

## CURATIVE TERMINOLOGY IN THE ACCOUNT OF THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN AT BETHESDA POOL

RĂZVAN PERȘA\*

**ABSTRACT.** The importance of healing in the biblical texts is determined by the use of a precise terminology, which designates multiple therapeutic actions. Analysing the Greek language of healing in the Gospel of John can prove this. The central lexical element around the theme of healing developed in the Gospel of John is the Greek adjective ὑγιής. Used as an antithetical description to the noun ἀσθένεια, this adjective indicates, according to the Gospel of John, a new existential reality concretised in a new moral life. The main thesis of the paper is that the Johannine term ὑγιής involves a holistic existential dimension of human health. An important part before analysing the occurrences of ὑγιής in the New Testament is given by the need of etymological foundation for conceptualizing the health in the Greek world and in the same time the need of emphasizing the Old Testament Hebrew and Judeo-Hellenist perspectives on health. This will give us the possibility to determine the importance of the Johannine healing terminology in the precise social, historical, cultural and linguistic context.

**Keywords:** health, holistic healing, Gospel of John, Bethesda Pool

### Introduction

Often interpreted as symbolic or allegorical *topos*<sup>1</sup>, or as curative place of divine love, or as the image of the inefficiency of the Jewish Law, the Bethesda pool was and is of great interest for scholars, theologians and archaeologists, especially after the excavations of the site<sup>2</sup>, between 1957-1962<sup>3</sup>. The results of

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\* PhD Candidate, University Aurel Vlaicu, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Arad, Romania. Email: persarazvan@gmail.com.

<sup>1</sup> John Marsh, *The Gospel of Saint John* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), pp. 245-246.

<sup>2</sup> Urban C. von Wahldt, "Archaeology and John's Gospel", in James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus and Archaeology* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 562.

<sup>3</sup> Although archaeological excavations began before World War II, very few results have been published: among them we can mention the work of Hugues Vincent, Félix-Marie Abel, *Jérusalem: recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*, vol. II (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1926), 90 pages. After the World War II, they were published more papers, as: Joachim Jeremias, *Die Wiederentdeckung von Bethesda: Johannes 5*

the excavations confirmed or rejected some exegetical theories applied to the text of the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John. In his book, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology*, John J. Pilch, after analysing the three healing stories from the fourth Gospel, comes to this conclusion: “for persons in John’s group whose relatives are ill or who themselves suffer from forms of immobility and blindness, the experience of the living Jesus in midst of the group brings restoration. It is access to the resurrected Messiah of Israel in altered state of consciousness, experiences that enables results such as those reported in the significant healing interactions of Jesus”<sup>4</sup>. In our modern society healing is seen just as a medical effort to restore somatic health, leaving aside its spiritual, psychological and social dimension.

The Gospel of John can bring up a different perspective of human health. In order to emphasize that the healing of the lame man at the Bethesda pool does imply a holistic dimension of health, we will analyse in this paper the curative terminology of this passage starting from the etymological and lexicological benchmarks. One of the most important words in this episode is the adjective ὑγιής (healthy), used in the Gospel of John exclusively with reference to the healing of the lame man at the Bethesda pool. For defining the term ὑγιής we can use lexicographical resources, which emphasize its diachronic<sup>5</sup> and synchronic development. According to the synchronic perspective, ὑγιής is used to describe human integrity, mental or somatic health<sup>6</sup> and cleanliness and it can be translated

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(Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), 26 pages, a paper that was received with great enthusiasm by the scholars. The most important papers are: Antoine Duprez, *Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs: à propos de Jean V*, Vol. 12 *Cahiers de la Revue biblique* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1970), 184 pages; Jacques Bernard, “Guérison de Bethesda : harmoniques judéo-hellénistiques d’un récit de miracle un jour de sabbat”, *Mélanges de science religieuse*, 33 (1976): 3-34; J. M. Rousée, “Sainte- Marie de la Probatique: état et orientation des recherches”, *Proche-Orient chrétien* XXI (1981): 23-42; L. Devillers, “Une piscine peut en cacher une autre: A propos de Jean 5,1-9a”, *Revue Biblique*, 106 (1999): 175-205; S. Gibson, “The Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem and Jewish Purification Practices of the Second Temple Period”, *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 55 (2005): 270-293; Urban C. von Wahlde, “The ‘Upper Pool’, Its ‘Conduit’, and ‘the Road of the Fuller’s Field’ in Eight Century BC Jerusalem and Their Significance for the Pools of Bethesda and Siloam,” *Revue biblique*, 1-4 (2006): 242-262; Urban C. von Wahlde, “The Puzzling Pool of Bethesda”, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 37 Sep/Oct (2011): 40-65; Walter Zanger, Urban C. von Wahlde, “Pool of Bethesda”, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 38,1 (2012): 8-10.

<sup>4</sup> John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 138.

<sup>5</sup> For the development of curative terminology in the Greek world, see: G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, G. Friedrich, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 8, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 309-310. For the Greek language of healing, see the great analyse of Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing from Homer to New Testament Times* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 1-102.

<sup>6</sup> H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon With a revised Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1842; Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg Neva Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament ANLEX*, vol. 4, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 387.

as: *healthy, wholesome, sound, fresh*<sup>7</sup>, showing in general human health.

In this paper we will try to analyse the healing terminology from the perspective of Eugeniu Coseriu's theory of lexical semantics<sup>8</sup>, the study of the domains of lexical signified, but at the same time, we try to highlight certain elements of grammatical meanings of linguistic units, especially those related to voice and time<sup>9</sup>. In the same *sphere of signified*, together with the word ὑγίης we can find the terms θεραπεύω and ίάομαι, which are used in the Gospel of John. Maintaining the theory that a conceptual domain is structured *on* and derived *from* a lexical domain, we will analyse the semantic domain of the curative terminology from the Old Testament perspective.

### 1. Etymological and lexicological benchmarks for curative terminology

The etymological evidences help us to see the term ὑγίης as designating an existential reality<sup>10</sup>. Ferdinand de Saussure<sup>11</sup> summarizes three arguments for the etymological interpretation of the word ὑγίης, borrowed from several Indo-European examples. The adjective ὑγίης is composed of ὑ + γίης, the first element ὑ, found in Sanskrit as the prefix *su*, means "good, well" and the second element γίης, coming from Proto-Indo-European stem \**gʷey*, from which the Greek words βίόω and ζάω<sup>12</sup> (βίος and ζωή) derived, means "to live"<sup>13</sup>. Thus, ὑγίης as

<sup>7</sup> Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, Hauspie Katrin, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003); Maurice Carrez, Francois Morel, *Dictionar grec-român al Noului Testament*, trans. Gheorghe Badea, (Bucharest: Societatea Biblică Interconfesională, 1999), 205; William Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 832; A. Bailly, *Abrégé du dictionnaire grec – français* (Paris: Hachette, 1969), 892; G. Ioanidu, *Dictionar elino-românească tradus dupa al lui Skarlat D. Vizantie*, vol. 2, (Bucharest: Tipografia Statului, 1862), 836.

