K. 263+10934, A Tablet with Recipes Against the Abnormal Flow of a Woman’s Blood

Ulrike Steinert

In this article I am using an unpublished Babylonian gynaecological text from the 1st millennium BC as a point of departure to advocate a comparative and historical approach to the study of cuneiform medicine.¹ A standard text edition of K. 263+10934 will be combined with a discussion of its contents and parallels to other texts on women’s ailments (found in other cuneiform texts as well as in Egyptian, Greco-Roman and Jewish sources), especially those concerned with the abnormal flow of blood, but also including medical recipes against other forms of haemorrhage.

The hitherto unpublished tablet K. 263+10934 contains medical recipes and a ritual against the abnormal flow of a woman’s blood (in rev. 37, it offers the rubric [ka.ini]m.ma müd munus atā tār-su). Although this text contains elements that are typical for Babylonian therapeutic texts on women’s illnesses, K. 263+ also exhibits some unusual features to be discussed. It is a one-column-tablet in Neo-Babylonian script from the Nineveh collection, possibly dating to the early Neo-Babylonian period and later brought from Babylonia to Nineveh during Assurbanipal’s reign.² Its top left-hand corner and bottom right-hand corner are still missing. The joined fragment K. 10934 forms the top right-hand corner. The handwriting is rather large, adding together with a few missing signs to the impression that this tablet could form an excerpt collecting recipes exclusively dealing with gynaecological haemorrhage.³

¹This article presents an extract of my ongoing research project on Mesopotamian gynaecological texts of the 1st millennium BCE, which consists of an edition of a corpus of (mostly unpublished) texts on women’s healthcare and a comparative study of Mesopotamian gynaecology in the light of intercultural parallels. This project is funded by a Medical History and Humanities Fellowship of the Wellcome Trust London during 2011–2013. I would therefore like to thank the Wellcome Trust for funding me to carry out this research, as well as M.J. Geller and I. L. Finkel for reading and discussing difficult passages of K. 263+ with me and for providing criticism to early versions of this article. I also thank the Trustees of the British for kind permission to publish K. 263+ on this occasion.
²I.L. Finkel, personal communication.
³See for a similar suggestion J. Fincke, http://fincke.uni-hd.de/nineveh/babylonian/index.htm. The two then unjoined fragments were mentioned by Fincke (2003/2004, esp. 143; both fragments joined by her in 2005) as of unidentified medical content, yet the text shows that the tablet belongs to the gynaecological corpus. The tablet is of light reddish-beige colour, its size approximately 7 × 11 × 2 cm; fingerprint traces are visible on the reverse. For a photograph of this tablet see the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI): http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/cdlisearch/search/indexi.php under the Accession Number K 00263.
Transliteration

Obv.
1) [diš munus múd-šá du-ki']
2) [x x x] zu-sákk ina múd giš eren la ši
3) [ina šig.še me da']
4) [nan muš-šašara ša ši-tur šú gas-ma taš-iš]
5) [ina šig.še me da niggin-mi] semaška diš-niš šúd
6) [ki min x x x suši']
7) [ki min minuz tu']
8) [ki min nuggišušušušušušu šúd]
9) [šúd-šá] semaška diš-niš šúd
10) 'šúd-šašara ša ši-tur šú gas-ma taš-iš
11) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
12) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
13) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
14) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
15) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
16) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
17) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
18) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
19) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
20) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
21) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
22) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]
23) [ki min nuggišušušušušu šúd]

Rev.
24) [ki min niggim] 1
25) [ki min niggim] 2
26) [ki min niggim] 3
27) [ki min niggim] 4
28) [ki min niggim] 5
29) [ki min niggim] 6
30) [ki min niggim] 7
31) [ki min niggim] 8
32) [ki min niggim] 9
33) [ki min niggim] 10
34) [ki min niggim] 11
35) [ki min niggim] 12
36) [ki min niggim] 13
37) [ki min niggim] 14
38) [ki min niggim] 15
39) [ki min niggim] 16
40) [ki min niggim] 17
41) [ki min niggim] 18
42) [ki min niggim] 19
43) [ki min niggim] 20
44) [ki min niggim] 21
45) [ki min niggim] 22
46) [ki min niggim] 23
47) [ki min niggim] 24
48) [ki min niggim] 25
49) [ki min niggim] 26
Philological Comments

Note the following peculiarities of this text:

- The variation between the female vs. male pronominal suffix –šá (in obv. 3, rev. 30) and –šú (in obv. 10, rev. 36, 38–42) hints at the use of more than one textual source to assemble this tablet (cf. also the variant writings of urīzu in obv. 22 and rev. 33).
– Since as a rule a recipe always starts at the beginning at a new line, I suppose that the section starting with ki.min in the middle of rev. l. 30 is an alternative recipe with kirbān eqli-plant (from a different textual source) for ll. 28–30.

