Aretaeus and Dumas Describe the Symptoms of the Disease

In his memoirs, Alexandre Dumas (a 19th-century French writer) wrote:

“... it was the fashion to suffer from the lungs; everybody was consumptive, poets especially; it was good form to spit blood after each emotion that was at all sensational, and to die before the age of thirty...”

Aretaeus, a Greek physician who worked in the 1st century CE, described the physical appearance of a person with phthisis (the Greek word for consumption):

“Voice hoarse; neck slightly bent, tender, not flexible, somewhat extended; fingers slender, but joints thick; [from] the bones alone the figure [of the body] remains, for the fleshy parts are wasted; the nails of the fingers crooked, ...nose sharp, slender; cheeks prominent and red; eyes hollow, brilliant and glittering; [the face is] swollen, pale and livid; the slender parts of the jaws rest on the teeth, as if smiling; otherwise of cadaverous aspect...”