<sup>8</sup> For Eugeniu Coseriu's theory of lexical semantics, see: Dirk Geeraerts, *Theories of Lexical Semantics* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 77-80.

<sup>9</sup> Eugen Munteanu, *Lexicologia biblică românească*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2008), 246.

<sup>10</sup> Johann Baptist Hofmann, *Ετυμολογικόν λεξικόν τῆς ἀρχαίας ἐλληνικῆς* (Athena: Παπαδήμας, 1974), 455; Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la Langue Grecque. Histoire des mots* (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1968), 1151; Hjalmar Frisck, *Griechisches Etymologisches Woerterbuch*, vol. 2 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1960), 954-955; Emile Boisacq, *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Grecque. Etudiee dans ses rapports avec les autres Langues Indo-Europeennes* (Paris Editions: Klincksieck, 1916), 997; see also: Georg Curtius, Ernst Windisch, *Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie* (B.G. Teubner, 51879), 187.

<sup>11</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Recueil des publications scientifiques de Ferdinand de Saussure*, ed. Charles Bally, Leopold Gautier (Genève: Lausanne, 1922), 457-458.

<sup>12</sup> From the proto-indo-European *gʷey*, *gʷyā-* to live (ə=γ), *gʷiwos* - *gʷiywos*- alive; with the long vowel we have in Sanskrit: *jiva-*; in Old Persian: *jiva-*; Latin: *vivus*; Lithuanian: *gyvas*; Gothic: *quis*; with short vowel we have in old Irish: *beo*, *beu*; Welsh: *byw*; Greek: βίος. For the full development of the stem *gʷey* see: Winfred P. Lehmann, *A Gothic Eymological Dictionary* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 278. Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2, (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1959), 467-468.

<sup>13</sup> Michel Lejeune, *Phonétique historique du mycénien et du grec ancien* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972), 44 and 206.

an adjective with a stem in sigma, has as etymon the Indo-European construction *\*su-g<sup>wiy</sup>-es* or *\*h<sub>1</sub>su-g<sup>wih<sub>3</sub></sup>-es*<sup>14</sup>, which can be translated as “to live well, to live in a good manner” and is equated with the Latin term *sanus*<sup>15</sup>, from where we have the Romanian adjective *sănătos*. Etymological markers give us the possibility to place the term ὑγιής in the thematic area of life, an established topos of Johannine theology, ὑγιής and ζωή having common etymological components pertaining to the same semantic domain. However, Michael Weis assumes more convincingly that ὑγιής derives from *\*h<sub>2</sub>iu-g<sup>wih<sub>3</sub></sup>-es*, which means: “to have eternal life”. He compares ὑγιής with the Latin word *iugis*- constant, and with Avestan *yauuaeji-living forever*<sup>16</sup>. This idea is borrowed by Robert Beekes in his etymological dictionary of Greek and is considered the best etymological interpretation for this word<sup>17</sup>. In defining our term we have to start from the idea that it has to do with life, from the perspective of living well or eternal.

## 2. Curative terminology in the Old-Testament

In the Septuagint (LXX) we can find ὑγιής as a term used especially for bodily healing, showing by its few occurrences<sup>18</sup> the physical dimension of health closely linked to the spiritual dimension. The adjective ὑγιής is in the Septuagint (LXX) the translation of the Hebrew adjective חַי (hāy -living, alive, raw)<sup>19</sup>, or of the verb חָיָה (hāyā- to live, to be alive)<sup>20</sup>, or of the phrase בְּשָׁלוֹם (bēšālōm- in completeness, soundness, welfare, peace)<sup>21</sup>. Somatic health is placed at the level of daily existence, as part of biological life embedded in the meaning of the verb חָיָה

<sup>14</sup> Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vol. 2, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 1525.

<sup>15</sup> Michiel de Vaan, Michiel Arnaud Cor de Vaan, *Etymological dictionary of Latin and the other Italic languages*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 538.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Weiss, “Life everlasting: Latin *iugis* “everflowing”, Greek ὑγιής, Gothic *ajukdups* “eternity” and Avestan *yauuaeji* (living forever)”, *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 55 (1994): 131-156.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, 1525.

<sup>18</sup> The word is used 9 times in LXX: Lev. 13:10,15<sup>x2</sup>,16; Joshua 10:21; Isaiah 38:21; Tobit 12:3; Wisdom Sir. 17:28, Wisdom Sir. 30:14;

<sup>19</sup> Used in Lev. 13:10,15<sup>x2</sup>,16 for *bāšār hāy* (raw flesh) as a sign of a skin disease cf. G. J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1979), 198.

<sup>20</sup> Used in Isaiah 38:21: καὶ εἶπεν Ησαίας πρὸς Εζεκιαν λαβὲ πάλῃθην ἐκ σύκων καὶ τρίψον καὶ κατέπλασαι καὶ ὑγιής ἔσῃ | *And Isaiah had said to Ezekia “Take a cake of figs, and apply it to the boil and he shall live”*. J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 1-39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 691.

<sup>21</sup> Used in Joshua 10:21 for describing the returning of the people in the camp. W. L. Holladay, Ludwig Köhler, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 371; Alfredo E Tuggy, *Lexico Griego Español de Nuevo Testamento* (Editorial Mundo Hispano, 2003), 157; Ulrich Luck, “ὑγιής, ὑγιαίνω,” in Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, vol. 8, 310-311;

(*ḥāyā- to live*)<sup>22</sup>. The difference between the Hebrew and the Greek conceptualization of health is given by their vision of the world manifested in language. In the Jewish view, the term שְׁלֹמֶה (*šalōm*, equivalent to the Greek word εἰρήνη) indicates the fullness, completeness of bodily and spiritual health, in perfect harmony<sup>23</sup>, interfering sometimes with the sense of the Greek equivalent ὑγίης, as in Isaiah 38:21.

The two occurrences of the term ὑγίης in the book of the Wisdom of the son of Sirach<sup>24</sup> link the Hebrew concept of health with the Greek one, which can be designated as a way of restoring the human condition<sup>25</sup>. However, in the Wisdom Sir. 30:14, Codex B, the only manuscript that preserves the Hebrew version of the book, the term ὑγίης is equivalent to the Hebrew חַי (ḥāy-alive).<sup>26</sup>

In the book of Tobit, ὑγίης is used to describe the result of the verb θεραπεύω. These two words, ὑγίης and θεραπεύω<sup>27</sup>, and the verb ἰάομαι are the most important terms belonging to the semantic domain of healing. Therefore, to determine the full sense of the word ὑγίης, we must analyse, in addition to its occurrences, the verbs θεραπεύω and ἰάομαι in LXX, by tracing the equivalences with the terms of the Masoretic text. The verb ἰάομαι is used more than the denominative verb θεραπεύω<sup>28</sup>, but the semantic domain of θεραπεύω is more developed than that of ἰάομαι, being

<sup>22</sup> *To be healthy*, from the Jewish perspective is synonymous with *to live*. The semantic connexion between health and life is not specific just for Hebrew, we can find examples in the Acadian and Aramaic terminology about health. Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Zondervan, 1995), 32-33.

<sup>23</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "Health and healing in the Old Testament", *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21/ 3 (1983): 191.

