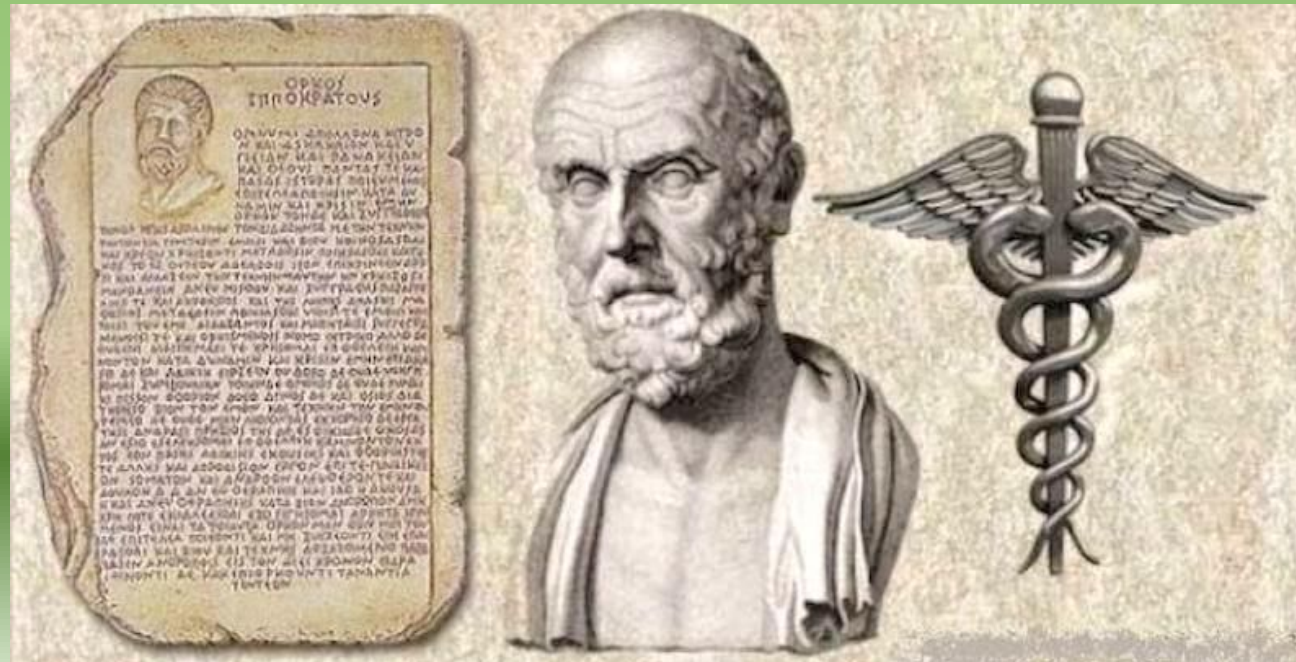


Hippocrates (c. 460–370 BCE) — Greek father of medicine

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Hippocrates, (born c. 460 BCE, island of Cos, Greece—died c. 375 BCE, Larissa, Thessaly), ancient Greek physician who lived during Greece's Classical period and is traditionally regarded as the father of medicine. It is difficult to isolate the facts of Hippocrates' life from the later tales told about him or to assess his medicine accurately in the face of centuries of reverence for him as the ideal physician. About 60 medical writings have survived that bear his name, most of which were not written by him. He has been revered for his ethical standards in medical practice, mainly for the Hippocratic Oath.

