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

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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 ὑγίης. 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 ὑγίης involves a holistic existential dimension of human health. An important part before analysing the occurrences of ὑγίης 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, 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, between 1957-1962. The results of

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4 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."4 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 ὑγίης (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 ὑγίης we can use lexicographical resources, which emphasize its diachronic5 and synchronic development. According to the synchronic perspective, ὑγίης is used to describe human integrity, mental or somatic health6 and cleanliness and it can be translated


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as: healthy, wholesome, sound, fresh, 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, 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. In the same sphere of signified, together with the word ὑγιής we can find the terms ἰάομαι and ἑρμαύαι, 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 ὑγιής as designating an existential reality. Ferdinand de Saussure summarizes three arguments for the etymological interpretation of the word ὑγιής, borrowed from several Indo-European examples. The adjective ὑγιής is composed of ὑ + γιής, the first element ὑ found in Sanskrit as the prefix su, means “good, well” and the second element γιής coming from Proto-Indo-European stem *gwey, from which the Greek words βιόω and ζάω derived, means “to live.” Thus, ὑγιής as

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8 For Eugeniu Coseriu’s theory of lexical semantics, see: Dirk Geeraerts, Theories of Lexical Semantics (Oxford University Press, 2010), 77-80.
9 Eugen Munteanu, Lexicologia biblică românească, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2008), 246.
11 Ferdinand de Saussure, Recueil des publications scientifiques de Ferdinand de Saussure, ed. Charles Bally, Leopold Gautier (Genève: Lausanne, 1922), 457-458.
an adjective with a stem in sigma, has as etymon the Indo-European construction *su-gwiy-es or *h₁su-gʷih₃-es¹⁴, which can be translated as "to live well, to live in a good manner" and is equated with the Latin term sanus¹⁵, 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 *h₂iu-gʷih₃-es, which means: "to have eternal life". He compares ὑγιής with the Latin word iugis- constant, and with Avestan yauuae-ji-"living forever"¹⁶. This idea is borrowed by Robert Beekes in his etymological dictionary of Greek and is considered the best etymological interpretation for this word¹⁷. 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 occurrences¹⁸ 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 (ḥāy- living, alive, raw)¹⁹, or of the verb חָיָה (ḥāyā - to live, to be alive)²⁰, or of the phrase בְּשָׁל֑וֹם (bešalōm - in completeness, soundness, welfare, peace)²¹. Somatic health is placed at the level of daily existence, as part of biological life embedded in the meaning of the verb ἁγιάζω.

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(ḥāyā- to live)\textsuperscript{22}. 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 שָׁלוֹם (šalōm, equivalent to the Greek word εἰρήνη) indicates the fullness, completeness of bodily and spiritual health, in perfect harmony\textsuperscript{23}, 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\textsuperscript{24} link the Hebrew concept of health with the Greek one, which can be designated as a way of restoring the human condition\textsuperscript{25}. 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).\textsuperscript{26}

In the book of Tobit, ὑγίης is used to describe the result of the verb θεραπεύω. These two words, ὑγίης and θεραπεύω,\textsuperscript{27} 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,\textsuperscript{28} but the semantic domain of θεραπεύω is more developed than that of ἰάομαι, being

\textsuperscript{22} 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.
\textsuperscript{24} Sir. 17:28 ἀπὸ νεκροῦ ὡς μηδὲ ὄντος ἀπολλύται ἐξομολογησίας ζῶν καὶ ὑγίης σῶσα 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 ὑγίς καὶ ἰσχύων τῇ ἐξ ἐξ ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐν ἐ
\textsuperscript{25} 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 si 101. The word ὑγίης shows in the same time the therapeutic medical healing and the divine healing, especially by the god Asklepios.
\textsuperscript{26} 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.
\textsuperscript{27} Tobit 12:3 ὅτι με ἀγείοχεν σοι ὑγίη καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα μου θεράπευσεν καὶ τὸ ἄργυρον μου ἤνεγκεν καὶ σὲ ὰμιμα ἰάεσαν | 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 θεράπευσεν 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.
\textsuperscript{28} 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^{29}. 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^{30}. 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”^{31}. 

