and will draw a

filmy white skin off his eyes. And your father will no more be blind but will be able to see the light.' The mother ran forward and threw her arms round her son's neck. 'Now I can die,' she said, 'I have seen you again.' And she wept. Tobit rose to his feet and stumbled across the courtyard through the door. Tobias came on towards him (he had the fish's gall in his hand). He blew into his eyes and said, steadying him, 'Take courage, father!' With this he applied the medicine, left it there a while, then with both hands peeled away a filmy skin from the corners of his eyes. Then his father fell on his neck and wept. He exclaimed, 'I can see you, my son, the light of my eyes!' And he said: Blessed be God! Blessed be his great name! Blessed be all his holy angels! Blessed be his great name for evermore! (New Jerusalem Bible)

The theme which is narrated in the homily related to Tobit is as follows. Now Sara, the daughter of Raguel, was challenged while seven of her husband's passed away during sharing bed with her by evil spirit concealed and stuck between her laps. St. Raphael mentioned by the name of Zacharias and ordered Tobit to wed her then the archangel told him smoked the heart and liver of the fish to depart the Satan sprit from her and saved his life.

ወበይእቲ ዕለት ረከባ ለወለተ ራጉኤል ስዕራ እንተ እምነ በጣኒ ዘመዶን ወተአዖራሃ አዕማተ አቡሁ እስማ አስተዋስተዋ ፯ ዕደው ወቀተሎ ወጋኔን እኩይ አስምንዴዎስ ... (f.142a-b)

On this day, he met Raguel's daughter, whose mother and father married her to seven young men who were killed by an evil demon named Asmendewos.

The above extracted narration has St. Raphael as one major character. This indicates that the book of Tobit has inter-textual relationship with the Homily of Raphael. The homily also briefly narrates how The Archangel Raphael ordered the son Tobit to smear

the bile of the fish into his father's blind eyes to cure the eyesight (Encyclopedia Aethiopica 2003:123).

**2. Raphael as revealer, informer, and punisher in the Ethiopic Book of Enoch**

In 1 Enoch, Raphael is one of the four archangels, together with Michael, Suriel (or Uriel), and Gabriel (1 En. 9.1; 10.4-8), or as one of the seven (1 En. 20.3). St. Raphael is mentioned 14 times in 1 Enoch. Only once mentioned in relation to healing, in a general way.

Since Raphael is the angel of men's souls, he accompanies Enoch on his heavenly journey and explains the distribution of souls in the various sections of sheol after death (1 En. 22.3-6). He also appears with Enoch in the paradise of righteousness and tells him of the tree of wisdom (1 En. 32.6). In Enoch's vision, the archangel Raphael is charged by God to bind Asael hand and foot and to heal earth, which the angels have corrupted (1 En. 10.4-8; 54.6). This charge appropriately reflects the double meaning of the root rapha, "to tie" and "to heal." Raphael is also said to have power over illness and wounds (1 En. 40: 9-10).

ወይቤለኒ: ዝቀዳማዊ: ውእቱ: መሓሪ: ወርሑቀ: መዐት: ሚካኤል፤ ካልእ: ዘዲበ: ኩሎ: ሕማም: ወዲበ: ኩሎ: ቍስል: ዘውሉደ: ሰብእ: ውእቱ: ፍፋኤል፤ ወሃልስ: ዘዲበ: ኩሎ: ንይል: ውእቱ: ገብርኤል፤ ወራብዕ: ዘዲበ: ንስሓ: ለተስፋ: እለ: ደወርሱ: ሕይወተ: ዘለዓለም: ዘስሙ: ፋኑኤል:: ወእሉ: አርባዕቱ: መላእክቲሁ: ለእግዚአ:" 1 Enoch 40:9-10.

And he said to me: 'This first is Michael, the merciful and long-suffering; and the second, who is set over all the diseases and all the wounds of the children of men, is Raphael: and the third, who is set over all the powers, is Gabriel: and the fourth, who is set over the repentance unto hope of those who inherit eternal life, is named Phanuel.' And these are the four angels of the Lord of Spirits and the four voices I heard in

those days. (Charles Old Testament Pseudepigrapha)

### 3. St. Raphael in Ethiopia

#### The healing narrations of Homily of Raphael

The homily begins and reminds that the text should be read on the third Ethiopian Leap year for celebrating and acknowledging the mercy of Archangel Raphael which healed Tobit the son of Gebael. The homily is based on Tobias, Chapter 5 to 14,

It is briefly narrated that the vision of Enoch about the seven archangels in the heaven. In this narration Archangel Raphael mentioned as he was provided from God to cure the wounded body of believers and also purify their soul from sin.