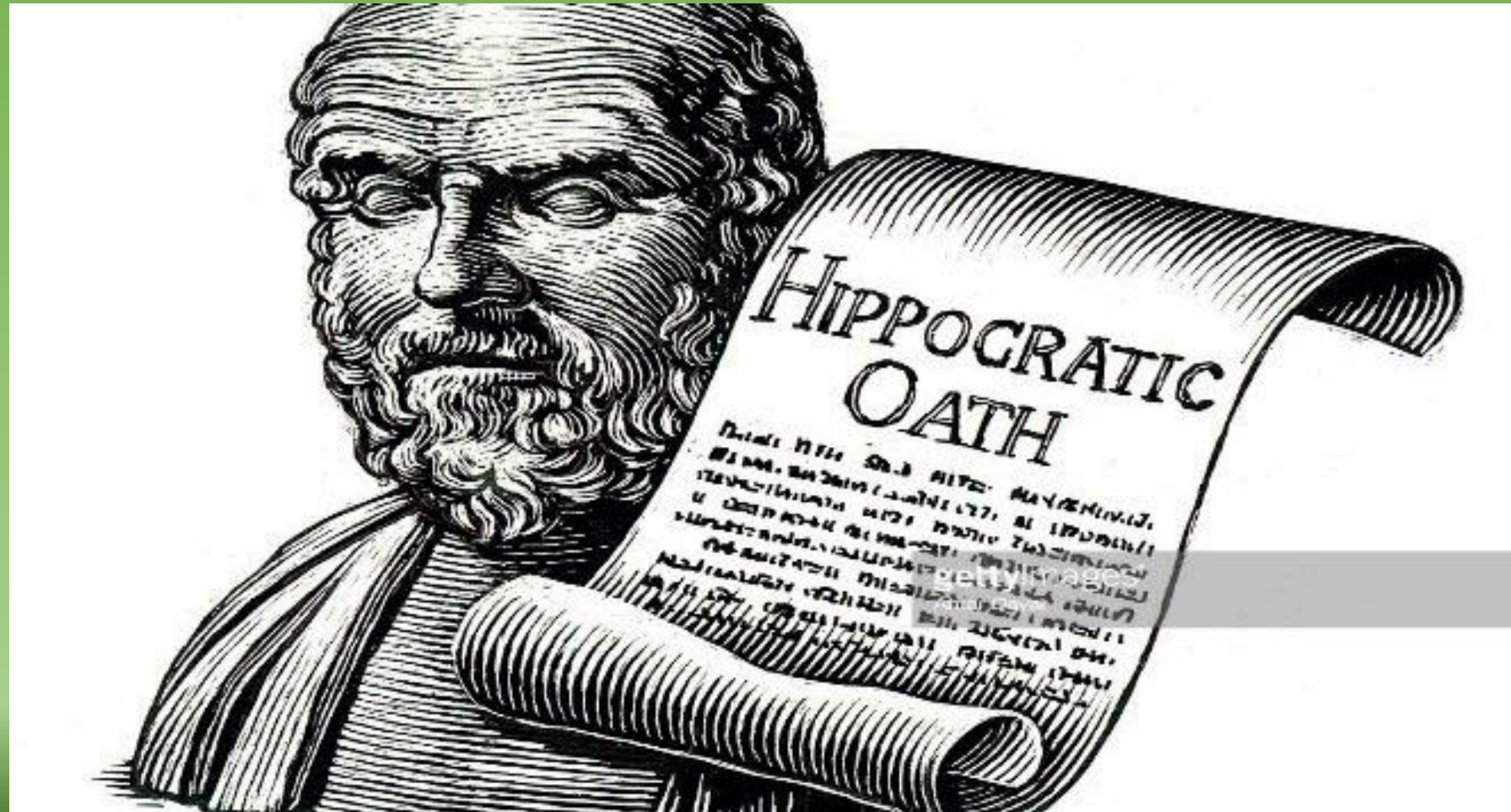
Fragment of an ancient Greek text, likely a medical or philosophical treatise, written in a cursive script on papyrus. The text is arranged in several columns, with some lines beginning with large, decorative initial letters. The papyrus is aged and shows signs of wear and discoloration.

