Aretaeus of Cappodocia (130–200)

Aretaeus was the first to describe the aura and hallucinations preceding epilepsy and noted the tendency of seizures to recur once established. He differentiated nervous diseases and mental disorders, described hysteria, headache, mania, and melancholia. The cerebral paralyses were closely studied and he observed that in a cerebral lesion the paralyses was crossed, but this was not the case with a spinal lesion. This was explained in terms of decussation of nerves.

This recent stamp (1990, Stanley Gibbons 249) was issued by Transkei as part of “The conquest of diabetes series.” Aretaeus gave an early account of the disorder.