– Note missing signs in obv. l. 16 and rev. l. 38.

– Instead of the common phrase diš ki.min “if ditto” to begin entries for the same purpose as before, the text seems to use throughout only ki.min “ditto”, with the possible exception of obv. l. 4, which could have started with diš ki.min instead, confirming that the ruled section ll. 1–5 would have been taken from a different source than the following sections starting with ll. 11. Moreover, the scribe wrote the ki.min signs in an abbreviated fashion, with only one vertical wedge for the sign MIN, and the KI-sign with only three horizontal wedges, except for the first time in line 5 where he wrote it with four horizontals.

Discussion

This tablet preserves a collection of recipes against the abnormal flow of a woman’s blood (“to stop a woman’s blood”). On the obverse, it contains three sections.

The first section (ll. 1–5) comprises two recipes for suppositories, using plant and mineral ingredients respectively.

The second section (ll. 6–10) contains three recipes, the first two of which again make use of a suppository, while the third describes the preparation of a potion consisting of the blood of a bird, probably a male partridge (issūr ḫurri). As can be concluded from the lacuna of ll. 6 f., the first two recipes of this section also apply a drug containing only a single component (simplicium, i.e. one drug to combat one ailment), as in all the recipes of the third section (ll. 11–23), which consists of one plant, mineral or animal substance to be drunk in beer. This is remarkable given the tendency in Mesopotamian medical texts of the 1st millennium BC for compound recipes.

The reverse of K. 263+ starts with a fragmentary section of recipes of which ll. 24–27 are too damaged to reconstruct with confidence, but they seem to contain three prescriptions for potions with various drugs (mineral, plants and animal substances) in beer. Lines 28–31 continue with two more recipes for potions. The first of the two prescriptions uses two plant ingredients, kirbān eqli and an uncertain ingredient (possibly elikulla), with a third ingredient in l. 28 lost in the lacuna. The second potion combines kirbān eqli and the horn of an animal (gazelle?). The second and third sections of the reverse contain recipes with minerals. The second section is a one-line recipe for a suppository (l. 32), but the third contains a prescription for a potion of beer mixed with three powdered minerals (ll. 33–36).

The set-off line 37 introduces the rubric [ka.ini]m.ma múd munus ana tar-su, which should follow an incantation as a subscript, but here the incantation is not included, so this rubric is meant as a reminder for the specialist that an incantation (for stopping haemorrhage) has to be recited in conjunction with the last prescription.20

The next section on the reverse (lines 38–39) consists of a recipe with a suppository (l. 38) and a potion (l. 39). The suppository is prepared with another simplicium (crushed magnetite) wrapped in wool. Because there is only space for 4 or 5 signs in the lacuna at the

20Note a similar occurrence of a ka.ini.ma-rubric with the incantation missing after ritual instructions in BAM 237 i 17’ (see I.L. Finkel 1980, 50f.).
beginning of l. 39, it is possible that this line was indented and there is actually nothing missing, consisting of a variant treatment type with crushed magnetite.

The following two sections are two more one-line recipes, again for a suppository and a potion. The suppository in l. 40 is probably prepared with ‘iron stone’ wrapped in red wool. The simple ingredient for the potion in l. 41, supposedly a mineral, is lost in the lacuna, but this time it is dissolved in water. The last section of the reverse of K. 263+ (ll. 42–48) is interesting but damaged. After the lacuna at the beginning of l. 42 the signs dü dü [bi] can be deciphered, forming the rubric for the beginning of a ritual instruction which can only partially be read with certainty. The ritual instruction ends with the sentence en 3šu šid-nu in l. 45. Thus, the last three lines contain the incantation to be recited three times, which is confirmed by the last two signs of l. 48, tu6,ën. The incantation is like a short prayer addressed to a plural object, as shown by the second person plural pronominal suffix (-ku-nu) preserved in ll. 46–47. Asalluḫī and Ea are invoked in the last line 48. The beginning of l. 42 probably consists of a short two-word sentence and is set off by a ‘ditto’-sign from the ritual instruction. This seems to be the incipit of an incantation. Before the preserved pa₄, meš-šu “her canals” (atappātu or palgū) a verbal form is expected, e.g. “May her canals be dammed up!” (i.e. a form of sekēru) or the like. The sentence reminds us of the incantation for stopping a woman’s blood in BAM 235: 10–16 // BAM 236 Rev. 1’–9’, which speaks of the woman’s blood as a “carnelian river, a carnelian canal” (atappātu), and of the inside of the woman’s body as a meadow, which is to be dammed up (sekēru).²¹