THE OATH OF HIPPOCRATES



I swear by Apollo Physician, by Asclepius, by Health, by Panacea, and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgment, this oath and this indenture. To hold my teacher in this art equal to my own parents; to make him partner in my livelihood; when he is in need of money to share mine with him; to consider his family as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they want to learn it, without fee or indenture. I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but never with a view to injury and wrong-doing. I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art. In whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm. And whatsoever I shall see or hear in the course of my profession in my intercourse with men, if it be what should not be published abroad, I will never divulge, holding such things to be holy secrets. Now if I carry out this oath, and break it not, may I gain forever reputation among all men for my life and for my art; but if I transgress it and forswear myself, may the opposite befall me

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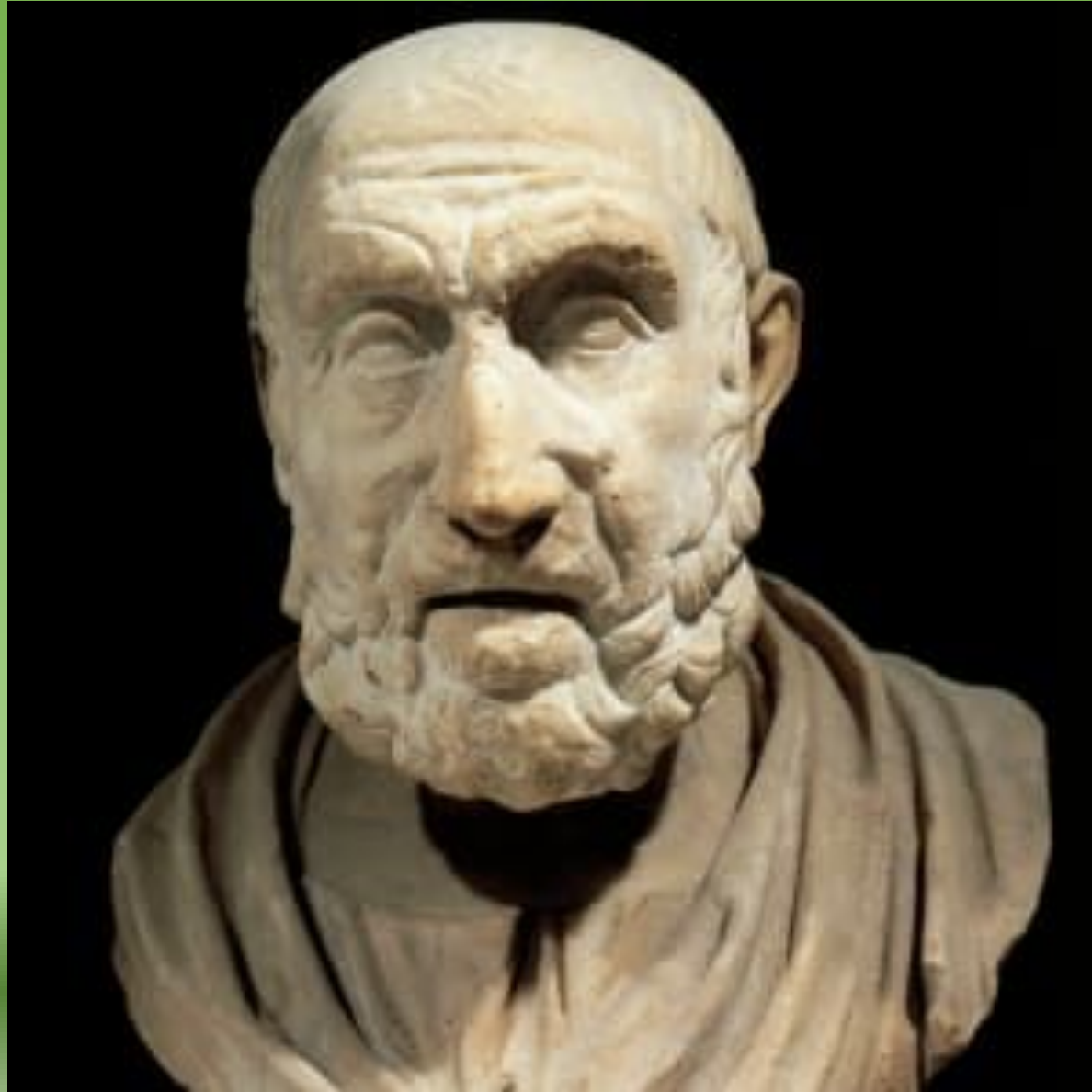


