

Companions of the Stone
 First Degree Lodge Lecture:
 On the Elements in the Microcosm

The medical elements are the Aristotelian elements, products of the interaction of the four polarized qualities (hot/cold and wet/dry).

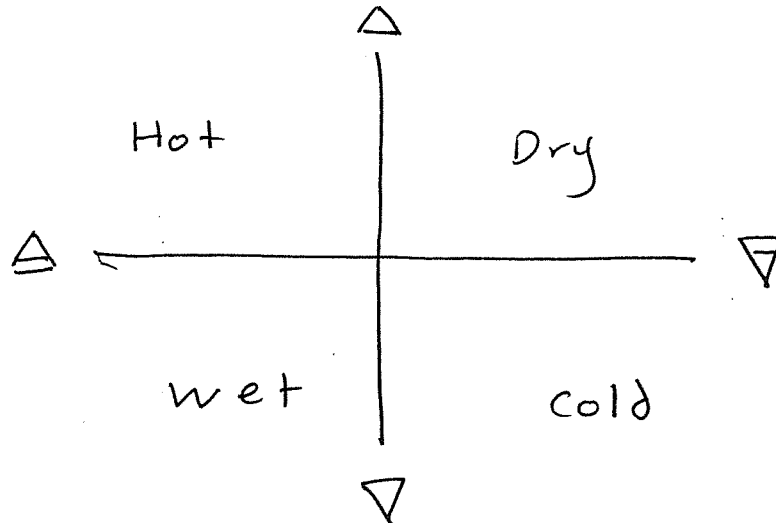
	Wet	Dry	secondaries
Cold	Water	Earth	passives
Hot	Air	Fire	Actives
			primaries

It was Empedocles (-500 - -430) who stated that the 4 elements were equally important; Hippocrates (-460 - -377) who articulated the equilibrium model of elements and humors in the body.

The four "humors" are choler (bile, yellow bile), phlegm, blood, and black bile (melancholy).

Fire	choler (hot and dry)
water	phlegm (cold and wet)
air	blood (hot and moist)
earth	melancholy (cold and dry)

There were also characteristic constitutions, each a balance or equilibrium (krisis) of qualities with a particular bias -- an elemental set of 4 + and ideal one, and a quality set of 8 + the ideal one (cf the quintessence).



The four basic constitutions were

Fire	Choleric, bilious, hot-tempered
Water	Phlegmatic, calm, composed, sluggish, apathetic
Air	Sanguine, ruddy, cheerful, optimistic
Earth	Melancholic, sad, contemplative, ruminative, depressed

hot	tall	hairy	blacker hair	reddish faces
cold	short	hairless	reddish hair	livid in the cold
wet	lean	harder		
dry	fat	softer		

Furthermore, various organs had their own characteristic qualities, most importantly

heart	hot & dry	fire
brain	cold & moist	water
liver	hot & moist	air

These qualities pertained not only to people's constitutions, but to the effects of food, the environment, and so on. Certain foods for example are heating, others are cooling

Celsus distinguished four degrees for any quality (eg hot)

	Celsus	another system
1°	slightly heating	not strongly felt
2°	stronger	uncomfortable
3°	even stronger	injurious
4°	disrupting	fatal

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yellow bile	summer (& fall)	bitter	fire	south
phlegm	winter	salty	water	north
blood	spring (& summer)	sweet	air	east
melancholy	fall	sour	earth	west

This was not the only scheme used for attributing the elements to seasons or directions; however (a) it is useful and (b) the different schemes are not necessarily any more true or false than C is really always Do and never Mi.

There is a well-documented and widespread tendency of the tetrapolar schemes to collapse, especially on the folk level, into hot/cold (dipolar) schemes, with wet/dry de-emphasized, lost or assimilated (dry:hot::wet:cold).

One of the most useful aspects of this scheme is not the directions or times of year as such, but the analysis in terms of component qualities. This can be applied to a range of things: for example, the virtues, or other systems capable of being seen in terms of four "elements". The key is to find an interpretation of the polarities of hot/cold and wet/dry. If hot/cold refers to active/passive, for example, and wet/dry refers to absorbed/detached ("A dry soul is wisest and best; souls delight in becoming moist"), we can not only derive the four Galenical humoral types, but we can also see how they can be transformed into each other, and how imbalances can be remedied.

Re-thinking: autonomic nervous system

cholinergic	stimulated	inhibited
adrenergic	stimulated	inhibited

Other temperament systems: Jung (4 [intellectual, intuitive, sensation, feeling] x 2 [introverted/extroverted]), ectomorph/mesomorph/endomorph (Sheldon) or asthenic [schizoid]/pyknic [cyclic]/athletic

Hot: garlic, onion, black pepper, clove, oregano, marjoram, rosemary, ginger, alcohol, honey, cinnamon, sesame, pennyroyal, strong alcohol

Cold: banana, grapes, potato, fish, barley, carrot, mushrooms, pears, salt, apples, beer, cucumber

Herbal medicines: cold are sedative, anesthetic, soporific; hot are stimulative, tonic. Poppy is cold & dry, as is hemlock; henbane (cold in the third degree) Moistening medicines tend to "add water" -- increase fleshiness or moisture. Drying medicines are astringent, even wasting.

Places to look:

Culpeper, Nicholas

Title: Culpeper's Complete Herbal and English Physician
Edition: Enlarged Reprint ed.
Publisher: Meyerbooks
Year: 1987
Pages: 420p.
ISBN/Price: 0-916638-38-3 Cloth Text \$25.00 (Ingram Price), \$35.00
0-916638-20-0 Trade Paper \$12.50 (Ingram Price), \$12.50

Dioscorides, Pedanius. Gunther, Robert T. (Editor)

Goodyear, J. (Translator)

Title: Greek Herbal
Edition: Reprint ed.
Publisher: Hafner Press
Year: 1968
ISBN/Price: 0-02-843930-9 Trade Cloth \$26.95 Out of Print
Dioscorides (Greek Herbal)

Galen. Harkins, Paul W. (Translator)

Contributors: Riese, Walther (Introduction by)
Title: On the Passions and Errors of the Soul
Publisher: Ohio State University Press
Year: 1964
Pages: 144p
ISBN/Price: 0-8142-0052-4 Trade Cloth \$4.75 Out of

Gerard, John

Contributors: Appelbaum, Stanley (Notes by)
Title: The Herbal or General History of Plants
Edition: Reprint ed.
Publisher: Dover Publications, Incorporated
Year: 1975
Pages: xiv, 1678p.
Illustration: Illustrated
ISBN/Price: 0-486-23147-X Trade Cloth \$89.95
Subj (BIP): PLANTS

Grieve, M.

Title: A Modern Herbal
Publisher: Peter Smith Publisher, Incorporated
Year: 1987
Volume: 2 vols.
Illustration: Illustrated
ISBN/Price: 0-8446-0302-3 Trade Cloth \$32.00 Out of Print
Subj (BIP): HERBS

Siegel, Rudolph E.

Title: Galen's system of physiology and medicine. An analysis of his doctrines and observations on bloodflow, respiration, tumors and internal diseases [by] Rudolph E. Siegel.
Pub. Info.: Basel, New York, Karger, 1968.

Tacuinum Sanitatis:

Contributors: Arano, Luisa C. (Introduction by)

Title: The Medieval Health Handbook: Tacuinum Sanitatis

Publisher: George Braziller Incorporated

Year: 1981

Illustration: Illustrated

ISBN/Price: 0-8076-1026-7 Trade Cloth \$15.00 Out of Stock Indefinitely

Subj (BIP): MEDICINE-MEDIEVAL