The ritual instructions in ll. 42–45 are unique within the gynaecological corpus, although partial parallels can be found in other medical and ritual texts. The ritual actions employ symbolic and metaphoric associations relating to the woman’s body and her disorder. An object, presumably a waterskin in which something has been deposited or which was filled with a liquid, is to be closed with a mixture of clay and chaff and to be sealed with a carnelian seal. The waterskin reminds us of the female body and its open canal (or more specifically the womb and its neck), which is to be sealed off,²² and the use of a carnelian seal employs a colour symbolism entailing the colour of blood. Similar rituals can be found elsewhere, yet unfortunately they do not offer a real duplicate for the instructions in K. 263+. A close parallel can be found in the series against the disease sagallu, which affects the lower extremities (CT 23, 1: 9 ff.), where we find the following instructions:

dü dü bi en an-ni ta ina tak-pir-ti uzu ūr šid nig sila₁₁ gā šu-a-tu₄ ina ḫabru₄²¹
šad₂šu₄ a gar-an-ma ina im in bubbu kā-šū bad ina na₄₄ kišib šuba u na₄₄ kur-nu / kā-šu₄ ta-bar-ram

“Its ritual. You recite this incantation at the wiping of the thigh (with dough), you put this dough into a hole towards the west. You close its opening with clay and chaff, you seal its opening with a seal of šubû-stone and haematite (šadânu). (Other ritual actions follow)”²³

Following this parallel, I suggest that in the ritual of K. 263+ a hole had to be dug, in which the sealed waterskin itself was then buried. Then the opening of the hole had to be closed

²¹See for a transliteration and translation of this incantation T. J. Collins (1999, 181 f.).
²²For parallels in Old Babylonian Sumerian incantations probably designed for a similar purpose (the stopping of a haemorrhage), which also employ the metaphor of water and irrigation canal, see Finkel 1980, 37 ff.
²³Cf. also PBS 1/1, 15 (rev.) 30–35 (Laessoe 1955, 30f.); BAM 542 iii 8–12 (K. 2450, a ritual against dental trouble cited in CAD B, s. v. barānu sub 1b), where the sealed object is a clay model of the gums; VAT 35: 13 (courtesy Köcher) and PBS 1/2, 120 rev. 11–14 (a ritual against witchcraft (ušbrurdu), cf. rev. 10), see Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 168, 186: 42’–45’: dü dü bi ene šē₄ la ḫu₄ <du₄> ma zē nag ši₄ i / gu aš ti i gi₄ meš-šu₄ tar-rim ina ḫabru₄ šad₂šu₄ a ḫu₄–ḫu₄–nu₄ ina na₄₄ kišib na₄₄ šuba u na₄₄ kur-ni kā-šu₄ ta-bar-ram “Its ritual: <You make> a tongue of tallow, you drench (lit.: “have it drink”) it with bile, you cover its face with cobwebs, you shut it up in a hole toward sunset; then you seal its opening with a seal of šubû-stone and with a seal of šadânu-stone.”
and sealed as well. Old Babylonian Sumerian incantations designed for a similar purpose also speak of using a seal (of šubû-stone), but also of a potsherd with which the vulva of the woman suffering haemorrhage is rubbed; a ritual against nāḫšātu in BAM 237 i 1–16 employs a potsherd from the street as well, which is put in an isolated place in the patient’s house.24

Similar instructions, in which an object is enclosed and buried or disposed, can be found in ghost rituals and anti-witchcraft rituals. In KAR 184 (= BAM 323): 1–38, a ritual against a pursuing ghost or demon, a figurine of the ghost is made from dust mixed with the blood of an ox. Finally the figurine is put in a jar, which is closed and buried in an abandoned place (ll. 36 ff.: ana dug gar-an-šu-ma ... ká-sú bad-ḫi / [...] ina ḫar-bi na-du-ti te-ge-ber-šá).25 In rituals against witchcraft, figurines are often put into a vessel sealed with a šubû-stone and haematite (šadānu) seal and enclosed in holes, in a wall or under a threshold.26 In a Neo-Babylonian ritual text from Ur against slander, clay models of the slandering “tongues” are enclosed and sealed with a šubû-stone and hematite seal in a clay model boat, which is then thrown into the river.27

Within the gynaecological texts, a parallel to the metaphor of sealing an opening with a seal is presented by BAM 237 ii 1′–6′ (// BAM 386 IV 1′–6′; SpTU 4, No. 129 VI 11′–27′ (von Weiher 1993, 32–40)), an incantation which was used against nāḫšātu (abnormal flow of blood in pregnant women) and also against nosebleed. In this incantation, a deity is asked to bring down from heaven “the seal of Anu” and to seal with it the “disorder of her (the woman’s) vagina” (lā dumuq ūriša, best preserved in SpTU 4, No. 129 VI 24′ ff.).