...ዝንቱ ውእቱ ሩፋኤል ዘዲበ ሕማም ውቀስል ዘይትፊኖ ከመ ይፈውሶሙ ለነፍሳት ጸለ ቁስላ በንጢአት ወለቁስላ ሥጋኒ በሥጋ ደዌ...” (f.138b)

This is Raphael who is sent to the suffering and wounded to heal souls that are wounded because of sin, and those who have injuries in their flesh and hurt by leprosy.

The theme of Dersane Rufa’el also narrates how St. Raphael healed the daughter of Rakun and Raguel from an evil spirit that had made her widow and deprived her from having children. It is mentioned in the homily as follow:

...ወፈወሳ፡ ለወለተ፡ ራኩን፡ ወአውፅአ፡ ጸምኔሀ፡ መንፈሱ፡ ርኩሱ። ወወሀባ፡ ከመ፡ ትለድ፡ ወልደ። (f. 3a)

And He healed the daughter of Rakun and chased away from her an evil spirit; and he enabled her to give birth to a son.

From this narration, the Angel Raphael repeatedly reinstates broken marriages, allegedly associated to the influence of evil spirits, and blesses matrimonies by giving children too. Lack

of offspring is one among the major problems that couples in the EOTC face and aspire to spiritual assistance.

The next narration of the homily describes how St. Raphael resuscitates the life of a person who had nearly passed away; then the person gave witness about the clemency of the angel: It was mentioned in the homily as follows:

ወዘይእቲ፡ ሰዓት፡ ገብአት፡ ነፍሱ፡ ለውእቱ፡ ብእሲ፡ ንቤሁ፡ በኃይለ፡ ጸግዚብሉር፡ ወበስእለቱ፡ ለሊቀ፡ መለእክት፡ ሩፋኤል፡ ወሶቤሃ፡ ተንሥኦ፡ ውእቱ፡ ብእሲ፡ ወአኃዘ፡ ይትናገር። (f8b)

At this moment the man’s soul was restored by the authority of God and the request of the archangel Raphael. Then the man recurred then said to his brothers and parents, “Thanks be to God, who raised me from the dead, by the existing God and by the archangel.

In EOTC tradition believers pray to the angels when one of their family members falls ill badly. They also sprinkle the injured by holy water to get healing from the angel. After their restoration of health, the faithful usually provide alms in the name of the Archangel. They also give witnesses and announce the miracle of the angel in the church yard to the pilgrims during annual celebration day.

The last narration of the homily is about how St. Raphael saved the church guard from the trap of a big snake beast. It was explained the beast trapped the person and drawn in to the island in the sea. Then his relatives supplicated to St. Raphael with great cry to save him. Eventually St. Raphael snatched the person from the mouth of the beast and thrown to the land and saved him. This explains in the homily as follows:

ወሰምዓ፡ ስእለቶሙ፡ ወተሠሃሎሙ፡ መልአከ፡ ሣህል፡ ዓቢይ፡ ሩፋኤል፡ ወሖረ፡ ንብ፡ ውእቱ፡ አርዌ፡ ጸንዘ፡ ወስተ፡ አፍሁ፡ ውእቱ፡ አቃቢ፡ ወመልቀቆ፡ ወማኅቶት፡ ውስተ፡ ጸዴሁ፡

ለዓቃቢ፡ ወአውፅአ፡ እምደሴት፡ ወገደፎ፡ ኅብ፡ ጽንፈ፡ ባሕር” (ff. 26b-27a) ወበአሐቲ ዕለት ቦአ ከመ ያበርህ ማህቶተ ቅድመ ሥዕሉ ክቡር ፋፋኤል ወረከቦ ወርእዮ ዘረስሐ ፈድፋድ እብዝታ ቅብዕ እስመ ነበረ ብዝታ መዋዕለ እንበለ ይሕፅብዎ ወከነ ውእቱ ማኅቶት ዘእምወርቅ ንጡፍ ወነሥአ ውእቱ ኣቃቤ ወሐረ ኅቦ ባሕር ከመ ይሕፅቦ ወናሁ ኣርጭ ዓቢይ እምኣራዊተ ባሕር ዘይሰመይ ቅርሳ ወበዲቦ ርእሱ ቀርን ዓቢይ። ወሶቦ ርእዮ እንዘ ይመጽእ ወፅእ እማዮ ባሕር ወአታዘ ለውእቱ ዓቃቢ እንዘ ሀሎ ቀንዲል ውስተ እዲሁ ወመሠጦ ወውስዶ ኅቦ ደሴት ዘውስተ ባሕር