It is known that while Hippocrates was alive, he was admired as a physician and teacher. His younger contemporary Plato referred to him twice. In the Protagoras Plato called Hippocrates “the Asclepiad of Cos” who taught students for fees, and he implied that Hippocrates was as well known as a physician as Polyclitus and Phidias were as sculptors. It is now widely accepted that an “Asclepiad” was not a temple priest or a member of a physicians’ guild but instead was a physician belonging to a family that had produced well-known physicians for generations. Plato’s second reference occurs in the Phaedrus, in which Hippocrates is referred to as a famous Asclepiad who had a philosophical approach to medicine.

Meno, a pupil of Aristotle, specifically stated in his history of medicine the views of Hippocrates on the causation of diseases, namely, that undigested residues were produced by unsuitable diet and that these residues excreted vapours, which passed into the body generally and produced diseases. Aristotle said that Hippocrates was called “the Great Physician” but that he was small in stature (Politics).

Hippocrates is credited with being the first person to believe that diseases were caused naturally, not because of superstition and gods. Hippocrates was credited by the disciples of Pythagoras of allying philosophy and medicine. He separated the discipline of medicine from religion, believing and arguing that disease was not a punishment inflicted by the gods but rather the product of environmental factors, diet, and living habits. Indeed there is not a single mention of a mystical illness in the entirety of the Hippocratic Corpus. However, Hippocrates did work with many convictions that were based on what is now known to be incorrect anatomy and physiology, such as Humorism.

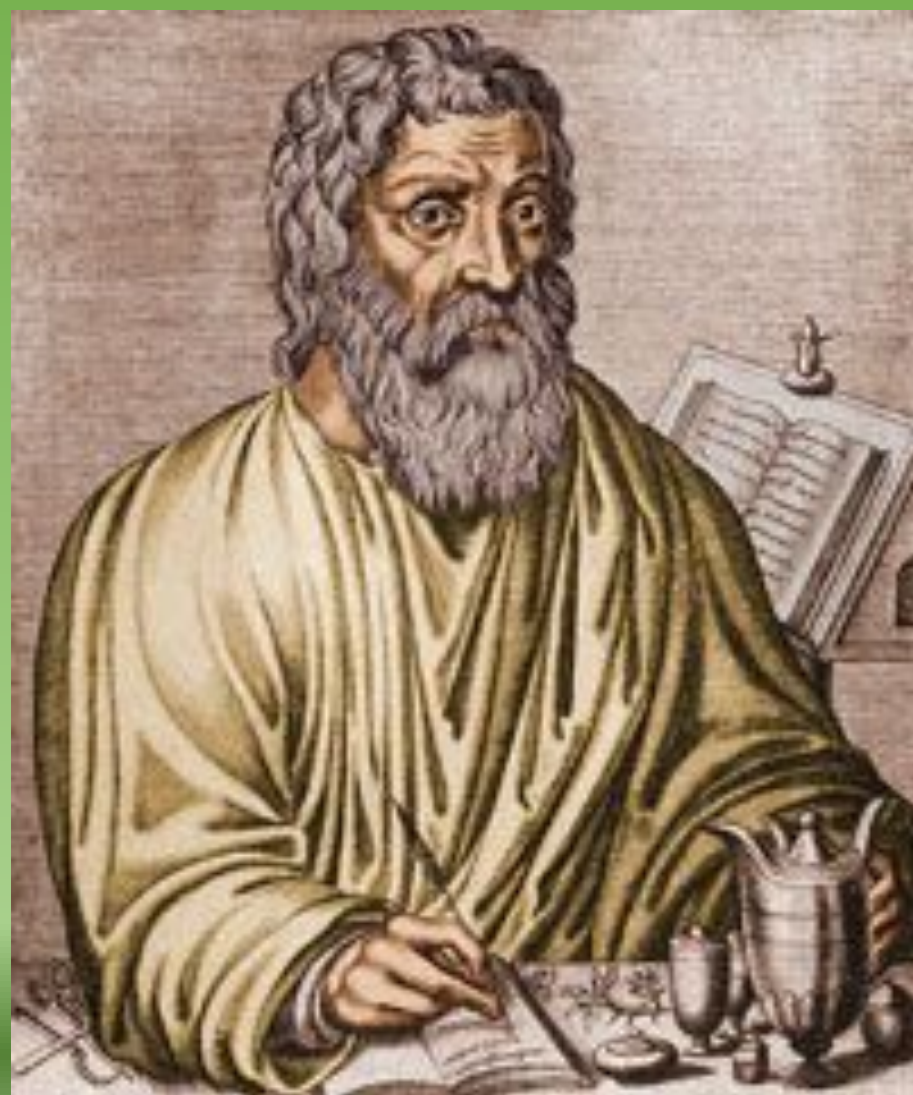
Ancient Greek schools of medicine were split (into the Knidian and Koan) on how to deal with disease. The Knidian school of medicine focused on diagnosis. Medicine at the time of Hippocrates knew almost nothing of human anatomy and physiology because of the Greek taboo forbidding the dissection of humans. The Knidian school consequently failed to distinguish when one disease caused many possible series of symptoms.[18] The Hippocratic school or Koan school achieved greater success by applying general diagnoses and passive treatments. Its focus was on patient care and prognosis, not diagnosis. It could effectively treat diseases and allowed for a great development in clinical practice.



