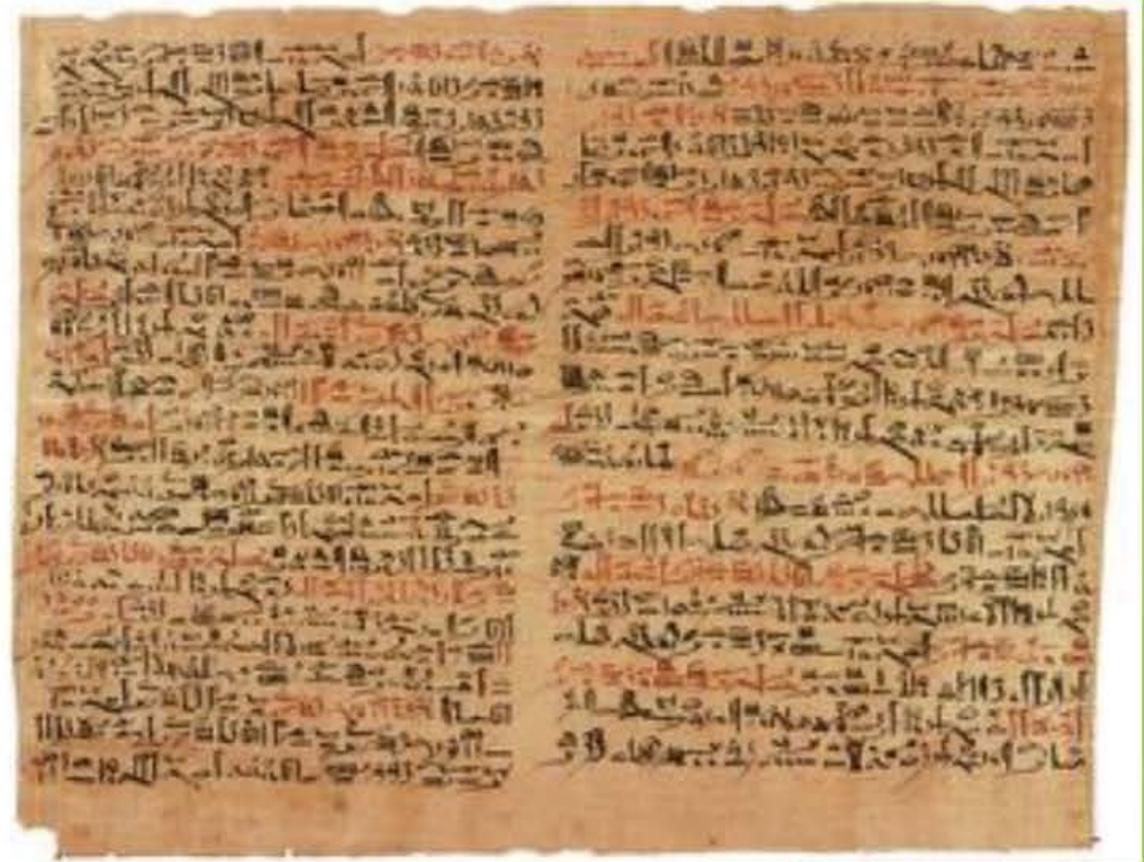


Picturing Disease and Illness

- ▶ The oldest surviving medical text is an Egyptian scroll on papyrus
- ▶ Features surgical case studies of trauma from head to chest wounds, possibly military-related
- ▶ Egyptians did not know about bacteria BUT recommended the use of honey (a natural bacterial killer) on open wounds, and applying moldy bread to wounds (pre-penicillin)
- ▶ Click on the following link to take a look at this surgical papyrus that is stored in the New York Academy of Medicine in the Upper East Side: <https://tinyurl.com/htxune2>



Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus at
the New York Academy of
Medicine, c. 1600 BCE