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 γὰρ εἰμὶ κύριος ὁ ἰὼμενός (ךָרֹפְאֶֽ) σε ἵνα εἰμὶ θεραπεύωτας τὸ ἔθνος σου | for I am the Lord who heals you^{32}. The Hebrew participles רֹפְאֶֽ (rōpə’ēḵā) and the Greek ἰὼμενός 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^{33}. The Healer-title of God does not exclude certain human therapeutic medical practices^{34}. 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^{35},

^{29} 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: θεραπεύσαν ἐν τῇ ἁπλῇ τοῦ βασιλέου. Ἐστά: 1:4; θεραπεύετε τὸ ἐνοχὸν αἰτίαν; 2:14; b: figurative Proverbs 14:19; 19:6; 29:26: πολλοὶ θεραπεύουσιν πρόσωπα; c: a worshiping term to worship a divinity Is. 54:17; κύριον, Daniel 7.10; Judith 11:17; θεραπεύοντας 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; 12:3-12; Wisdom 16:12; Sir. 18:19; 38:7. 
^{30} See the examples in Louise Wells, The Greek Language of Healing, 106. 
^{31} See the demonstration in Michael L. Brown, Israel’s Divine Healer, 25-31. 
^{33} Michael L. Brown, Israel’s Divine Healer, 31. 
^{34} 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. 
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 אֲפֹרָא (rōpē - doctor, healer) 36 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 ἔθεραπεύετο ἐν Ἰεζραελ ἀπὸ τῶν τοξευμάτων | 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 Raphael37 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 one38. 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 ἰώμενος | For it was neither herb, nor mollifying plaister, 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 Christ39. 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 too40. 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.

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40 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:\[41\] πρὶν ἢ λαλῆσαι μάνθανε 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 ιάομαι and θεραπεύω, a radical change in the Jewish perspective is done by Jesus Ben Sirach\[42\] in chapter 38, who binds the assertion of Exodus 15:26, where God is presented as the Healer \textit{par excellence}\[43\], with the medical care and the therapeutic practice. This practice is accepted and honoured because God has created and established them as doctors\[44\] (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\[45\].

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)\[46\]. The final conclusion is that the sinner, even if he calls the doctors will not be healed because the healing source is God Himself\[47\], who created and taught the doctor, and He asks for spiritual rehabilitation in the same time with the somatic one (v.15)\[48\]. 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\[49\] with the practice and the


\[44\] The verb ἄναχ (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, \textit{Studies in Hellenistic Religions} (Brill Archive, 1979), 219, n. 10.

\[45\] Frederick J. Gaiser, \textit{Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry} (Baker Academic, 2010), 121.


\[48\] S. Noorda, “Illness and Sin, Forgiving, and Healing”: 221.

influence of Greek medicine. From the Old Testament we can conclude 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 (šaló, 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 verb ἱάομαι. These terms designate together the divine action of restoration of the human creature through healing depicted by the verb ξανά.

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

Before analyzing the meaning of the word ὑγιής we have to show the differences between ἱάομαι 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 ἱάομαι. 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. In the Old-Testament the healing action was considered exceptional, in the New Testament it is normative for the mission of Christ. What was in a constant expectation in the Old Testament it is now fulfilled in the Messianic era. However the Judeo-Hellenistic meaning is maintained in the New-Testament by the Pharisees in their confrontation with Jesus.

52 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.
54 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. In the story of Mark and Luke, Jesus designates the healing as a soteriological reality:

\[ \text{ἐξέστιν τοῖς σάββασιν ἀγαθὸν ποιῆσαι ή κακοποιῆσαι, ψυχὴν σῶσαι ή ἀποκτεῖναι} \]

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 \( \text{θεραπεύω} \) in Mt. 12:13 in the context of the occurrence of \( \text{ὑγιὴς} \). In verse 10 the action of \( \text{θεραπεύω} \) is correlated with a specific interdiction given by the rabbinic law and is regarded as a violation of the Sabbath:

\[ \text{εἰ ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν θεραπεῦσαι;} \]

if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath? All the Sabbath controversies have healing acts as a main issue.