<sup>24</sup> Sir. 17:28 ἀπὸ νεκροῦ ὡς μηδὲ ὄντος ἀπόλλυται ἐξομολόγησις ζῶν καὶ ὑγίης αἰνέσει τὸν κύριον | *Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead, as from one that is not: the living and sound in heart shall praise the Lord*; Sir. 30:14 κρείσσων πτωχὸς ὑγίης καὶ ἰσχύων τῇ ἕξει ἢ πλούσιος μεμαστιγωμένος εἰς σῶμα αὐτοῦ | *Better is the poor, being sound and strong of constitution, than a rich man that is afflicted in his body*.

<sup>25</sup> In the Hellenist world ὑγίης shows the restoration of the unhealthy condition of human nature brought through divine or human power to their original undamaged state of health and usefulness. Cf. Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 33 ἢ 101. The word ὑγίης shows in the same time the therapeutic medical healing and the divine healing, especially by the god Asklepios.

<sup>26</sup> Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts And a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* (Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 54.

<sup>27</sup> Tobit 12:3 ὅτι με ἀγείοχεν σοι ὑγιή καὶ τὴν γυναῖκά μου ἐθεράπευσεν καὶ τὸ ἀργύριόν μου ἤνεγκεν καὶ σὲ ὁμοίως ἐθεράπευσεν | *He brought me home safe and sound; he cured my wife; he brought the money back with me; and now he has cured you*. The verb θεραπεύω can be understood hear as a medical care and healing. C. A. Moore, *Tobit: A new translation with introduction and commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 267.

<sup>28</sup> The verb ἰάομαι is used 63 times in LXX and θεραπεύω ist used just for 24 times. See: Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 104, n. 8.

used outside the curative semantic domain<sup>29</sup>.

ἰάομαι is used as an equivalent term for the Hebrew verb רָפָא (*rapha*) and appoints the action of healing done just by God or by an agent through His power. If ἰάομαι is applied to the action of human healing, this healing is incomplete and helpless<sup>30</sup>. Michael L. Brown demonstrates that the semantic denominator of the Old Testament Hebrew examples of רָפָא (*rapha*) is not “to cure” but “to restore, to make whole”<sup>31</sup>.

From the Old Testament perspective, God is the only one who restores the creature to its fullness of health, as it is showed in His revelation in Exodus 15:26: ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι κύριος ὁ ἰώμενός (יְרַפֵּךָ) סֵע | *for I am the Lord who heals you*<sup>32</sup>. The Hebrew participles רַפְּיָךְ (*rōpā 'ekā*) and the Greek ἰώμενός do not have to be construed as medical technical titles as the word ἰατρός- *doctor* is, but more broadly, showing both bodily and spiritual healing. The dichotomy between somatic healing and spiritual healing is excluded from the Hebrew meaning of the verb רָפָא<sup>33</sup>. *The Healer*-title of God does not exclude certain human therapeutic medical practices<sup>34</sup>. But these practices are mostly designated by the term θεραπεύω and are seen within the semantic domain of the verb ἰάομαι.

If we refer only to instances in which θεραπεύω is used for a curative action we can see that it refers only to human activity, involving some knowledge of medical treatment. The meaning of θεραπεύω cannot be equated to a Hebrew verb because the given examples have no parallel text to the Masoretic text<sup>35</sup>,

<sup>29</sup> The verb means: 1. *to serve, to be serviceable*: a. As secular term in 2 Kings 19:25 ἐθεράπευσεν τοὺς πόδας; Esther. 1:1b; 2:19; 6:10: θεραπεύων ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ τοῦ βασιλέως, Ezra: 1:4; θεραπεύετε τὸ ἔθνος αὐτοῦ; 2:14; b. figurative Proverbs 14:19; 19:6; 29:26: πολλοὶ θεραπεύουσιν πρόσωπα; c. as a worshipping term *to worship a divinity* Is. 54:17: κύριον, Daniel 7:10; Judith 11:17: θεραπεύουσα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ; Sir. 35:16; Tobit 1:7; Wisdom of Solomon. 10:9 σοφία; Lamentation 1:25, 1:38; 2. *healing*: 4 Kings 9:16; Tob. 2:10; 12:3<sup>x2</sup>; Wisdom 16:12; Sir. 18:19; 38:7.

<sup>30</sup> See the examples in Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 106.

<sup>31</sup> See the demonstration in Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 25-31.

<sup>32</sup> J. I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Exodus*, Vol. 3 (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 2002), 213; W. H. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 578

<sup>33</sup> Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 31.

<sup>34</sup> The Hebrew perspective on healing was negative towards medical treatments due to interferences with pagan magic practices, which brought the wrath of God upon people. For this, see the example in 2 Chronicles 16:12, where King Asa had not turned to God during his illness, but to doctors. The passage has a moralizing structure because in Aramaic the term Asa means *doctor*. Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles, Word Biblical Commentary*, (Word Dallas, 2002), p.126.

<sup>35</sup> The book of Tobit has some fragmentary medieval copies in Aramaic and Hebrew cf. Robert J. Littman, *Tobit: The Book of Tobit in Codex Sinaiticus*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Brill, 2008), XXIII; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Stuart D. Weeks, “The Medieval Hebrew and Aramaic Texts of Tobit”, in Jeremy Corley, Vincent T. M. Skemp, *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit*, (Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005), 71-86.

except the passage in the Wisdom of the son of Sirach 38:7. But in this passage, found in Codex B, the only existed Hebrew manuscript that kept verse 7, the noun רופֵּן (*rôpē'*- doctor, healer)<sup>36</sup> is probably the equivalent for the verb θεραπεύω.

In 4 Kings 9:16 the Hebrew text is much shorter than the one in LXX, which adds the following: ὅτι Ἰωραμ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραηλ ἐθεραπεύετο ἐν Ἰεζραὲλ ἀπὸ τῶν τοξουμάτων | *for Joram king of Israel was getting healed in Jezrael of the arrow-wounds*. Θεραπεύω shows here a somatic medical care, the treatment and healing of the wounds.

The same idea is repeated in the episode of Tobit's blindness, chapter 2:10: καὶ ἐπορεύομην πρὸς τοὺς ἰατροὺς θεραπευθῆναι | *and I went to the doctor to be healed*. The difference between θεραπεύω and ἰάομαι is evidenced by the passage of Chapter 12, verse 3. Tobit's son uses the term θεραπεύω to describe the treatment and cure of his father, considering the angel Raphael<sup>37</sup> among those who are able to prescribe a medical treatment for healing.

However the angel Raphael uses the verb ἰάομαι to describe the action of healing, indicating another source of healing, namely the divine one<sup>38</sup>. The same difference between human and divine healing is emphasized by the Wisdom of Solomon 16:12: καὶ γὰρ οὔτε βοτάνη οὔτε μάλαγμα ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς ἀλλὰ ὁ σὸς κύριε λόγος ὁ πάντας ἰόμενος | *For it was neither herb, nor mollifying plaster, that restored them to health: but your word, O Lord, which heals all things*. The text contains a typological dimension too important to be overlooked.