Fighting Disease

- ▶ Egyptians made medicinal use of amulets, talismans, and stelae (uprights stone markers such as the one on the right)
- ▶ The Metternich Stela in the Metropolitan Museum of Art features 13 spells in hieroglyphics to protect or cure poisonous bites
- ▶ Spells are activated by incantation (speaking the spells) or pouring water of the stela and drinking the collected water
- ▶ You can read more about the Metternich Stela here: <https://tinyurl.com/vaejsgo>



Metternich Stela aka Egyptian Magical Stela, c. 360-343 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Medicinal Use of Egyptian Metternich Stela

- ▶ This detail of the Metternich Stela depicts the child Horus at the center of a frieze of Egyptian deities
- ▶ Young Horus standing atop an alligator is a common motif
- ▶ Note the scorpions and snakes (above antelope and lion) in Horus' hands to represent his ability to fight poisons



Wedjat eye amulet aka Eye of Horus



Wedjat eye amulet, faience,
British Museum, c. 1060-680 BCE

- ▶ The wedjat amulet has regenerative and protective powers
- ▶ Refers to the lost and restoration of Horus' eye
- ▶ According to Egyptian myth, when Horus offered the amulet to Osiris, it helped his father gain safe passage to the underworld
- ▶ Worn by the living and placed with mummies
- ▶ Blue and green colors symbolize regeneration

Possible evolution of Eye of Horus to Rx sign



- ▶ Some scholars believe the modern Rx symbol evolved from the wedjat
- ▶ You can read more about the Rx symbol here: <https://tinyurl.com/wzyy4tp> a

Hippocrates (460-375 BCE), the Father of Medicine

- Hippocrates performed no dissections, his knowledge is drawn only from observations
- Took careful notes of signs/symptoms of disease
- Believed disease is not caused by supernatural forces
- Wrote standard of ethics, which is the basis for today's medical ethics

HIPPOCRATIC OATH: MODERN VERSION

I swear to fulfill, to the best of my ability and judgment, this covenant:

I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow.

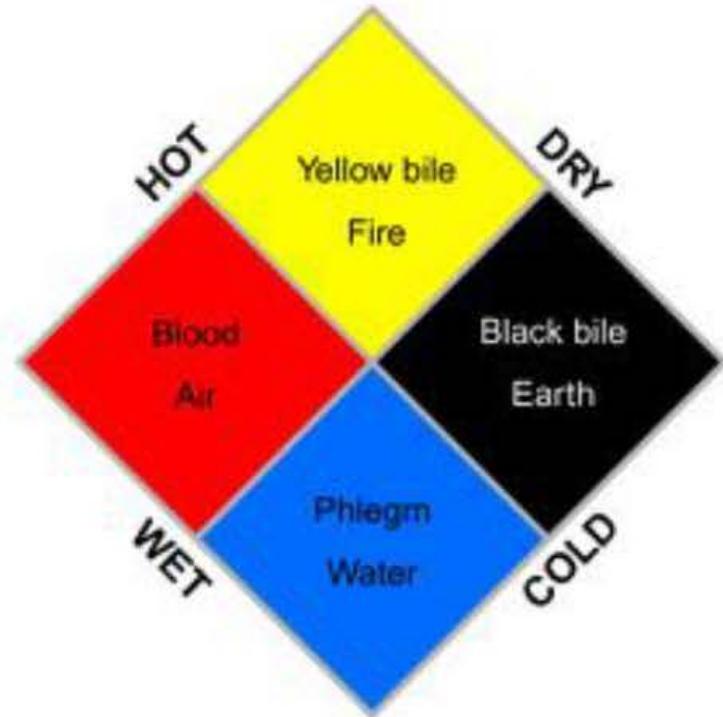
I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures [that] are required, avoiding those twin traps of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.

I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemist's drug.

...