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. \( \text{Ἰάομαι} \) 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, but the expiatory and restoring meaning of the Hebrew verb \( \text{רָפָא} \) is maintained by the use of \( \text{ἰάομαι} \) in New Testament, with the meaning of being free of mistakes and sins by healing. The verb \( \text{ἰάομαι} \) is used in the passive voice in order to highlight the direct intervention and the action of God. 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. 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

55 The account can be found in Mk. 3: 1-5; Mt. 12:9-14; Lk. 6:6-11.
56 The Babylonian Talmud says in Yoma 8.6 that anyone who is 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.
59 The same idea can be found in Lk. 13:14; 14:3; Jn. 5:10; 9:14.
62 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;
63 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 analyse 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 \( \textit{iáomai} \) two complementary meanings: the \textit{direct act of God’s presence} and the \textit{bodily healing performed by Christ as God}\(^\text{65}\). If in the Old-Testament the act of restoration and reunification of the creation through healing, rendered by the Hebrew verb \( \textit{kəḇər} \) and equated with \( \textit{iáomai} \), 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 \( \textit{ἡγίς} \).

In the New Testament \( \textit{ἡγίς} \) is mentioned for 11 times\(^\text{66}\). In Matthew 12:13, as stated above, \( \textit{ἡγίς} \) is used with \( \textit{θεραπεύω} \). The healing of the man with the withered hand is rendered as \( \textit{ἀπεκατεστάθη ἡγίς} \). \( \textit{ἡγίς} \) 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 \( \textit{ἀποκαθιστάνω} \) it means: \textit{restoring human beings in their integrity as part of God’s creation}\(^\text{67}\).

\( \textit{ἡγίς} \) appears in Mark 5:34 in the testimony of Christ: \( \textit{θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· ἕως ἂν ἔρθῃ ἡγίς ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγος σου | Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be whole from your suffering.} \)

\( \textit{Σέσωκέν}, \) as the indicative perfect active form of the verb, denotes a completed action with results in the present time\(^\text{68}\) showing the fulfilment of the woman’s desire depicted in v. 28 with the same verb with indicative future passive form (\( \textit{σωθήσομαι} \)) and accomplished in v. 29 by her immediate healing\(^\text{69}\). This leads us to conclude that the two present imperative of Christ (\( \textit{ὑπαγε} \) and \( \textit{ἴσθι ἡγίς} \)) are not simple reiteration of the result of healing\(^\text{70}\). The phrase \( \textit{ὑπαγε ἐις εἰρήνην} \) is an accurate translation of the Old Testament expression \( \textit{לְשָׁלוֹם לֵך} \) (\textit{lêḵ lešālôm})\(^\text{71}\), the meaning of \( \textit{εἰρήνη} \) is directly borrowed from Hebrew and indicates the fullness of spiritual
health\textsuperscript{72}, a moral life having a social dimension\textsuperscript{73} and even a missionary one\textsuperscript{74}. The imperative present form ἴσθι pictures a durative action\textsuperscript{75} being a command to do something constantly and perpetually\textsuperscript{76}, showing the permanent state of health. Thus, the phrase ἴσθι ὑγίης is a moral command for living a permanent healthy life. Through this analysis we can conclude that the term ὑγίης 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\textsuperscript{77}.

In Acts 4:10 ὑγίης 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\textsuperscript{78}. The holistic restoration of human health is strengthened by the use of the term ὀλοκλήρωσις 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\textsuperscript{79}, but these accounts are rendered as parts of the major theological themes of the Gospel, especially the healing through the power of the word\textsuperscript{80}. 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,

\textsuperscript{72} W. L. Lane, \textit{The Gospel of Mark}, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 194.


\textsuperscript{74} Louise Wells, \textit{The Greek Language of Healing}, 204.


\textsuperscript{79} 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 ὑγίης (in Jn. 5:6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 7:23 and in Jn. 5:4, the occurrence of the term ὑγίης being applied exclusively to the healing of the lame man ), the verb ἰάω (used only once in the whole Gospel Jn. 5:10) and the verb ἱεράζω (used only in Jn. 4:47, 5:13 and 12:40).