Hippocratic medicine and its philosophy are far removed from that of modern medicine. Now, the physician focuses on specific diagnosis and specialized treatment, both of which were espoused by the Knidian school. This shift in medical thought since Hippocrates' day has caused serious criticism over their denunciations; for example, the French doctor M. S. Houdart called the Hippocratic treatment a "meditation upon death".

Analogies have been drawn between Thucydides' historical method and the Hippocratic method, in particular the notion of "human nature" as a way of explaining foreseeable repetitions for future usefulness, for other times or for other cases

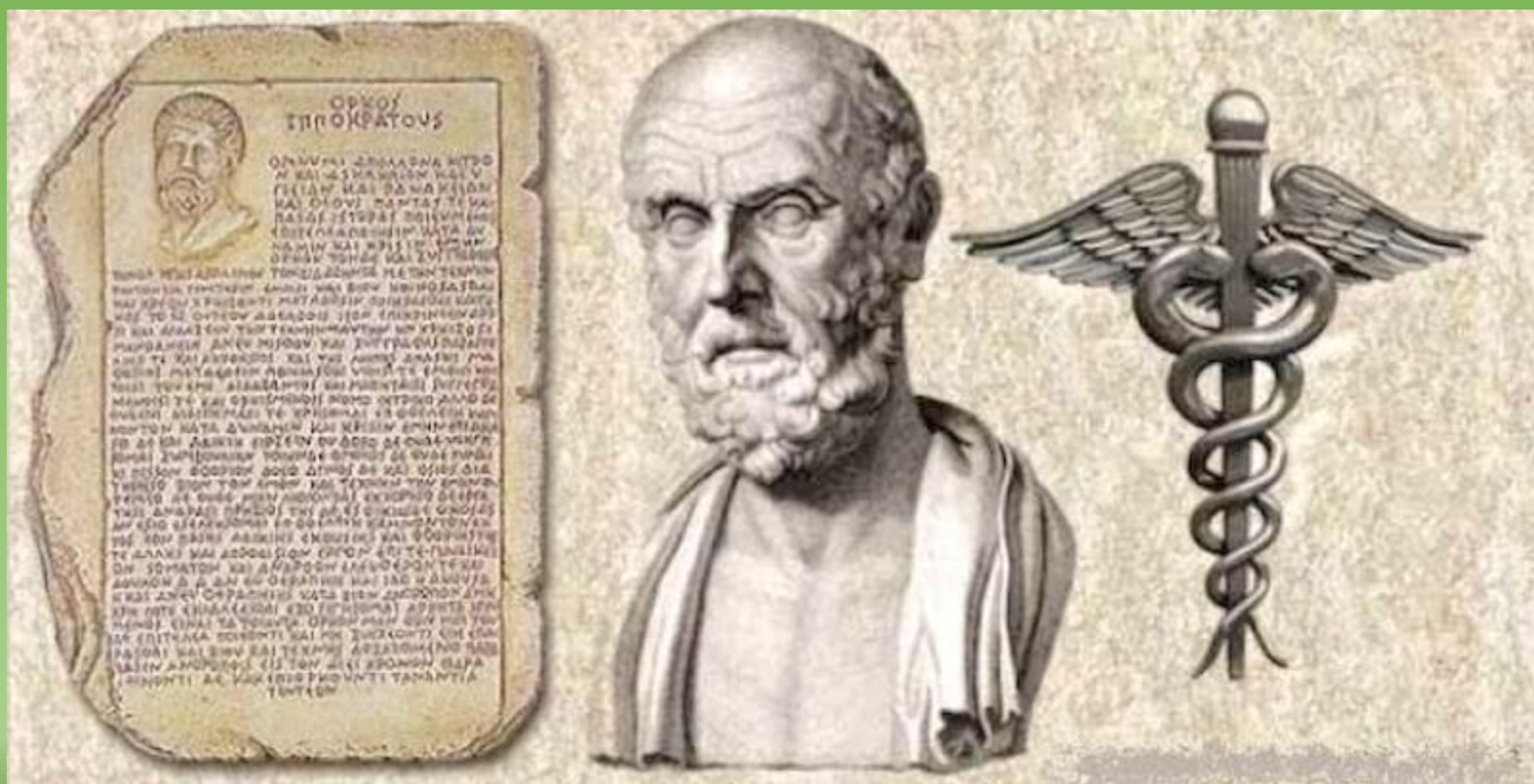
Hippocrates and his followers were first to describe many diseases and medical conditions. He is given credit for the first description of clubbing of the fingers, an important diagnostic sign in chronic lung disease, lung cancer and cyanotic heart disease. For this reason, clubbed fingers are sometimes referred to as "Hippocratic fingers".[38] Hippocrates was also the first physician to describe Hippocratic face in Prognosis. Shakespeare famously alludes to this description when writing of Falstaff's death in Act II, Scene iii. of Henry V



Hippocrates began to categorize illnesses as acute, chronic, endemic and epidemic, and use terms such as, "exacerbation, relapse, resolution, crisis, paroxysm, peak, and convalescence." Another of Hippocrates' major contributions may be found in his descriptions of the symptomatology, physical findings, surgical treatment and prognosis of thoracic empyema, i.e. suppuration of the lining