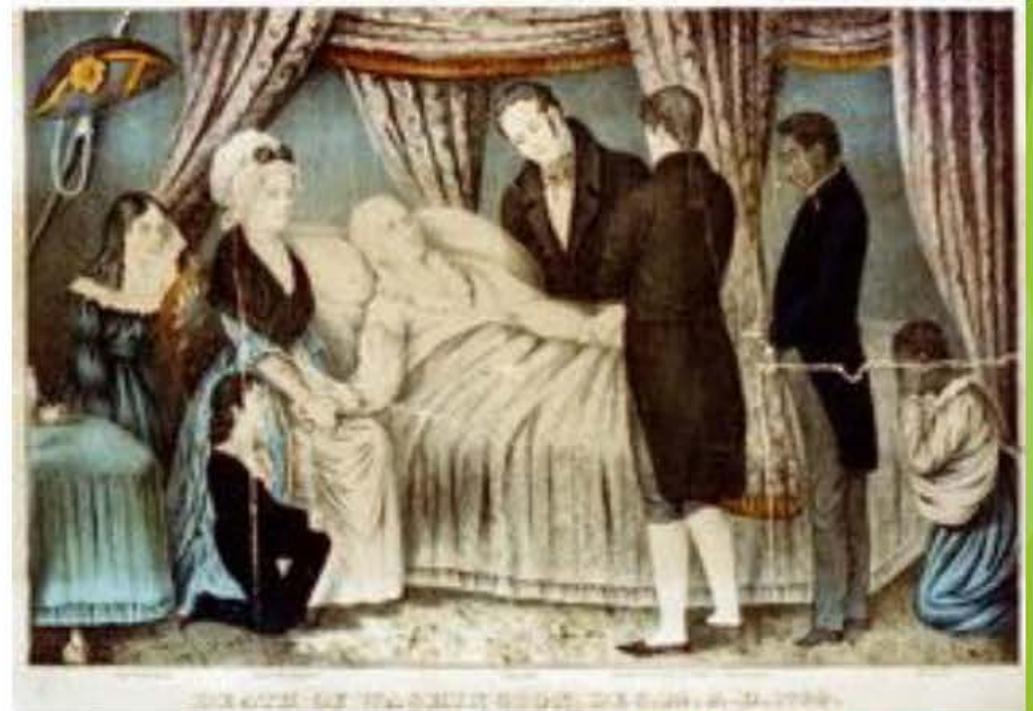
Hippocrates Developed the Doctrine of the Four Humors

- ▶ A system that links humankind to the natural world
- ▶ Each body is made up of 4 humors/bodily fluids and each fluid corresponds to a temperament
 - ▶ Yellow bile (fire element) / choleric (goal-oriented and analytical)
 - ▶ Phlegm (water element) / phlegmatic (relaxed and quiet)
 - ▶ Black bile (earth element) / melancholic (loyal and traditional)
 - ▶ Blood (air element) / sanguine (spontaneous and pleasure-seeking)
- ▶ Excess fluids purged by bleeding, cupping, and leeching



Belief in the Four Humors Dictates Medical Approaches

- ▶ On Washington's last day, at 9 am his doctor applied a painful "blister of cantharides," better known as "Spanish fly," to Washington's throat. The idea behind this tortuous treatment was based on a humoral notion of medicine dating back to antiquity called "counter-irritation." The blisters raised by this toxic stuff would supposedly draw out the deadly humors causing the General's throat inflammation.
- ▶ 9:30 am another bloodletting of 18 ounces
- ▶ 11 am another bloodletting of 18 ounces
- ▶ Before 4 pm the doctor prescribed two more bloodlettings, one drew 32 ounces
- ▶ Washington died after 10 pm
- ▶ Doctors justified removal of 80 ounces of blood in 12 hour period based on humoral theory of medicine
- ▶ **Read** about Washington's agonizing treatment: <https://tinyurl.com/msu3rf9>



Print commemorating George Washington's death bed on December 14, 1799

Four Humors / Four Temperaments

- ▶ Personality and ailments were believed to be determined by the predominant humor
 - ▶ Choleric: yellow bile
 - ▶ Phlegmatic: phlegm
 - ▶ Melancholic: black bile
 - ▶ Sanguine: blood