The corpus of Mesopotamian medical texts on women’s health shows a strong interest in the abnormal flow of blood and other discharges. A number of such texts from 1st millennium BCE Babylonia and Assyria offer close parallels to some of the recipes in K. 263+, but also highlight certain peculiarities and unique features in the text under discussion. The most important published texts containing recipes against the abnormal flow of a woman’s blood are BAM 235, 236 and 237 from Assur.28 BAM 237 is a four-column tablet containing a large compendium with recipes and rituals including a number of incantations, which are mainly directed against nāḫšātu, abnormal flow of blood during pregnancy, but also against other female ailments. BAM 235 and 236 are smaller one-column tablets with recipes and incantations against abnormal flow of blood (with the incantation rubric ka.inim.ma múd munus tar-si).29 There are two more unpublished Neo-Babylonian medical tablets (from Sippar or Babylon) in the collection of the British Museum known to me, BM 38624 and BM 40152, containing recipes presenting interesting parallels to K. 263+. Notably, BM 40152 rev. iii 6 contains the key line [diš] munus múd.meš-šá du-ku-ma la tar-su “If a woman’s blood flows and does not stop (to stop it)”, which is partly lost in K. 263+ rev. 1. This tablet also contains the remarkable line 17 ana múd kir₄ u múd munus tar-si “to stop nosebleed and (the flow of) a woman’s blood”, which shows that the Babylonian healers did not see a fundamental difference between the abnormal flow of blood from different body

---

25Scurlock 2006, 532.
26See for instance Tablet IX 53′ ff. of the anti-witchcraft series Maqlû, Abusch/Schwemer 2008, 182; see also Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 134, 140f. Text 7.6 sub 7.6.4 ll. 6 ff., (ms. C obv. 16–16); for a variation of the topic of sealing see ibid., 136, 143 Text 7.6 sub 7.6.6 ll. 35 ff. (ms. E obv. 35 ff.), where the mouth of a figurine representing an evil adversary is sealed with a seal of šubû- and šadānu-stone; also ibid., 362 f. Text 8.12 ll. 7 ff.
27See Collins 1999, 177 ff. for an edition of this incantation.
28Published in cuneiform copy only by Köcher (1964).
29See e.g. BAM 235: 14 // BAM 236 rev. 6′. For nāḫšātu and a discussion of BAM 237 see e. g. I.L. Finkel 1980, 42 and 49 ff.; J. Scurlock 1991, 136 ff. Parts of BAM 237 have been translated by B. Böck (2010a, esp. 111 f.).
Egypt and the Near East in antiquity).

Rochberg-Halton 2004), and there is also evidence for the late survival of Mesopotamian astronomy/astrology into Aramaic (see e. g.

Mesopotamian influences on Greece have been pointed out for other domains of ancient science, e. g. astronomy/astrology (see e. g.

Millennium BCE, especially in Alexandria during the Hellenistic period, and Egyptian influences on ancient Greek medicine have

Remedies or practices, given the archaeological evidence for the long-standing exchange of medicinal substances between Greece,

Yet, from intercultural parallels it can be concluded that the Mesopotamian recipes under discussion indeed refer to stopping either excessive menstrual flow or, in medical parlance, gynaecological haemorrhage (abnormal bleeding). Thus, recipes designed for this purpose can also be found in earlier, roughly contemporary and much younger sources: in Egyptian medical papyri, in the Hippocratic Corpus and in Medieval Jewish texts on women’s healthcare. Although (most of) the Egyptian and especially the Medieval Jewish sources are temporally remote from the discussed Mesopotamian texts by one millennium or even more, the inclusion of comparable examples from these different corpora in the following discussion is justified because the comparison does not claim a historical interconnection or intercultural transmission between these texts, but rather highlights that gynaecological haemorrhage was a common medical problem to be dealt with in ancient medicine.

Moreover, the similarities in the ways of treatment and agreements in the use of materia medica in texts of four different cultures and periods hint at the existence and stability over long periods of time of a common medical tradition, which can be described as recipe-based and partially grounded in folk medicine.

31 It is important to note here that in the Hippocratic Corpus, a nosebleed in women and menstruation were seen as complementary phenomena, due to the conception that there was an internal connection or route between the orifices and the vagina and that menstrual blood could be diverted and exit through other body openings (King 1998, 28, 79 f. and passim, see Frandsen 2007, 84 ff. for parallels of this conception in Egyptian medicine). For similar connections in Egyptian and Greek birth prognoses see also Reiner 1972, 124 ff.; Stephan 2005, 93 ff.