The importance of this passage resides in the fact that it is a clear example of Hellenistic Jewish literature that provides a context for interpretation of the title of *Healer* given in the Gospel to Jesus Christ<sup>39</sup>. The author of the book sees in the trials from the desert of the chosen people wonders or signs through which God, or the Word of God, reveals himself through repeated healings. This idea is found in the Fourth Gospel too<sup>40</sup>. The human health or healing by βοτάνη or μάλαγμα is shown by the verb θεραπεύω and they have a limited power, but the divine healing, rendered by ἰάομαι, has an indefinite power as shown in verse 13: *For you have power of life and death: and you lead to the gates of hell, and bring up again.*

<sup>36</sup> Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, 65.

<sup>37</sup> The name רופֵּן means "whom God healed". W. Gesenius, S. P. Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, 953.

<sup>38</sup> The last researches shows that from medical point of view the Tobit's treatment could not be efficient for regaining his sight, therefore the healing had a divine origin. See: I. Papayannopoulos, "Tobit's Blindness", *Koroth* vol. 9, 1-2 (1985): 181-87. For theological interpretation of Tobit's sickness see: Micah D. Kiel, "Tobit's Theological Blindness", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 73, Issue 2 (2011): 281-298.

<sup>39</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), 60.

<sup>40</sup> For the authors who sustain this idea, see: Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 20-22.

The book of Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach introduces in the sphere of the signified of the verb θεραπεύω another dimension. Besides the curative action understood as the possibility to eliminate existing illness, the use of the verb θεραπεύω in Wisdom 18:19 designates a preventive or prophylactic action<sup>41</sup>: πρὶν ἢ λαλῆσαι μάθανε καὶ πρὸ ἀρρωστίας θεραπεύου | *Learn before you speak and care yourself before the illness*. If the analysed texts show some competition and subordination between the terms ἰάομαι and θεραπεύω, a radical change in the Jewish perspective is done by Jesus Ben Sirach<sup>42</sup> in chapter 38, who binds the assertion of Exodus 15:26, where God is presented as the Healer *par excellence*<sup>43</sup>, with the medical care and the therapeutic practice. This practice is accepted and honoured because God has created and established them as doctors<sup>44</sup> (v.1), the knowledge of doctors comes from God (v. 2), the power of God can be seen in the medical practice and in the science of preparing mixtures (μεῖγμα) or drugs. The main idea is that God uses doctors and their knowledge to fulfil through them the divine healing action of the entire humanity<sup>45</sup>.

This passage establishes the relationship between medical care and spiritual care, so in addition to repentance, prayer, inner purification and sacrifice, the presence of the physician is considered a necessity (v. 9 γὰρ αὐτοῦ χρεία), but the ultimate source of healing is God and the physician should also pray to God (v.14)<sup>46</sup>. The final conclusion is that the sinner, even if he calls the doctors will not be healed because the healing source is God Himself<sup>47</sup>, who created and taught the doctor, and He asks for spiritual rehabilitation in the same time with the somatic one (v.15)<sup>48</sup>. The request of a moral life for healing is clearly emphasized by this text. The change of mentality in the Jewish thought, although not complete, was due to the proximity of the Jewish-Hellenistic world<sup>49</sup> with the practice and the

<sup>41</sup> P. W. Skehan, A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: a New Translation with Notes, Introduction and Commentary*, (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 290.

<sup>42</sup> Howard Clark Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Vol. 55 Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 19.

<sup>43</sup> Friedrich V. Reiterer, "The Influence of the Book of Exodus on Ben Sira", in J. Corley, *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit*, 114.

<sup>44</sup> The verb יָקַח (*laqach*-take, take in the hand, carry along) is understood as κτίζω (*to create, build, found*). See. S. Noorda, "Illness and Sin, Forgiving, and Healing: The Connection of Medical Treatment and Religious Beliefs in Ben Sira 38.15," in: Maarten Jozef Vermaseren, *Studies in Hellenistic Religions* (Brill Archive, 1979), 219, n. 10.

<sup>45</sup> Frederick J. Gaiser, *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry* (Baker Academic, 2010), 121.

<sup>46</sup> Eric Ève, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), 107.

<sup>47</sup> For a Jewish legalist perspective on healing see: Fred Rosner, "The Physician and the Patient in Jewish Law", in Fred Rosner, J. David Bleich, Menachem M. Brayer, *Jewish Bioethics* (KTAV Publishing House, 2000), 47-57.

<sup>48</sup> S. Noorda, "Illness and Sin, Forgiving, and Healing": 221.

<sup>49</sup> Friedrich V. Reiterer, "Review of Recent Research on the Book of Ben Sira", in Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference*, 28-31 July 1996, Soesterberg, Netherlands (Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 40.

influence of Greek medicine<sup>50</sup>.

From the Old Testament we can conclude that the term ὑγίης is applied to somatic healing and was influenced by the Hellenistic meaning, but at the same time it is subordinated to the Hebrew concept of life. The term שָׁלוֹם (*šalōm*, equivalent to εἰρήνη) indicates the holistic dimension of health concretised in a new moral life as a ground for healing. Θεραπέυω means the prophylactic and therapeutic human healing action subordinate and dependent on divine healing emphasize by verb ἰάομαι. These terms designate together the divine action of restoration of the human creature through healing depicted by the verb ἰάει.

### 3. Curative terminology in the New-Testament. Ἰαγίης as a moral imperative

Before analysing the meaning of the word ὑγίης we have to show the differences between ἰάομαι and θεραπεύω in the New-Testament. If the occurrences of θεραπεύω are very few in the writings of the Old Testament, in the New Testament the verb θεραπεύω is used twice more than the verb ἰάομαι<sup>51</sup>. Its action, being a component part of the didactic messianic mission<sup>52</sup>, does not have the same connotations of medical therapeutic practices as found in Judeo-Hellenistic thinking.

If the term originally designated the secular service, moving towards the care of sick people through medical treatment, the verb θεραπεύω reaches another level of semantic development, meaning in this period: *divine healing, restoration of human health*, gaining soteriological connotations. In the Old-Testament the healing action was considered exceptional, in the New Testament it is normative for the mission of Christ<sup>53</sup>. What was in a constant expectation in the Old Testament it is now fulfilled in the Messianic era<sup>54</sup>. However the Judeo-Hellenistic meaning is maintained in the New-Testament by the Pharisees in their confrontation with Jesus.

<sup>50</sup> B. McCovery, "Ben Sira's "Praise of the Physician" (Sir 38,1-15) in the Light of Some Hippocratic Writings", *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 21 (1998): 62-86.

<sup>51</sup> The verb θεραπεύω is used in the New Testament for 43 times, Matt 4:23; 4:24; 8:7; 8:16; 9:35; 10:1; 10:8; 12:10; 12:15; 12:22; 14:14; 15:30; 17:16; 17:18; 19:2; 21:14; Mk: 1:34; 3:2; 3:10; 6:5; 6:13; Lk. 4:23; 4:40; 5:15; 6:7; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2; 8:43; 9:1; 9:6; 10:9; 13:14; 13:14; 14:3; Jn: 5:10; Acts 4:14; 5:16; 8:7; 17:25; 28:9; Rev. 13:3; 13:12;

<sup>52</sup> Louise Wells demonstrates that the verb θεραπεύω is used in the synoptic Gospels to show the effect of the presence of Jesus in among the crowds. In Matthew's Gospel the term can be a substitute for διδάσκω (*to learn*), the final action of the verb θεραπεύω is equated with the teaching and kerygmatic messianic mission. Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 130-131.