Iconography of the Four Humors

- ▶ Iconography = study of symbols in a work of art
- ▶ In Albrecht Durer's engraving (a type of print) *Adam and Eve*, the artist includes symbolic references to the Four Humors
- ▶ Cat: choleric (cruelty, pride)
- ▶ Rabbit: sanguine (sensuality)
- ▶ Elk: melancholic (gloom)
- ▶ Ox: phlegmatic (sluggishness, sloth)
- ▶ Watch the following video about this print:
<https://tinyurl.com/qvxja2m>
- ▶ Watch this video to find out more about the engraving process: <https://youtu.be/Qf4sH8iCOPw>

Albrecht Durer, *Adam and Eve*,
engraving, 1504



Iconography of the Plague

- ▶ Albrecht Durer produced this woodcut (a type of print) featuring a biblical story of the Apocalypse
- ▶ The four riders include:
 - ▶ Death
 - ▶ Famine
 - ▶ War
 - ▶ **Plague** (the rider with bow and arrow)
- ▶ Read more about this print here:
<https://tinyurl.com/se4krls>



Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, c. 1497-1498

Art Inspired by Plague

- ▶ In medieval to early modern times, paintings were produced to protect from plague or to give thanks for protection
- ▶ Read about this phenomenon here: <https://tinyurl.com/wvzb9ry>



Josse Lieferinxe, *St. Sebastian interceding for the plague stricken*, 1497-1499



Anthony Van Dyck, *St. Rosalie Interceding for the Plague-Stricken of Palermo*, 1624

Spread of the Plague

- ▶ Originated in China 1330s
- ▶ Trade routes via land and sea



Spread of the Black Death through Afro-Eurasia

Deaths

- ▶ Pandemic - widespread across countries and continents
- ▶ Estimates 75-200M deaths
- ▶ Europe lost 50% population
- ▶ Middle East lost 30%



Excavated Mass Grave of Plague Victims
Martigues, France

Plague Doctors



- ▶ Miasma theory: bad or corrupt air spreads disease
- ▶ Long black leather coat, waxed or covered in suet
- ▶ Leather gloves and boots
- ▶ Glass domes over eyes
- ▶ Beak-like nose mask filled with incense or herbs such as myrrh, camphor, flower petals, mint, cloves, or sponges soaked in vinegar
- ▶ Stick used to examine patient



16th century German plague doctor mask

Early Medicinal Treatment

- ▶ Gentile da Foligno, a Renaissance doctor, prescribed diet, sleep habits, and a plaster to remove poison from the boils that consisted of gum resin, roots of white lilies and human excrement
- ▶ Gentile da Foligno also prescribed a poisonous potion of powdered gold, quicksilver, and starflower water
- ▶ Others prescribed soothing potions (popular recipe of apple syrup, lemon, rosewater, and peppermint)



Gentile da Foligno, from
Hartmann Schedel, *Liber
chronicarum mundi* (Nuremberg
Chronicle), Nuremberg, 1493.
Woodcut.

Other Treatments

- ▶ Prayer
- ▶ Emergence of self-flagellants, who toured from town to town, and self-flagellated as means to protect others from suffering