32 See esp. p. 168 f. Text 15, 1. 5: (a supposition) šá múd tar-šú “for stopping the blood”.

33 Except for the very rare Akkadian word sagû “flow (of blood)” (connected to the verb sagû “to trouble?”) attested in BM 38624 i: 27′, 29′ (see also CAD S, s. v. sagû B). This term is equated with dam ardati “blood of a (young) woman” in SpTU 1, No. 39: 6, a commentary to the Diagnostic Handbook Tablet 36. The Old Egyptian word for the menses was ḥsmn, which also means “purification” (Frandsen 2007, 82 ff.), while the Hippocratics used several designations including gynaikêia “women’s things”, terms which relate to their monthly appearance (katanênia, epîmênia, emmênia) and expressions such as ta kuta physis “the natural things” or hé physis “nature” (King 1998, 29 with references). In contrast, the Biblical Hebrew word for a menstruating woman niddâh (“removed, separated”) is associated with impurity.

34 In rare instances a text can specify if acute haemorrhage takes place after delivery or if bleeding occurs during pregnancy (see e. g. SpTU 4, No. 153: 7 f. and below for the word nahšûta). Similarly, Hippocratic theories (see e. g. Diseases of Women 1, 41; Littre 1962, 98) considered the lochia, bloody discharges from the uterus after delivery, as composed of menstrual blood (see King 1998, 85 f., 90 for a discussion and further references). In Mesopotamian gynaecology, the lochia are called “the blood of a woman in childbed” (dam ḫaršiţë). Intercultural transmissions of medical knowledge are possible and even likely given the globalisation of knowledge in the 1st millennium BCE, especially in Alexandria during the Hellenistic period, and Egyptian influences on ancient Greek medicine have often been assumed because of similar concepts and recipes (see e. g. Stephan 2005, 92 ff. with literature). Yet, although Mesopotamian influences on Greece have been pointed out for other domains of ancient science, e. g. astronomy/astrology (see e. g. Rochberg-Halton 2004), and there is also evidence for the late survival of Mesopotamian astronomy/astrology into Aramaic (see e. g. Greenfield/Sokoloff 2001), these are still hard to prove in the medical domain (see e. g. the sceptical opinion of Nutton 2005, 40ff. regarding Near-Eastern influences on Greek medicine in the domain of medical theory, but allowing the transmission of single remedies or practices, given the archaeological evidence for the long-standing exchange of medicinal substances between Greece, Egypt and the Near East in antiquity).
In Egyptian papyri from the 2nd and 1st millennium BCE, gynaecological haemorrhage is connected with ailments of the uterus, but most of the recipes against flux address haemorrhage during pregnancy, an important problem in Mesopotamian gynaecology as well. There are also some recipes in Demotic texts from the end of the 1st millennium BCE and the first centuries CE, which have been characterised as displaying Mesopotamian and Greek influences (Hoffmann/Quack 2010, 298), notably the Demotic Papyrus Berlin, Carlsberg and the Magical Papyrus London and Leiden. These texts contain recipes to stop (gynaecological or obstetric) haemorrhage and other discharges using ointments, potions and suppositories. One similarity to Mesopotamian texts like K. 263+ is the administration of medicine in the morning on an empty stomach, but other familiar features are lacking. Noteworthy are a few recipes (unknown from Mesopotamian sources), designed to interrupt menstruation for sexual intercourse, where *materia medica* are applied to the male partner.40

In the Hippocratic Corpus (5th/4th cent. BCE) heavy menstrual flow is often seen as positive to women’s health (King 1998, 29 f.), and there seems to be a stronger emphasis on provoking menstrual flow when it is judged to be insufficient. On the other hand, Hippocratics also held a surplus of menstrual flow to be unhealthy (*Aphorisms* 5.57, Loeb IV, 172; see also *Diseases of Women* I, 6; Littré 1962, 34), and recommend the use of cupping glasses to make the blood come out from other places than from the womb (ibid., 5.50, translated in Loeb IV, 170), a practise very unlike Mesopotamian therapies. According to *Diseases of Women* I, 5 (Littré 1962, 29 f.), too abundant menstrual periods are either caused by a bodily disposition (excessive physical wetness or because the mouth of the uterus was located too close to the vulva) or by lifestyle (excessive sexual intercourse which broadens the mouth of the uterus and overeating). Regarding the Hippocratic therapies for abnormal fluxes, one notices a few similarities to Mesopotamian recipes under discussion, but more differences. Like the Mesopotamian texts, the Hippocratics prescribed suppositories and potions, mostly with plants and animal ingredients, but hardly any minerals. In contrast to Mesopotamian potions mostly made with beer, the Greeks mainly used wine. In some recipes against fluxes, dark wine is an astringent. Beside potions and suppositories, the Hippocratic Corpus also recommends fumigations, poultices, emmemagogues and uterine injections (see *Diseases of Women* 2, Chapters 110, 192–199; Littré 1962, 238 f.; 370ff.). Another medical writer who has left a detailed account is Soranus (1st/2nd cent. CE). Book III of his *Gynaecology* contains a whole chapter on excessive uterine haemorrhage because of a difficult delivery, a miscarriage, ulceration or wounds. His recommended treatments are various: He advises that the patient lie still in a little dark and cool room, on a bed more elevated at the feet. Sponges with cold water and vinegar are to be applied to the genitals, hips and loins, and the face should be cooled with vinegar as well.