One day, he arrived to light a lamp in front of the picture of Raphael. He found that it was besmirched because of excessive use of oil. It was ignored without cleaning for a long time. The lamp was galvanized with gold. The guard took it and went to the sea to wash. When a great of beasts, its name is Qersa which had a great horn on its head, saw him while coming upon there. It came out of the sea and grabbed the guard, holding the lamp in his hand. It took him to an island where the sea was.

Moreover, there is another version of the Homily of Raphael in Hiq Estifanos in Wollo (EMML 1835). This manuscript has more inter-textual relationship with the selected Homily of Raphael for this article. The healing practices of St. Raphael were narrated as follow: Initially, it was revealed St. Raphael was healer for whom suffered by ailments and wounds in the homily as follow:

“...ዝንቱ ውእቱ ፋፋኤል ዘዲቦ ሕማም ወቀሳል ዘይትፊኖ ከመ ይፈውሶሙ ለነፍሳት እለ ቁስለ በኅጢአት ወለቁስለ ሥጋኒ በሥጋ ደጭ...” (f.138b)

“It is Raphael who is sent to heal people when they suffer from sickness and wounds.”

The other narration is about how St. Raphael departed the Demon Asmendeos from the daughter of Raguel. The demon killed her seven husbands when they married her. Eventually St.

Raphael departed the demon and she married Tobia the son of Tobit.

ወበይእቲ ዕለት ረከባ ለወለተ ራጉኤል ስዕራ እንተ እምነ በጣኒ ዘሜዶን ወተአዮራሃ ኣዕማተ ኣቡሁ እስማ ኣስተዋስብዎ ፯ ዕደው ወቀተሎ ወጋኔን እኩይ ኣስምንዴዎስ... ወተስምዓት ጸሎቶሙ ለክልኤሆሙ በቅድመ ስብሐተ ዕቡዮ ለፋፋኤል ወተፈነወ ይፈውሶሙ ለክልኤሆሙ :: ለጦቢትኒ ኣመ ያሰስል ጢስ። ለሳራኒ ወለተ ራጉኤል ከማሁ ይሁባ ለጦብያ ወልደ ጦቢት ትኩኖ ብእሲ። ወከመ ይእሰሮ ለእስምንድዮን ለጋኔን እኩይ እስመ ጦቢያ ይወርሶ...(f142a-b)

On this day, he met Raguel's daughter, whose mother and father were, married her to seven young men who were killed by an evil demon named Asmendeos....

The next narration of the homily mentioned how St. Raphael healed the eye-sight of Tobia's father by the bile of fish. According to the homily narration, the angel ordered Tobia to smear the bile of fish on the eyes of his father.

ወይቤሎ መልአክ ኣንዝ ለዝንቱ ዓሣ ወአሐዞ ውእቱ ዝኩ ወልድ ወአውፅአ ውስተ ምድር ወይቤሎ ዝኩ መልአክ ምትሮ ለዝኩ ዓሣ ወንሣእ ልቦ ወከብዶ ወሐሞቶ ወአጸንእ ዓቅባ። ወገብረ ውእቱ ወልደ በከመ ኣዘዘ ውእቱ መልአክ ወዓሣሁሶ ጡብሱ ወበልዑ ወጌሱ ክልኤሆሙ ወበጽሑ ቤጤሜስ ወይቤሎ ዝኩ ወልድ ለመልአክ(f146a) ... ወሐሞቶሶ ይኩሐልዎ ዐይኖ ለብዕሲ ዘቦ ጢሶ ውስተ ኣዕይንቲሁ ወዮሐዮ... ወሶቦ በእኩ ውስተ ጽርኅ ንሣእ ለከ ሕራረ ዕጣን ወደይ ውስተ ልቦ ዓሣ ወእምነ ከብዱ ወአጤሶ ቦቱ ወሶቦ ጸነወ ለውእቱ ጋኔን ይጌይይ ወኢይገብእ እንከ ለዓለመ ዓለም።” (f.149a)

The angel said to him, caught this fish. The boy took the fish to land. The angel said, “Eat the fish and take its heart, liver and bile.” Tobias did as the angel commanded. They fried the fish and ate it. Both went forward. When you arrive at Tanes, take the incense stick and smoke it with the heart and liver of the fish. The demon will go out with the smell and will not come back forever.