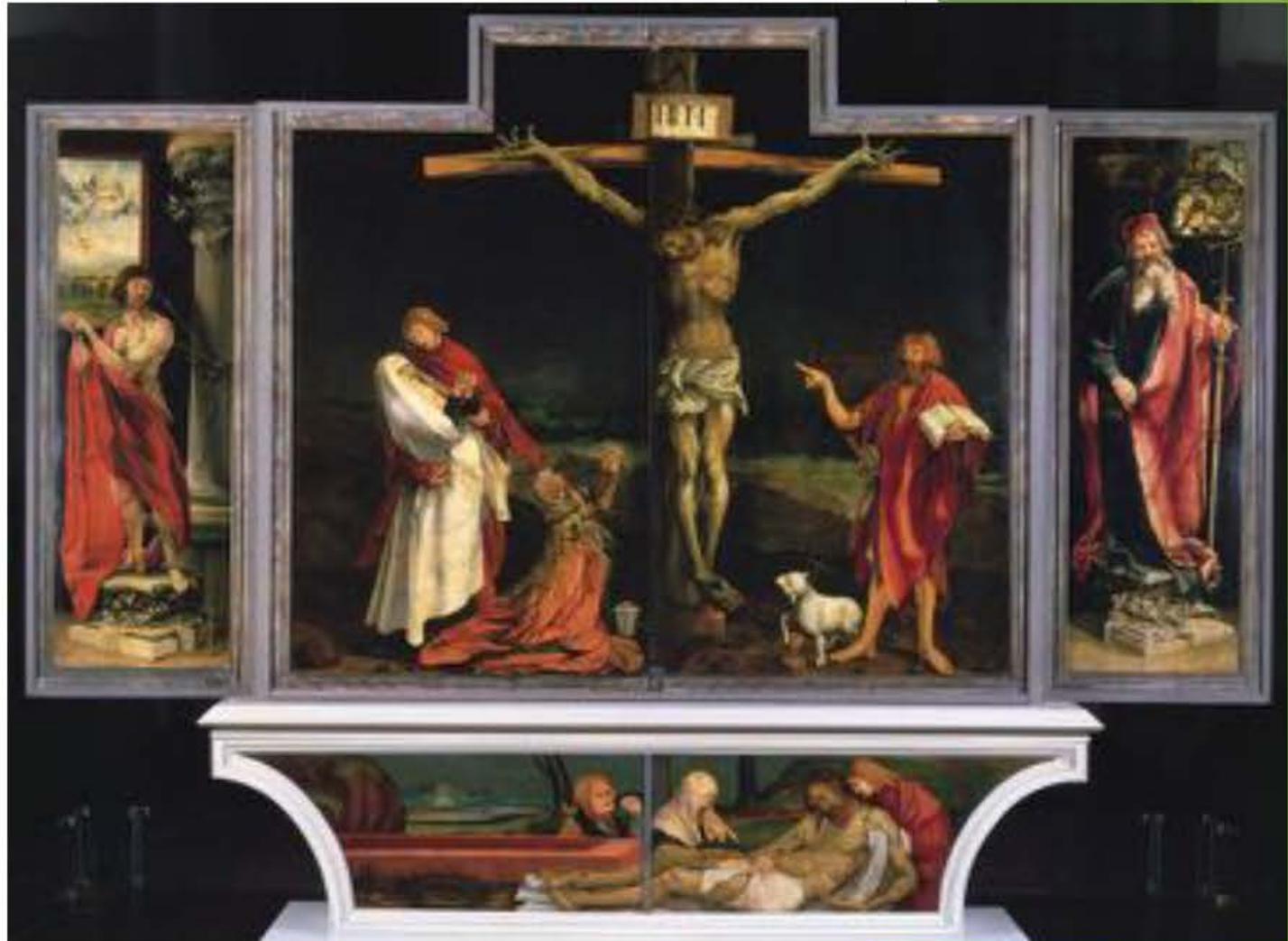
Priest Blessing Plague Victims, 1360-1375



Flagellants from a 15th Century Woodcut

St. Anthony's Fire (ergotism)

- ▶ Ergotism was a common disease
- ▶ This altarpiece was painted for the hospital chapel of St. Anthony's monastery
- ▶ Caused by consumption of poisonous ergot fungus
 - ▶ Spoiled rye or wheat
- ▶ St. Anthony, the patron saint of people suffering from skin diseases (plus basketweavers, brushmakers, gravediggers, and swineherds)
- ▶ Read about the Isenheim Altarpiece here: <https://tinyurl.com/v6ks5vl>