of the chest cavity. His teachings remain relevant to present-day students of pulmonary medicine and surgery. Hippocrates was the first documented chest surgeon and his findings and techniques, while crude, such as the use of lead pipes to drain chest wall abscess, are still valid.

Hippocrates is widely considered to be the "Father of Medicine". His contributions revolutionized the practice of medicine; but after his death the advancement stalled. So revered was Hippocrates that his teachings were largely taken as too great to be improved upon and no significant advancements of his methods were made for a long time. The centuries after Hippocrates' death were marked as much by retrograde movement as by further advancement. For instance, "after the Hippocratic period, the practice of taking clinical case-histories died out," according to Fielding Garrison.

After Hippocrates, the next significant physician was Galen, a Greek who lived from AD 129 to AD 200. Galen perpetuated the tradition of Hippocratic medicine, making some advancements, but also some regressions. In the Middle Ages, the Islamic world adopted Hippocratic methods and developed new medical technologies. After the European Renaissance, Hippocratic methods were revived in western Europe and even further expanded in the 19th century. Notable among those who employed Hippocrates' rigorous clinical techniques were Thomas Sydenham, William Heberden, Jean-Martin Charcot and William Osler. Henri Huchard, a French physician, said that these revivals make up "the whole history of internal medicine.



*Nature is
the Healer
of Disease*

Hippocrates (460 - 370 BC)

