

## **Morbus Hercules. The role of heracles in epileptology and Greek and Scythian mythology**

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The word "epilepsy" is derived from Ancient Greek "επιληψις" (a seizure) which comes from "ἐπιλαμβάνειν" – "to seize, possess or afflict". In medical tractate "On the Sacred Disease" Hippocrates (c.460 – c.370 BC) gave the earliest available biological interpretation of the nature of epileptic process as brain disturbance. Epilepsy was also known by Greek and Latin physicians as "morbus Hercules" because Heracles (Hercules) was one of the most famous epileptic patients. Epilepsy caused a severe tragedy in life of Hercules - in the condition of complex partial seizure he killed his wife, two sons and also two children of his half maternal twin brother Iphicles. To expiate the crime, Heracles was required to carry out ten labors by the order of his cousin – Eurystheus, basileus of Argolid. During his life Heracles periodically had complex partial and secondary generalized seizures that were explained in Greek mythology as a penalization from the goddess Hera out of jealousy and revenge to the illegitimate son of her unfaithful husband - god Zeus. Episodes of rage, fury and crazy behavior of Hercules in the state of altered consciousness, accompanied by hyperemia, ophthalmic phenomena, hypersalivation with expired foam from mouth, chaotic automatisms, destroying everything and everyone, was noted in a number of legends and written sources, including the Euripides` drama "Madness of Heracles". Heracles is famous for his polygamy and fertility, and a lot of dynasties and tribes proclaimed Heracles as forefather. During his journey Heracles met in the cave the beautiful snake-woman Echidna, who bore him three sons, whose name was Agaphirs, Gaelon and Skyth - the ancestor of the Scythians. Famous Russian poets of "silver age" symbolists stile at the beginning of XX century - Alexander Block suffered from epilepsy and Valery Bryusov suffered from nightmares used antic legends, Heraclius and epileptic motives in their creativity.