Mattias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, c. 1510-1515

Bodily Fluids in Art

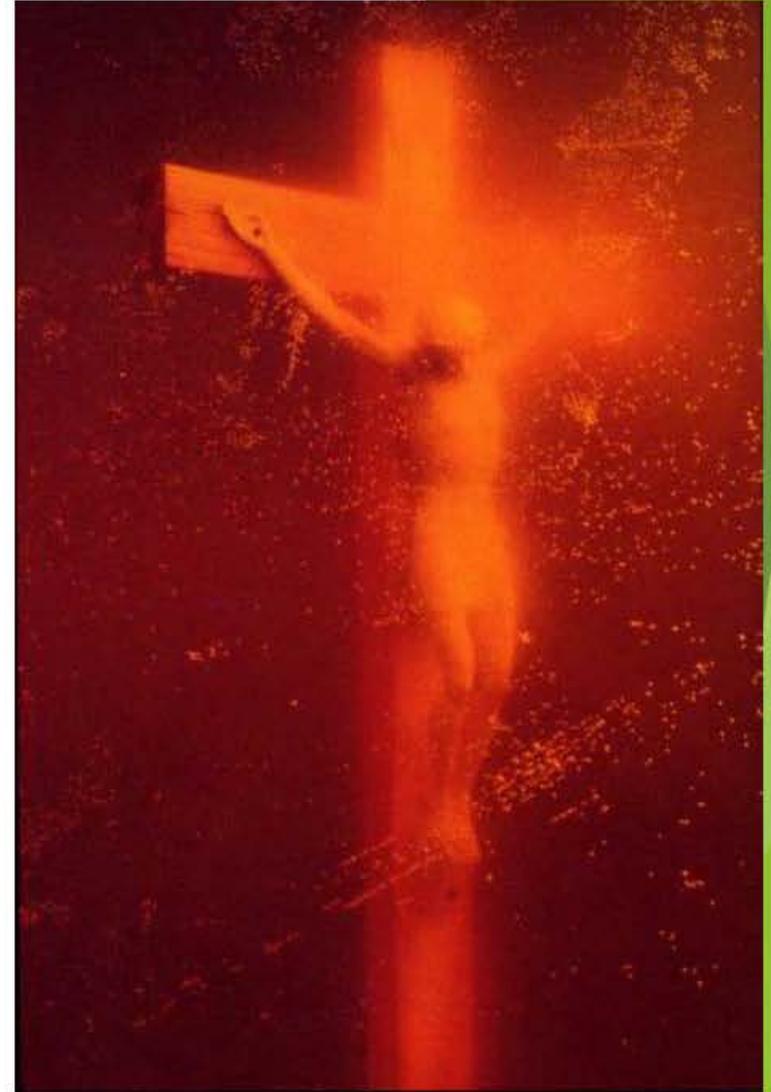
- ▶ Bodily fluids make frequent appearance in art, especially during the early modern period
- ▶ 17th century Dutch and Flemish genre paintings (images of everyday life) often features doctors or medical quacks treating patients
- ▶ In this comic image by the Dutch painter Jan Steen, the doctor is seen taking the pulse of the forlorn seated woman
- ▶ The woman's maid holds a bottle of the young lady's urine for the doctor to examine
- ▶ The boy with the bow and arrow (symbols of Cupid) allude to the young woman's true ailment— lovesickness
- ▶ **Read more about the painting here:**
<https://tinyurl.com/t49kjt看>



Jan Steen, *Doctor's visit*, 1658-1662

Bodily Fluids in Contemporary Art

- ▶ Many modern day artists make use of bodily fluids in their art in reaction to contemporary issues in society
- ▶ One of the most controversial uses of bodily fluids is the artist Andres Serrano's photograph of a crucifix submerged in his own urine
- ▶ **Read** about this photograph, which Time Magazine declared one of the 100 most important images of our time: <https://tinyurl.com/v6hsn7u>
- ▶ If you are interested in looking at some other artists who use bodily fluids in art, read this: <https://tinyurl.com/wbzztmc>



Andres Serrano, *Piss Christ*, 1987