| 36 | For a first attempt to compare Babylonian and Greek (Hippocratic) medicine see Geller 2001–2002; cf. Goltz 1974. One difference between Mesopotamian sources like K. 263+ and the gynaecological corpora from Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew sources is the fact that whereas the latter preserve only lengthy compilations on several topics, we also find short tablets devoted to one medical problem (e. g. recipes to stop bleeding), i.e. excerpts and school tablets, among the Mesopotamian medical cuneiform texts. |
| 37 | Papyrus Kahun 17 (ca. 1850 BCE, see Westendorf 1999, 416 f.) could deal with discharges after delivery. Papyrus London 25–30 and 33 (ca. 1350 BCE, Leitz 1999, 67 f.; Westendorf 1999, 421–424) contains spells and recipes against obstetrical haemorrhage (miscarriage) called “incantations for repelling the blood”. Similar to Mesopotamian practises, these texts employ magical and mechanical means to seal the woman’s vagina or womb. Some of these incantations speak of “flood” and “dam”, similar to Mesopotamian river and dike-metaphors. The recipes use similar means of treatment, e.g. protective bandages, vaginal suppositories (“amuletic knots”) and carnelian (to be placed on the anus), similar to the carnelian seal in the ritual of K. 263+. The Papyrus Ebers 828–831 (ca. 1550 BCE; Westenholz 1999, 686 f.) contains recipes to stop the flow of blood and against haemorrhage of the uterus, which recommend vaginal injections based on plant drugs dissolved in beer or wine and suppositories with minerals (a mineral earth and lead glance). |
| 40 | E. g. (calcined) copper ( galze, Littré “carnelain”) and sulphur as ingredients of suppositories against heavy periods and abnormal fluxes in *Diseases of Women* I, 74 (Littré 1962, 160ff.) and *Diseases of Women* 2, 199 (Littré 1962, 382 f.). |
| 41 | An element of Hippocratic medicine (including gynaecology) not found in Mesopotamian texts are elaborate dietetic prescriptions. |
cold water as well. Moreover he advises cold baths, injections into the vagina and suppositories with cooling and astringent plants, but he only mentions alum and chalcites (a mineral containing copper and sulphur) as effective haemostatic minerals. Although he notes that other writers use remedies in the form of amulets (a common form of therapy in Mesopotamia), he does not believe them to be effective although they might have a positive psychological effect on the patient.43

The Medieval Hebrew compilation called The Book of Women’s Love (Sefer Ahavat Nashim) is one among about twenty known Hebrew works on women’s healthcare from the period between the 12th and 15th century, some being translations of Latin or Arabic compendia, others original compositions in the Hebrew language (Caballero-Navas 2004; Barkai 1998, 4 f.). Similar to other Hebrew texts of this genre, The Book of Women’s Love was compiled using a mixture of sources: oral traditions (especially of women), Greek, Latin and Arabic medical texts, Jewish sources (esp. the Kabbalah) and medieval treatises from Western Europe (e. g. the Catalan treatise Tròtula).44 Although temporally very distant from the Mesopotamian sources, the Book of Women’s Love exhibits the closest parallel rubric to the Mesopotamian texts, “to stop menstrual flow” (דנ דיס נשה, דנ דיס נשה), and the expression “menstrual haemorrhage” (דנ דיס נשה, דנ דיס נשה), which could trigger the question of possible Mesopotamian influences.45 Yet, this treatise also speaks of materia medica as preventing “excessive menstrual blood” (וף דיס נשה היי יב, יב יב יב יב), unknown in the Mesopotamian recipes.46 Moreover, the Medieval Hebrew gynaecological treatises contain theoretical considerations and speculations which are not found in the laconic cuneiform sources, but are typical for the style of Greek and Latin medical writers. For instance, the treatise A Record of the Diseases in the Genital Members notes that when the duration of menstruation is longer than the normal three to six days, it is considered an illness called “loss of blood” (כון, כון, כון), the causes of which are ascribed to bruises in the uterus, open veins or an abundance of blood (Barkai 1998, 118 f., 139 f.).