Furthermore, the homily mentions the Angel remind Tobia to smear the bile to recover his father’s eyes when he arrived at home. As he did smoke like things out of his eyes and began to see.

ወሐሞቱሰ ይኩሐልዎ ዐይኖ ለብእሲ ዘበ ጢስ ውስተ አዕይንቲሁ ወየሐየ... (f151a&b) ወትቤሎ ለአቡሁ ነዋ ወልድነ ሞጽአ ለዝኩኒ ብእሲ ዘሐሩ ምስሌሁ ወይቤሎ ፋፋኤል ለጦቢያ አነ አእምር ከመ ይትከሰት አዕይንቲሁ ለአቡከ ወአንተሰ ኩንሎ ዘንተ ሐሞተ ውስተ አዕይንቲሁ ወሰበ ተኩንሎ የሐሲ ወየሐየ ወይወፅእ እምውእቱ ጢስ እምአዕይንቲሁ ዘይሩ፡ (f.146a)

And the bile is good for anointing the eyes, in which there is a white speck, and they shall be cured... she told her husband, saying: Behold thy son cometh. And Raphael said to Tobias: As I teach you recover your father eyesight, anoint his eyes with this gall of the fish, Then Tobias taking of the gall of the fish, anointed his father's eyes and a white skin began to come out of his eyes,

The above two extracted parts of the homily has some traditional practices in Ethiopian traditional healing practices. The bile of fish used to cure different illnesses by local traditional healers. On the other hand fishermen pray to angels while they harvest fish and give alms after their fishing. These practices have relation with the narration of the homily.

**St. Raphael in some other Ethiopic texts**

The representation of Archangel Raphael in EOTC faith tradition is dominant. (Encyclopedia Aethiopica 2003:265) St. Raphael is believed to be the third among the seven Arch Angels. In the many churches dedicated to Arch Angels, the Miracles and a corresponding Homily are read during the celebrations, and Hymns specific for each Arch Angels are sung. ...

The following narration is also composed in the homily of Raphael as follows. The composition the homily began and reminded that this homily should be read on the third Ethiopian Leap year for celebrating and acknowledging the mercy of Archangel Raphael which healed Tobit the daughter of Gebael. The homily is based on Tobias, Chapter 5 to 14, and on the book of Enoch and also attributed to Abuna Zacharias.

... በስመ አብ ወወልድ ወመንፈስ ቅዱስ አሐዱ አምላክ። ድርሳን ዘይትነበብ አመ ለወረኃ ፫፻፲፱ን ዘከመ አሕዳዊ ወፈወሶ ለጦቢት ወልደ ግበኤል፣ ዘአሴል ውእቱ ፋፋኤል እምእለ ይተግሁ መላእክት ቅዱሳን ዘርእዮ ሄኖክ ወልደ ያሬድ... (f.137a)

In the name of God the father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God, The homily of Archangel Raphael, one of the dedicated to the mission, on how Enoch the son of Yared Saw and healed Tobia the son of Gebael from the Ase’sl side and it will be read on third Paguimen.

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church lectionary allowed 3rd Paguemen (September 8) for commemoration of St. Raphael (Rufa’el). It is one of the church service books.Accordingly St. Raphael is included in Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Lectionary on the specific day of 3rd Paguemen.

The Deggwa is a book of hymns or chants for the liturgy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. St. Raphael is one of the seven archangels celebrated in the Deggwa as one can see below. Matsehafa Deggwa narrate in this days the following chants:

ዋዜማ ዘቅዱስ ፋፋኤል “...መልአከ ፍሥሐ ዘይትነፀፍ ንጹሃነ ኅበ ጦብያ ፋፋኤል ወረድኦ መክረሠ ዓሣ ነሢኦ ሰብሐ ዘምስለ ሐሞት ከብዶ አዕይንተ ዕውር ስወቶ ወአጋንንት ሰደዶ...” ሊቀ ሥልጣናት ሀብተ ማርያም et. Al (1958)

Raphael, the angel of joy who protects the innocent, went to Tobias

with the heart of a fish along with the liver and gall, and thanked God, cast out the demons and saved his lost eyesight

ዋዜማ ዘሩፋኤል “...እግዚእ ለጦብያ ኣነ ውእቱ ሩፋኤል መልአክ ፩ እምነ ፮ ሊቃነ መላእክት ዘፈኖኩ ንቦ ጦቢት...” EMIP 1082\_AddisAlem (f72vb)

“The Lord said to Tobias, I am the one who sent to Tobit from the seven archangels.”