<sup>53</sup> H. R. Balz, G. Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 143-144.

<sup>54</sup> Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, 208.

This fact could be seen in the episode of the healing of the man with a withered hand on Sabbath presented in the Synoptic Gospels<sup>55</sup>. In the story of Mark and Luke, Jesus designates the healing as a soteriological reality: ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν ἀγαθὸν ποιῆσαι ἢ κακοποιῆσαι, ψυχὴν σῶσαι ἢ ἀποκτεῖναι | *Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?* The importance of this miracle for our analysis is given by the use of θεραπεύω in Mt. 12:13 in the context of the occurrence of ὕγις. In verse 10 the action of θεραπεύω is correlated with a specific interdiction<sup>56</sup> given by the rabbinic law<sup>57</sup> and is regarded as a violation of the Sabbath<sup>58</sup>: εἰ ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν θεραπεύσαι; | *if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath?* All the Sabbath controversies have healing acts as a main issue<sup>59</sup>.

The Pharisaic perspective on healing is that the healing action designates a secular cure activity involving a particular act or work which is contrary to restrictive sabbatical principles<sup>60</sup>. ἴαομαι is used in the New Testament to show the miraculous healing done by Jesus onto people. Most often this term is used to indicate the curative somatic healing<sup>61</sup>, but the expiatory and restoring meaning of the Hebrew verb נָפַךְ is maintained by the use of ἴαομαι in New Testament, with the meaning of *being free of mistakes and sins by healing*<sup>62</sup>. The verb ἴαομαι is used in the passive voice in order to highlight the direct intervention and the action of God<sup>63</sup>. We can find in the Gospel of Luke the middle voice of the verb in order to show that the action of bodily healing is performed onto people by Jesus<sup>64</sup>. The fact that the verb is not used with the active voice meaning, especially when the healing appears to be dependent on the faith of the sick person, signifies that the

<sup>55</sup> The account can be found in Mk. 3: 1-5; Mt. 12:9-14; Lk. 6:6-11.

<sup>56</sup> The Babylonian Talmud says in Yoma 8.6 that anyone who is in imminent danger of death does not have to keep the sabbatical restrictions *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. Jacob Neusner, vol. 5 (Hendrickson Pub., 2005), 323.

<sup>57</sup> Ulrich Luz says that Matthew: *is interested in the conflict with the Pharisaic opponents*. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew: A commentary*, Vol. 2, trad. James E. Crouch (Augsburg: Fortress Press, 2001), 187. This conflict is due to the interpretation of verb as an act against the Sabbatical laws. However, in verse 13, by using the adverb τότε and the historical present, the focus is on the one who suffers. J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, Paternoster Press, 2005), 489.

<sup>58</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publication, 2007), 464.

<sup>59</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 464.

<sup>60</sup> The same idea can be found in Lk. 13:14; 14:3; Jn. 5:10; 9:14.

<sup>61</sup> Mt. 8:8,13; 15:28; ; Mk. 5:29; Lk. 5:17; 6:18; 6:19; 7:7; 8:47; 9:2.11.42; 14:4; 17:18; 22:51; Jn.4:47; 5:13; Acts 9:34; 10:38; 28:8;

<sup>62</sup> H. R. Balz, G. Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary*, 170; Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (New York: American Book Company, 1889), 296.

<sup>63</sup> Mt. 8:8; 8:13; 15:28; Mk. 5:29; Lk. 6:18; 7:7; 8:47; 17:18; Jn. 5:13; Hebr. 12:13; Jacob 5:16; 1Ptr. 2:24;

<sup>64</sup> In the parallel passages the authors are using the middle voice just for the Old-Testament quotations: Mt. 13:15; Lk. 5:17; 6:19; 9:2; 9:11; 9:42; 14:4; 22:51; Jn. 4:47; 12:10; Acts 9:34; 10:38; 28:8; 28:27; The examples from John will be analysed in the next chapter.

healing is not a psychosomatic and cognitive process done by the person itself, but rather the healing is done by God through Jesus Christ.

Through the passive and middle voice usage of the verb the author of the Gospel gives to *ἰάομαι* two complementary meanings: *the direct act of God's presence* and *the bodily healing performed by Christ as God*<sup>65</sup>. If in the Old-Testament the act of restoration and reunification of the creation through healing, rendered by the Hebrew verb *שָׁחַ* and equated with *ἰάομαι*, was accomplished by God, in the New Testament this is done by Christ as the divine presence and power. In addition to these two terms, an important role for curative terminology is played by the adjective *ὑγιής*.

In the New Testament *ὑγιής* is mentioned for 11 times<sup>66</sup>. In Matthew 12:13, as stated above, *ὑγιής* is used with *θεραπεύω*. The healing of the man with the withered hand is rendered as *ἀπεκατεστάθη ὑγιής*. *Ἰγιής* is used in this account, as in Mt. 15:31, to showcase the result of physical healing, but with the use of the passive form of *ἀποκαθιστάνω* it means: *restoring human beings in their integrity as part of God's creation*<sup>67</sup>.

*Ἰγιής* appears in Mark 5:34 in the testimony of Christ: *θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· ὕπαγε εἰς εἰρήνην καὶ ἴσθι ὑγιής ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου* | *Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be whole from your suffering*. *Σέσωκέν*, as the indicative perfect active form of the verb, denotes a completed action with results in the present time<sup>68</sup> showing the fulfilment of the woman's desire depicted in v. 28 with the same verb with indicative future passive form (*σωθήσομαι*) and accomplished in v. 29 by her immediate healing<sup>69</sup>. This leads us to conclude that the two present imperative of Christ (*ὕπαγε* and *ἴσθι ὑγιής*) are not simple reiteration of the result of healing<sup>70</sup>. The phrase *ὕπαγε εἰς εἰρήνην* (*go in peace*) is an accurate translation of the Old Testament expression *לֶלֶךְ לְשָׁלוֹם* (*lêk lešālôm*)<sup>71</sup>, the meaning of *εἰρήνη* is directly borrowed from Hebrew and indicates the fullness of spiritual

<sup>65</sup> Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 161.

<sup>66</sup> Considering the text from Jn. 5:4 as an interpolation, and the Mk. 3:5 an equivalence of Mt.12:13, the term appears in the New Testament for 11 times in: Mt. 12:13; 15:31; Mk. 5:34; Jn. 5:6.9.11.14.15; Jn. 7:23; Acts 4:10; Tit 2:8.

<sup>67</sup> H. R. Balz, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 129.

<sup>68</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, (Zondervan Publishing House, 2002), 573.

<sup>69</sup> R. A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26, Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, 2002), 299. For the curative meanings of *σώζω* see: Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 180-191.

<sup>70</sup> J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 361. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Paternoster Press, 2002), 238.