Treatments and materia medica against haemorrhage in K. 263+, Mesopotamian medicine and beyond

K. 263+ concentrates on two forms of medical prescriptions to combat gynaecological haemorrhage: suppositories and potions, in contrast to other texts, e. g. BAM 237, which also includes other forms of therapy (amulets, ointments) and elaborate ritual instructions. BAM 237 also differs in the large amount of ingredients in many of its recipes, while K. 263+ mostly records simplicia. Some close parallels for prescriptions and ingredients in K. 263+ are known from other Mesopotamian gynaecological texts and present a few intercultural parallels in ancient Egyptian medicine, in the Hippocratic Corpus, Greco-

---

42Soranus III, pp. 42 ff.; Temkin 1991, 161 ff. In the following chapter on female fluxes (Soranus III, pp. 47 ff.; Temkin 1991, 165 ff.), he defines these as prolonged and abundant uterine flows distinguishing red/bloody and white/watery discharges. For these symptoms, Soranus recommends in principle the same therapies as against uterine haemorrhage, but he also mentions potions which other authors recommended as haemostatic, e. g. earth of Samos (Samia, a white, alkaline clay) mixed with water and wine, a mineral also described by Dioscorides (De Materia Medica 5-172) as effective for women’s menstrual flows.

43Contrary to the theory current throughout Greek medicine that bloodletting could divert a flux, Soranus advises against it, because exceeding blood loss might cause the patient’s death.

44See the detailed discussion in Caballero-Navas 2004, 23 ff. The compiler cites or mentions explicitly that he copied passages from authors such as Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, Ibn Sinā, al-Rāzī. Works of these authors were translated into Hebrew in the medieval period. For sources of Hebrew origin by Jewish medical writers of the period see Caballero-Navas 2004, 34 ff. It may be of interest here that in the Book of Women’s Love “the sages of Babylon” are also acknowledged as an authority, which refers “to the sages of the rabbinical schools in Babylon, centre of Jewish intellectual life from Antiquity until the Middle Ages, when the centre of knowledge moved to the West” (ibid., 38). For the interrelations of the various medical traditions contained in other medieval Hebrew treatises on gynaecology from Mediterranean Europe see Barkai 1998.

45That comparisons between temporally very distant texts from Mesopotamian and Jewish contexts are not totally unbearable is shown by Greenfield and Sokloff (2001) who found a manuscript from the Cairo Genizah containing extracts from the series Enūma Anu Enlil attesting to the survival of elements of Babylonian astrology/astronomy as late as the 11th century CE.

46Caballero-Navas 2004, 168, see also 164, 166.
Roman pharmaceutical handbooks (especially Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica*) and in Medieval Jewish treatises, which point (as already noted above) to continuities in the knowledge (based on the transmission of ancient texts) as well as to the widespread use of certain *materia medica* as haemostatics based on positive experience, or to shared principles in the choice of drugs for specific purposes, due to their properties (e. g. colour).

The ingredients of the suppositories

a) plants:

- ‘blood’ (resin) of cedar (obv. 2):

Within the gynaecological recipes, cedar (wood) is applied e. g. in BAM 237 iii 8’ (as powder), while K. 263+ uses the resin for a suppository. A very noteworthy parallel for the astringent (but at the same time decaying, poisonous) effect ascribed to cedar occurs in Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica* 1-105, where he reports the use of the berries and the oil prepared from the resin of cedar from the Lebanon. The resin, he states, “dries out extraordinarily”, and if rubbed on the genitals before intercourse, it would cause sterility (probably designating a contraceptive effect); if given as a suppository, it could be used as abortifacient, but the berries, taken as a drink, would dry out the menstrual flow.

b) minerals:

- kalû and kalgukku (obv. 4 f.):

The minerals kalû and kalgukku (yellow and red mineral earths or ochre also used as dye and in glassmaking) are often found together as drugs in medical recipes. The two minerals are also used together with alum (see below). (Red) ochre is widely found in Mesopotamia and contains iron oxide or haematite. The application of this mineral to stop bleeding can be connected to its colour but also to astringent and haemostatic qualities documented in ethnomedical studies. In this context it may be relevant that the Greek word haematite means “bloody” (connected to the colour which can be similar to dried blood). Among others, Dioscorides, in his *De Materia Medica* (5-144 and 5–108), described this stone beside ochre as astringent and recommends it with pomegranate juice against women’s discharges (menstrual flow).