“...መልአክ ፍሥሐ ዘይትአጻፍ ነደ ንቦ ጦብያ ሩፋኤል ወረደ እምከርሠ ዓሣ ነሢኦ ሰብሐ ዘምስለ ሐሞት ከብዶ አዕይንተ ስውር ፈወሰ አጋንንተ ሰደደ...” EMIP Gesamt 1126\_AddisAlem084 (f170vc)

“Raphael, the angel of joy trained in fire, went to Tobias with a fish’s heart, liver, and gall, he thanked God and saved the lost eye sights and drove away the demons.”

Thus, the Ethiopian antiphony or Deggwa, also contains the above extracted chants in the commemoration St. Raphael on the 3 Pagwémen.

### **HEALING PRACTICES AND MIRACLES ATTRIBUTED TO ST. RAPHAEL IN ETHIOPIA (DISEASES/ POSSESSION OF EVIL SPIRIT)**

With regard to the narration of the homily, the Observation Results of Sample Places of St. Raphael Churches indicates the following lively healing practices of St. Raphael. The first statements of the observation checklist relate to the healing practice of St. Raphael's holy water for healing various ailments. This tradition is common in the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahédo Church named after St. Raphael. There is the holy water sprinkling service offered to the faithful to cure their diseases in churchyards. In addition, some springs near the church or monastery of St. Raphael, after being blessed by the church leaders, serve as holy water to merrily celebrate these events once a year on the 3rd Pagwémen. Many multitudes gathered

from different places to be healed and blessed with the holy water of St. Raphael.

The second observation checklist is designed to identify what ongoing practice of protection of St. Raphael's is best for the believers and their wealth. In this regard, it was common throughout Ethiopia to collect and store the rainwater from the 3rd Pagwémen in traditional EOTC practice. The rain of that day is considered the blessed waters of St. Raphael, so children and youth stood naked outside to sprinkle the annual blessed rainwater. Elders poured the rainwater into containers and kept it in safe places. They spray the entire house grounds to protect themselves and their animals from snake bites. Also, they believed that all their property was protected from voodooists. In addition, during the 3rd Pagwémen before sunrise, most EOTC believers descended to the nearby river and swam there to cure them of diseases throughout the New Year.

The third observational checklist is to identify the vivid practices of the Healing of Afflictions preaching of Raphael in the EOTC traditions. Most often they travel to the holy springs of St. Raphael's and drink and sprinkle and pray for seven days or more to obtain healing. They also brought holy water and mud around the spring to smear their bodies until they were healed. In addition, the rainwater kept at home on the 3rd Pagwémen is used for accidental health problems and the birth of children after reading and preaching the homily of Raphael.

The fourth observation checklist is designed to identify the supplications of St. Raphael in dangerous incidents. EOTC believers ask for St. Raphael when at risk. Merchants ask for the protection of St. Raphael from robbers when traveling through the risky areas. They also ask for the angel to protect them from epidemic diseases. They spray the holy water around their compound. The fishermen also ask St. Raphael for



protection from sinking of the traditional sailboat and better harvests. Afterwards, they also give alms to St. Raphael's Church.

The final observation checklist is to identify Saint Raphael's supplication for the establishment of marriage. In some cases marital failure occurred and EOTC believers who were victims of these incidents supplicated St. Raphael and sprinkled holy water. Having made a good marriage, they give alms and take the oath to St. Raphael's churches.

### **A COMPARISON BETWEEN TEXTS AND THE OBSERVATION OF THE HEALING PRACTICE**

This section of the article addresses discussion results which were presented from the collected data through document analysis and indirect observations. Based on this, the following results were drawn. It explores the use of Dérsanä Rufaýel in traditional healing Ethiopian spiritual practice and worship. As the data gathered from document analysis and indirect observation above has shown, the following healing practices were alive to date in the EOTC tradition.