<sup>71</sup> For the Old-Testament examples see: R. H. Stein, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 271.

health<sup>72</sup>, a moral life having a social dimension<sup>73</sup> and even a missionary one<sup>74</sup>. The imperative present form ἴσθι pictures a durative action<sup>75</sup> being a command to do something constantly and perpetually<sup>76</sup>, showing the permanent state of health. Thus, the phrase ἴσθι ὑγιής is a moral command for living a permanent healthy life. Through this analysis we can conclude that the term ὑγιής refers not only to bodily health, which can be deteriorated over time, but, beside the somatic dimension, it should be rendered as a concept of spiritual and mental health too. The moral imperative given above imposes a new permanent existential dimension and a new moral healthy life<sup>77</sup>.

In Acts 4:10 ὑγιής is used to describe the miraculous healing of a lame man carried out by Peter, indicating that the source of healing is Jesus Christ himself. The healing of the lame man is designated in verse 9 by the perfect passive indicative form - σέσωται- showing the divine origin and in the same time the somatic and spiritual meaning of the healing<sup>78</sup>. The holistic restoration of human health is strengthened by the use of the term ὁλοκληρία in Acts 3:16.

#### 4. The curative terminology in the account of the healing of the lame man at Bethesda Pool

The Gospel of John accounts fewer healings than the synoptic Gospels<sup>79</sup>, but these accounts are rendered as parts of the major theological themes of the Gospel, especially the healing through the power of the word<sup>80</sup>. Healing, understood as restoration to life, can be described as an issue in the Christological context that renders Jesus as *Life-Giver*. Accounted in the close proximity to another healing,

<sup>72</sup> W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 194.

<sup>73</sup> Marla J. Selvidge, "Mark 5:25-34 and Leviticus 15:19-20: A Reaction to Restrictive Purity Regulations": *Journal of Biblical Literature* 4 (1984): 622, n. 20.

<sup>74</sup> Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing*, 204.

<sup>75</sup> F. Blass, A. Debrunner, R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 172.

<sup>76</sup> J. H. Moulton, N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 74.

<sup>77</sup> John R. Donahue, Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, vol. 2 of *Sacra Pagina* (Liturgical Press, 2005), 176. W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 194.

<sup>78</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 300.

<sup>79</sup> In the account of the healing of the lame man at Bethesda pool the author of the Gospel uses three terms that designate curative actions: the adjective ὑγιής (in Jn. 5:6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 7:23 and in Jn. 5:4, the occurrence of the term ὑγιής being applied exclusively to the healing of the lame man), the verb: θεραπεύω (used only once in the whole Gospel Jn. 5:10) and the verb ἰάομαι (used only in Jn. 4:47, 5:13 and 12:40).

<sup>80</sup> As in Jn. 4:5; In 5:8; Jn. 9:7; Jn. 11:43; Larry O. Hogan, *Healing in the Second Temple Period*, col. *Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus*, vol. 21 (Fribourg/ Göttingen, 1992), 235.

the miracle from the pool involves a higher theological and Christological level of interpretation<sup>81</sup>, because Christ names Himself as ζῶοποιῶν (*He who gives life, he who makes alive*).

The curative terminology is used mainly with reference to the healing of the lame man at Bethesda Pool. Both adjective ὑγιής and verb θεραπεύω are being used just in this account. Instead, the term ἰάομαι, which has few occurrences in the Fourth Gospel, is connected with the theme of life and restoration to the true life.

Except the account of the healing at the Bethesda Pool, the author of the Gospel also uses the verb ἰάομαι as a curative term<sup>82</sup>, for the healing of the Official's son<sup>83</sup> in Jn. 4:47<sup>84</sup>. The specificity of the Johannine passage is given by the use of different terms in the same context for describing the holistic dimension of healing, compared with previous state, described by the verb ἀσθενέω<sup>85</sup>. The meaning of ἰάομαι is enhanced by the use of the verb ζάω (*to live*), showing that the result of healing is not given only by the physical recovery from the disease, but at the same time healing is perceived as restoring to life<sup>86</sup>. Ἰάομαι is closely related to the meaning of the verb ἡγῆ (ἡγῆ- *to live*), rendered in the Old-Testament as a curative term. Thus, in Jn. 4:47 ἰάομαι is used within the theme of life going beyond the simple understanding of healing as a biological and physical reality.

Ἵγιής is used for the first time in John's Gospel in the question of Jesus Christ in Jn 5:6: θέλεις ὑγιής γενέσθαι; | *Do you wish to get well?* as a solution to a former condition<sup>87</sup>. The question is an example of Christ's foreknowledge of the

<sup>81</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation*, 320;

<sup>82</sup> This verb is used in the quotation from Old Testament in Jn. 12:40: τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπόρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ἰάομαι αὐτοῦς. | *He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.*

<sup>83</sup> The word βασιλικός is used for a royal servant of Herod Antipas. H. R. Balz, *Exegetical Dictionary*, vol. 1, 208. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 206; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John, New International Commentary On The New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann, 2010), 276;

<sup>84</sup> The importance of this passage is given by the close relationship with healing at the Bethesda Pool. Some scholars consider that Jn. 4.46-54 and Jn. 5:1-47 are a single complete episode. cf. C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation*, 319; R. Brown considers the text of Jn. 4.46-54 as a passageway for the episode of the healing from Bethesda. Raymond. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, cxl-cxli.

<sup>85</sup> The verb ἀσθενέω designates the state of human helplessness and weakness at a psychosomatic level manifested through its effects, such as disease, somatic helplessness and mental incapacity, ethical and religious weakness manifested by sin and even economic failure. The term designates the "holistic" size human weakness. Gustav Stählin, „Art. ἀσθενής, ἀσθενεια, ἀσθενέω, ἀσθενημα“, in: Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, vol. 1, 490-493.

<sup>86</sup> R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 191.

<sup>87</sup> Although the author does not mention from which disease suffered this man, we can say according to v. 7, that it could be possible to suffer from paralysis or a severe locomotion difficulty. This disability last for 38 years. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 242.

sick man life<sup>88</sup>. The aorist participle form γνοῦς designates an action antecedent to the action of the main verb expressed by present<sup>89</sup>, showing that Christ comes towards the sick man because He is omniscient, knowing the condition of the fallen human nature<sup>90</sup>. The phrase πολλὸν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει reinforces the idea of divine foreknowledge, for the fact that γνοῦς as aorist participle is related to the verb ἔχει indicating a past action which is still ongoing<sup>91</sup>, a bodily illness from 38 years.

The first type of human health that we can highlight from these remarks is the somatic or bodily health, Christ being the one who heals bodily diseases. The Gospel of John describes the disease in terms of bodily suffering. In this biblical description we can see other elements of disease and a different vision of human health depicted by John the Evangelist. In order to do that we have to study the passage from a closer perspective.