\textsuperscript{80} As in Jn. 4:5; In 5:8; Jn. 9:7; Jn. 11:43; Larry O. Hogan, \textit{Healing in the Second Temple Period}, col. \textit{Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus}, vol. 21 (Fribourg/ Gottingen, 1992), 235.
the miracle from the pool involves a higher theological and Christological level of interpretation, because Christ names Himself as ζωοποιῶν (He who gives life, he who makes alive).

The curative terminology is used mainly with reference to the healing of the lame man at Bethezada 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 Bethezada Pool, the author of the Gospel also uses the verb ἰάομαι as a curative term, for the healing of the Official’s son in Jn. 4:47. 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. 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. Ἰάομαι is closely related to the meaning of the verb ἵππη (hāy- to live), rendered in the Old-Testament as a curative term. Thus, in In. 4:47 ἰάομαι is used within the theme of life going beyond the simple understanding of healing as a biological and physical reality.


The importance of this passage is given by the close relationship with healing at the Betheda 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 Bethezada. Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel According to John, cxi-cxii.

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, ἀσθένεια, ἀσθενέω, ἀσθένημα”, in: Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary, vol. 1, 490-493.


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. The aorist participle form γνοὺς designates an action antecedent to the action of the main verb expressed by present, showing that Christ comes towards the sick man because He is omniscient, knowing the condition of the fallen human nature. The phrase πολὺν ἧδη χρόνον ἔχει reinforces the idea of divine foreknowledge, for the fact that γνοὺς as aorist participle is related to the verb ἔχει indicating a past action which is still ongoing, 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. 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. The question of Jesus Christ is very important because it requires a psychological desire of the lame man to be healed by Christ. This idea is developed by St. Cyril of Alexandria, who says:

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"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."

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. 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 and the fact that Jesus Christ can heal this person. At the same time the answer of the lame man implies a new perspective on human sickness, the social one: κύριε ἄνθρωπo ἔχω γίναι ταραχθῇ τὸ ὕδωρ βάλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγώ, ἄλλος.
τὸ ἐμὸν καταβάνει | Sir, I have no man102 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 people103.

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 friend104, 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 time105. 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 deplorable106. 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 helplessness107. 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 ἄγγελων Δεσπότης ὁ τὸ πᾶν ἐργαζόμενος. Καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν· Νῦν τὸν κάμνοντα

102 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 scăldătore“ (Lord, I have nobody to put me into the pool), Sfânta Scriptură a Vechiului și Noului Testamentu, Edițione nouă revăzută după teectarile originale (Pesta, 1873), 89; in the translation of 1924 of D. Cornilescu we have: „N'am pe nimeni să mă bage în scăldătore“ (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 şi Străinătate, 1924); Gala Galaction translates: „Doamne, nu am pe nimeni ca să mă bage în scăldătore“ (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.


104 W. Arndt, F. Gingrich, F. Danker, W. Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon, 68.

105 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.


107 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.
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 man109, 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 one110 expressed in verse 6 by the participle form κατακείμενον. 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 tense111.

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 dead112. This means that Christ is raising this man from his sinful life. The verb ἔγειρε is used both for body and soul113. 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 action114, emphasizing both the beginning and the development of the action115 and the fact that the period of suffering is over116. 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 health117. The state of his complete recovery from disease is

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111 Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, 719-720;


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

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), υγιής (v. 11) and ἱάομαι (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)\(^{120}\).

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 υγιής. Etymological markers gave us the possibility to place the term υγιής in the thematic area of life, an established *topos* of Johannine theology, υγιής and ζωῆ having common etymological components pertaining to the same semantic domain.

From the Old Testament we have concluded that the term υγιής 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 ἱάομαι. These terms designate together the divine action of restoration of the human creature through healing depicted by the verb ἀφίσῃ.


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

Before analysing the meaning of the word ὑγίης, we have shown the differences between ἱάομαι 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 ἱάομαι. 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 been 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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