The most common healing practices of Dérsanä Rufaýel are the holy water services in every church of St. Raphael in EOTC. Priests and clergymen chant Dérsanä Rufaýel and related prayer services on the water, and then made faithful followers to drink and sprinkle the worshipers to heal their ailments. This is a common vigorous practice in the yard of St. Raphael's churches.

The other practices were performed in the nearby spring water /Tsabal/ around the St. Raphael churches. It has traditional procedures to use selected springs as holy water. First hermits indicate the chosen sources as they had seen visions through their dream. After this, the head of the clergy blesses the well and announces to the EOTC followers that

they will receive healing there. Even some nonbelievers use this holy water to gain healing. They also use the mud taken from the spring's basement to smear their bodies and to cure their ailments.

Another lively practice of Dérsanä Rufaýel in the EOTC tradition derived from the study is the use of the rainwater of the 3rd Pagwémen as sacred water. Pagwémen 3 is the annual commemoration date of St. Raphael in the EOTC tradition. The rain that falls on this day is considered as holy water. All EOTC Christian followers are sprayed with rain outdoors. They also collected the rainwater in bottles and kept it in their house. They believe that the holy water of Rufaýel protects them from harmful creatures like snakes and insects. They also sprayed the holy water when the women gave birth to alleviate the hard labor. They also believed that rain on this day protects their crops and animals from pests and other diseases year-round.

The other traditional practice explained in the study's analysis is that some EOTC adherents faced marital problems while being repeatedly widowed or unable to have a child. During this incident they ask for the supplication of St. Raphael and drink the holy water. After their relief, they bring alms to the church of Rufaýel on the annual Memorial Day, proclaiming the angel's mercy and giving thanks in front of the multitude. In addition, EOTC supporters who have been staying near the Church of St. Raphael ask for the supplication of St. Raphael to protect them from various dangerous incidents. The most common are epidemics. They give the alms to the church. Also, some EOTC trailer fishermen around Lake Zeway are asking St Raphael to look after their sails and have had good harvests. They also give alms to St. Raphael's Church.

**CONCLUSION**

This article focused on the place of Dérsanä Rufaýel in the Ethiopian healing tradition. The Homily in Honor of St. Raphael, being one of the significant religious books in the EOTC tradition, a review of Inter-textual and Related texts of Healing was a necessity. Accordingly, the reader could notice the place of St. Raphael in the Book of Tobit, whereby he played the role of revealer and informer. The Archangel plays even the role of punisher in the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, without excluding the role of curing the wounded and the sick. The finding illustrates the valuable contributions of the manuscripts of Raphael's homily in the Ethiopian healing tradition. Data collection tools have been used to obtain philological information as well as conduct text analysis on Raphael's homily. On the other hand, indirect observations were also performed to enforce the ongoing healing practice of Dérsanä Rufaýel and to verify the homily narrative and actual living traditional healing practices of the EOTC devotees.

Besides, a comparison between the relevant texts where the Archangel Raphael plays a prominent role, and the living Ethiopian tradition of healing has been carried out. In this sense, the narrations of Dérsanä Rufaýel correspond to the living healing practices is revealed through indirect observations. The similarities reflect the major role of Dérsanä Rufaýel, including the rich witnesses of manuscripts, in connection with the healing practices conducted among the members of the EOTC.

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#### APPENDICES

Fig. 1 The Annual ritual ceremony of baptizing blessed water of St. Raphael on the day of 3rd Pagwmen or 8<sup>th</sup> September in EOTC tradition at the place of River Abay under the old Abay bridge near to St. Raphael Church pilgrims crossing the river from Šäwa to Goêam and from Goêam to Šäwa at eve towards both sides of the river and bathe at dawn in the sanctified river water.

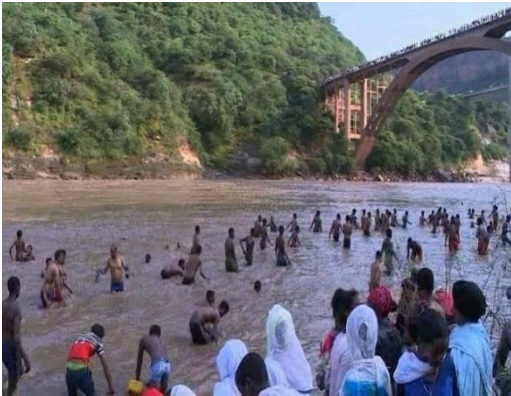


Fig. 2 Areal map of St. Raphael Church besides the Abay River near the Abay (Hidase) Bridge.