The question of Jesus Christ: “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6) implies a psychological dimension of health<sup>92</sup>. The Greek verb θέλω is used in the 2nd person singular, Christ asking for the personal desire of the lame man in order to be healed. In the verse 14 the verb γίνομαι is used with its passive voice form, but in verse 6 the author uses the verb γίνομαι at aorist middle voice<sup>93</sup>. The question of Jesus Christ is very important because it requires a psychological desire of the lame man to be healed by Christ<sup>94</sup>. This idea is developed by St. Cyril of Alexandria, who says:

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<sup>88</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 210; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 268.

<sup>89</sup> “τοῦτον ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς κατακείμενον καὶ γνοῦς ὅτι πολλὸν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει” | When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been in this condition for a long time. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 624; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 243; For a different opinion see: J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 292.

<sup>90</sup> Stelian Tofană, “Coordonate și imperative ale misiunii Bisericii în lumina episodului “Vitezda” (In 5, 1-15)”: *Plērōma* 1 (2008): 12-13.

<sup>91</sup> J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. 3, 62; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 520; E. D. W. Burton, *Syntax of the moods and tenses in New Testament Greek* (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 31898), 10.

<sup>92</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 268; W. Barclay, *The Gospel of John, Volume 1* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2001), 209; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John, Black's New Testament Commentaries* (London: Continuum, 2005), 193-194. For a different opinion, see: J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 292.

<sup>93</sup> θέλεις ὑγιῆς γενέσθαι; | *Do you want to be well?* T. Friberg, B. Friberg, N. F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Vol. 4, *Baker's Greek New Testament Library*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 97.

<sup>94</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John, Blaker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2004), 180. John MacArthur emphasizes the importance of this question by saying that: “it secured the man's full attention, focused on his need, offered him healing, and communicated to him the depth of Christ's love and concern.” John MacArthur, *John 1-11, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006), 174.

“It is a clear proof of Christ’s utmost goodness that he does not waste a moment waiting for requests from the sick but anticipates their request with his loving kindness. He runs, you see, to the one who is lying down, and he has compassion on the one who is sick and helpless. But the question about whether he wanted to be freed from his illness was not an inquiry made from ignorance about something that was clear and evident to all, but an act to stir up more fervent desire and to urge him to ask with the greatest zeal.”<sup>95</sup>

However the psychological dimension of the question must not transfer the disease in the domain of psychopathology. The assumption that the lame man at the pool was suffering of a general neurasthenia that would have led him to a lack of desire for life and to bodily paralysis cannot be proven<sup>96</sup>. The psychological dimension of this question involves the fact that Christ is trying to test the will of the lame man whether he wants to be healed<sup>97</sup> and the fact that Jesus Christ can heal this person<sup>98</sup>. At the same time the answer of the lame man implies a new perspective on human sickness, the social one: κύριε<sup>99</sup>, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα<sup>100</sup> ὅταν ταραχθῆ τὸ ὕδωρ βάλη με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν ᾧ δὲ ἔρχομαι<sup>101</sup> ἐγώ, ἄλλος

<sup>95</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, trans. David R. Maxwell (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 137-138.

<sup>96</sup> W. O. Fitch says that: “My thesis is that the Fourth Evangelist has depicted for us here, not merely one whose long illness has robbed him of hope, but one whose malady originated in the unconscious desire to avoid the responsibilities of life.” W.O. Fitch, “The Interpretation of St. John 5,6”, in F.L. Cross, *Studia Evangelica*, IV (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 195. For different exegetical interpretations see: Martin Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts as Juridical Controversy*, vol. 132, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 63-64.

<sup>97</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 243.

<sup>98</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria says: “The question of whether he wanted to receive what he longed for contains the suggestion and implication that Jesus can supply it and is already prepared to do it. He is only waiting for the request of the one who receives grace.” Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 138.

<sup>99</sup> The vocative form of the noun κύριε can be understood in the Gospel of John as a christological address or as a polite way to address. In this passage the sick man uses just a polite way to address Jesus Christ, showing us that the man does not see Jesus as the Messiah or as the Healer but as a person that can help him to go to the pool. H. R. Balz, *Exegetical dictionary*, vol. 2, 329; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 243; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 269; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 293;

<sup>100</sup> The construction ἔχω + accusative case+ ἵνα+ subjunctive can be considered a translation of an Aramaic construction because in Greek the verb is used in this kind of cases in the infinitive form. Antoine Duprez, *Jésus et les dieux guérisseurs*, 137. C. Barrett considers that this construction with ἵνα is a result of the mistranslation of the Aramaic particle ܗܘܢܐ, which, intended as a relative, has been taken as a final particle. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1978), 254.

<sup>101</sup> The construction ἐν ᾧ is the only example in the Gospel of John used with a temporal meaning.

πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει | *Sir, I have no man*<sup>102</sup> *when the water is troubled to put me into the pool, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.* This answer enables us to see that the human health involves the restoration of the social status; the disease implies the dislocation from the social environment and the loss of any personal relationships with other people<sup>103</sup>.

These two elements can be highlighted by the fact that the term ἄνθρωπος can be understood both as *servant*, showing the deplorable social and financial status of the lame man because he was unable to ask or to hire somebody to help him, and as *friend*<sup>104</sup>, indicating the inability of the man to fit in that social context, or the incapacity to maintain a minimally social position, despite the fact that he was at the pool for a long time<sup>105</sup>. The main concern of the paralytic man at the pool was the fact that he has no one to help him and his social status was deplorable<sup>106</sup>. Unable to engage in social relationships he could not find a person to be actively involved in his life. This is the reason why he emphasizes the social aspect of his helplessness<sup>107</sup>. St. John Chrysostom believes that the social dimension of the disease can be cure by Jesus Christ's help, because with Christ nobody can say that he is alone: Οὐ γὰρ ἄγγελός ἐστιν ὁ ταράσσων, ἀλλὰ ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων Δεσπότης ὁ τὸ πᾶν ἐργαζόμενος. Καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν· Νῦν τὸν κάμνοντα

<sup>102</sup> Some Romanian biblical editions, as some English ones, translate „ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω” by *I have no one*, showing that the sick man was completely alone. For example, in the Bible from Pesta we can find this translation: „Doamne, eu nu am pre **nimeni** să mă bage în scaldătoare” (*Lord, I have nobody to put me into the pool*), *Sfânta Scriptură a Vechiului și Noului Testament, Edițiune nouă revăzută după texturile originale* (Pesta, 1873), 89; in the translation of 1924 of D. Cornilescu we have: „n’am pe **nimeni** să mă bage în scaldătoare” (*I have no one to put me into the pool*), *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură a Vechiului și Noului Testament, [trans. D. Cornilescu], traducere nouă, cu trimeteri* (Societatea Biblică pentru Răspîndirea Bibliei în Anglia și Străinătate, 1924); Gala Galaction translates: „Doamne, nu am pe **nimeni** ca să mă bage în scaldătoare” (*Lord, I have no one*), *Biblia adică Dumnezeiasca Scriptură*, trans. By Vasile Radu and Gala Galaction (Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă Regele Carol II, 1939), 1197; Cristian Bădiliță translates this passage: „Doamne, nu am pe **nimeni**” (*Lord, I have no one*), *Evanghelia după Ioan, introduceri, traducere, comentarii și note patristice de Cristian Bădiliță* (Bucharest, Curtea-Veche, 2010), 43.

