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Paramedical Marginalia in the Vast Literature about Gout

We present our findings only from the poetical and lyrical works as drawings and similar works have been widely discussed by others. The initiative to start this study was a 12th-century couplet in the 102 Byzantine 12-syllable poem “Against the sexually hungry old woman” by the Byzantine literatus-monk Prodromos. It writes: “Suffering from podagra she tries to cover up the disease working diligently to imitate her body graciously bending”. This attitude by gouty persons had not been reported before but was elaborated by stating that people pretend that they are healthy to avoid discrimination or that they are sick in order to gain sympathy. One of the main diseases people pretended to suffer from in the 18th century was podagra. A 2013 report on the Maori people describes recently two old sisters insisting that the knocked their feet, not admitting that the cause was gout. Back in Byzantium, we trace the 11th century “excellent medical poem by the wisest Psellos” where again podagra was described in verse. Similar examples go back to Hellenistic times. In Epigram IV, the protagonist defies podagra, boasting that either with it or as fast as a sprinter he will go to Hades anyway, while Hydolos in another epigram referring to the causes of gout, says “By the sorrows melting Bachus and the sorrows melting Venous a daughter sprang, Podagra the master of limbs”. Epigram 11.403 in Greek Anthology states that Podagra delights in Italian wines and other delicacies. However, the vast majority of poetic works on gout comes from Latin authors. Virgil in his *Georgica* poem Liber III, calls podagra a foul kind of scub. But it was Lucian who made the disease famous, with his poem *Tragopodagra*. This is a mock-tragedy, starring a gouty man, the notorious goddess Podagra, a chorus of Pains and some mediocre doctors. This poem sets an example for several similar works to be produced. Catullus in his dedicatory poem to Virro connects sexual intercourse with gout: “For, when in hot embrace the lovers burn, she is cloaked with stench and he with gout is turn”. In the poetical translations of the elegies of Tibullus and poems of Sulpicius, there is a cynical note “With money a prostitute may embrace a gouty man”. We find versified references to podagra in poems by Horace, Lucilius, Ennius and Plautus as well.