<sup>103</sup> John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 120.

<sup>104</sup> W. Arndt, F. Gingrich, F. Danker, W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 68.

<sup>105</sup> Having friends and social relationships was an important and vital aspect for the life of a man in the Jewish and Mediterranean culture. John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, 128.

<sup>106</sup> Charles Harold Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge University Press, 1963), 177.

<sup>107</sup> The Romanian Theologian Andrei Scrima considers that the two parts of this answer imply the whole spectrum of human degradation. The fact that there was no man who can help him represents “an image of spiritual misery that rules our world”, “a picture of selfishness and lack of love over us all”. Andrei Scrima, *Comentariu integral la Evanghelia după Ioan*, (București: Humanitas, 2008), 69.

ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω<sup>108</sup>. So far the author of the Gospel speaks about three types of disease: bodily, psychological and social, a fourth type will be added in verse 14, that is the spiritual disease.

In this context of great suffering, Jesus Christ says: ἔγειρε ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει | “*Rise, take up your mat, and walk*”(John 5:8). The holistic healing is accentuated by the three imperative verbs addressed to the sick man<sup>109</sup>, two of them used in present tense and one in aorist tense. The first imperative verb ἔγειρε designates a continuous or perpetual action. This verbal form pictures an action in contrast to the previous one<sup>110</sup> expressed in verse 6 by the participle form κατακεείμενον. But this verb does not designate just the fact that the man should stand up, as we can see in some English translations, because in the previous verse the lame man stated that he was capable of walking, although with great difficulty, nor is a simple command, because for that it would have been used the aorist tense<sup>111</sup>.

We can translate the word ἔγειρε with *arise*. The same verb and the same translation can be found in the verse 21 of this chapter where Christ speaks about the resurrection of the dead<sup>112</sup>. This means that Christ is raising this man from his sinful life. The verb ἔγειρε is used both for body and soul<sup>113</sup>. This means that the man received both bodily and spiritual healing. The second imperative verb ἄρον used in aorist tense represents a momentary and unique action, but the usage of the imperative verb περιπάτει in present tense shows a progressive action<sup>114</sup>, emphasizing both the beginning and the development of the action<sup>115</sup> and the fact that the period of suffering is over<sup>116</sup>. The command of Christ to take up the mat does not represent a direct command for breaking the Sabbath, but a sign of the restoration of bodily health<sup>117</sup>. The state of his complete recovery from disease is

<sup>108</sup> „for now it is not an Angel that troubles, it is the Lord of Angels who works all. The sick man cannot now say, I have no man”. Saint Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and the Epistle to the Hebrews* trans. by Charles Marriott, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 14. Edited by Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1889), 125.

<sup>109</sup> John MacArthur, *John 1-11*, 174.

<sup>110</sup> F. Blass, A. Debrunner, R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar*, 173.

<sup>111</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 719-720;

<sup>112</sup> U. C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 218; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 243; Stelian Tofană, “Coordonate și imperative”, 15.

<sup>113</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 298.

<sup>114</sup> Buist M. Fanning had analysed the usage of the imperative form of the verb περιπατέω in the New Testament and concluded that it is used especially for healings. Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*, *Oxford Theological Monographs* (Clarendon Press, 1990), 343-344.

<sup>115</sup> J. H. Moulton, N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. 3, 77. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 721.

<sup>116</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, 180; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 244; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 294.

<sup>117</sup> G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary: John*, 74.

confirmed by the author of the Gospel: εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιής ὁ ἄνθρωπος /and immediately the man became well, (John 5:9). The temporal adverb εὐθέως and the word ὑγιής are used to show that the healing is instantly and complete<sup>118</sup>. In vv. 10-13, the discourse turns to the conflict between the Jews and the healed man<sup>119</sup>.

This polemic implies also the usage of curative terminology. The Jews are speaking about the one who was healed by using the verb τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ that according to their view represents a practice of secular healing involving a certain activity, which contravenes the law of Sabbath. The construction of this passage involves different words for disease and healing. The Evangelist is using three terms in order to describe the levels the healing of the sick man: θεραπεύω (v.10), ὑγιής (v. 11) and ἰάομαι (v.13). The paralytic man is called ὁ ἀσθενῶν/*the sick man* (v. 7), than τεθεραπευμένος/*the man who had been cured* (v. 10) and ὁ ἰαθεὶς/*the man who had been healed* (v. 13)<sup>120</sup>.

The final remark of the complete healing can be found in v. 14, where Jesus says: “See, you have been restored. Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you” (John 5:14). This is a proof that health is closely linked to a sinless life.

## Conclusions

In this paper, we tried to emphasize that the central lexical element around the theme of healing developed in the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John is the Greek adjective ὑγιής. Etymological markers gave us the possibility to place the term ὑγιής in the thematic area of life, an established *topos* of Johannine theology, ὑγιής and ζῶη having common etymological components pertaining to the same semantic domain.

From the Old Testament we have concluded that the term ὑγιής is applied to somatic healing and was influenced by the Hellenistic meaning, but at the same time, it is subordinated to the Hebrew concept of life. The term שָׁלוֹם (*šalōm*, equivalent to εἰρήνη) indicates the holistic dimension of health concretised in a new moral life as a ground for healing. Θεραπεύω means the prophylactic and therapeutic human healing action subordinate and dependent on divine healing emphasize by the verb ἰάομαι. These terms designate together the divine action of restoration of the human creature through healing depicted by the verb ἰσχύει.

<sup>118</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 269; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 212; Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Lettura dell'evangelo secondo Giovanni*, vol. 2 (Torino: Edizioni Paoline, 1992), 31-32.

<sup>119</sup> The term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is referring to the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people, especially not to the hole people. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 271;

<sup>120</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 295, n. 45.

Before analysing the meaning of the word ὑγίης, we have shown the differences between ἰάομαι and θεραπεύω in the New-Testament. If the occurrences of θεραπεύω are very few in the writings of the Old Testament, in the New Testament the verb θεραπεύω is used twice more than the verb ἰάομαι. We can conclude that its action, being a component part of the didactic messianic mission, does not have the same connotations of medical therapeutic practices as found in Judeo-Hellenistic thinking. If the term originally designated the secular service, moving towards the care of sick people through medical treatment, the verb θεραπεύω reaches another level of semantic development, meaning in this period: *divine healing, restoration of human health*, gaining soteriological connotations. We have seen that in the Old Testament, the healing action was considered exceptional, but in the New Testament, it is normative for the mission of Christ. However, the Judeo-Hellenistic meaning is maintained in the New Testament by the Pharisees in their confrontation with Jesus.

We have tried to demonstrate that the Johannine curative terminology involves a holistic existential dimension of human health, by emphasizing that, because the human being is a biological, psychological, social and spiritual reality, health contains four perspectives: 1. *somatic or bodily health*, because the Gospel of John describes the disease in terms of bodily suffering; 2. *psychological health*, involving the fact that Christ is trying to test the will of the man whether he wants to be healed; 3. *social health*, underlined by the fact that the lame man was unable to engage in social relationships, and 4. *spiritual health*, one of the most important.

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