47 See Riddle 1994, 34, 82. 48 For a gynaecological context see e. g. BAM 237 i 1’, in a recipe (probably against *nahšātu*) for a salve to be rubbed on the vagina.

49 Ochre and similar mineral earths are widely used in the traditional medicine of many cultures and are often applied against haemorrhage and for wound healing, see Nadkami 1976, 95; MacDonald 2008, 8 f. citing Velo 1984; 1986; cf. Weser 2005 for positive biological effects of iron compounds in connection with the use of red ochre in Egyptian medical papyri.

50 See also Pliny, The *Natural History* Book 36, Chapter 37. This tradition can still be found in the work of the alchemist Agricola (Georgius Agricola, *De Natura Fossilium* (Textbook of Mineralogy, Dover Edition 2007), 88). A similar colour symbolism as with haematite is probably involved in the use of calcined copper in a suppository in a Hippocratic recipe against abnormal menstrual flux in *Diseases of Women* 1, 74.

51 In the Greek and Roman periods, red jaspis, carnelian and haematite were also popular amulet stones worn against female illnesses such as haemorrhage and for a safe delivery (Michel 1995, 382 ff.; 2004, 127 f., 153 ff., 178 ff. with further literature).

52 Harris 1961, 156 f. with textual references; cf. Aufrère 1991, 653 ff.; Westendorf 1999, 510 f. for further literature. For instance, in the *Papyrus Ebers*, powder of “blood stone” was an ingredient of poultices against swellings and putrefacient ulcers, but also part of internal recipes against stomach troubles.
such a longstanding tradition), but can also be explained on account of similar mechanisms at work in the choice of *materia medica* in these cultures (colour symbolism).

– šadânu šābitu “magnetite”(?) (rev. 32, 38):

The identification of šadânu šābitu as magnetite/magnetic iron or loadstone has been established through its name, lit. “seizing šadânu”, and through its description in the explanatory stone list *abnu šikinšu* where it is said to have a black colour with red dots. This stone is applied beside other minerals in a salve to be rubbed on the vagina in BAM 237 i 2’; it is also applied in a suppository together with other minerals in BAM 237 i 45’ f. (against naḫšatu):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{na₄.ku.gi.na} & \text{ dab.ba an.bar kù.gan na.u₄-ri-za na₄.ku-pa-šu na₄.su.a} / \text{na₄.ta-ār-tú súd sīg.āka nigin } ana \text{ šà.túr-šá gar} \\
\text{“You pound magnetite, iron, antimony, urīzu-stone, kapāṣu-shell, šû-stone, (and) ajartu-mussel shell, you wrap (it) in a wad of wool, put (it) into her womb.”}^{55}
\end{align*}
\]

Note a similar recipe in BM 40152 rev. iii 6–8:

\[
\begin{align*}
6) \text{[diš] munus múd.meš-sā du-ku-ma la tar-su 7) [n]a₄.ku-nu dab súd na₄-u₄-ri-zu} \\
8) \text{súd ina sīg.ḥē.me.d[a n]ig} & \text{lin’ } ana \text{ šà.túr-šá gar-an} \\
\text{“If a woman’s blood flows and does not stop: you pound magnetite, you pound urīzu-stone, you wrap it in red wool, put it into her womb.”}^{56}
\end{align*}
\]

That magnetite was considered a general haemostatic can be inferred from its use outside gynaecology. Thus, powder of magnetite is also inserted in an anal suppository against haemorrhage from the rectum and diarrhea (Geller 2005, 140f. No. 22 rev. iii 16’; ibid., 214 f. No. 35 rev. 45 f.).

– parzillu/aban parzilli “iron (stone)” (rev. 40):

“Iron stone” (na₄.an.bar) can be found in recipes against naḫšatu in BAM 237 i 47’ (in a prescription for an amulet), beside an.bar “iron” in l. 31’ (also a recipe for an amulet) and in l. 45’ just cited above, where it appears in a list of mineral ingredients for a suppository. As suggested by Abusch and Schwemer (2011, 471), na₄.an.bar could designate an iron bead or a stone bead whose appearance is similar to iron. Colour symbolism might be implied in the use of this mineral, highlighted by its combination with red wool. What makes it even more interesting in the context of blood loss is the role of iron as haematopoietic substance that helps to build up red blood cells.\(^{57}\)

c) animal substances:

– red wool (*nabāsu*, rev. 40, also probable in obv. 3 and 5):

\footnotesize

53For the importance of colour in pharmacology see Geller (2005, 7) mentioning the wide-spread conceptions connected to the therapeutic effect of colours: Red liquids are often thought to be effective against fever, while the colour green is ascribed a soothing effect on stomach disorders.

54See Schuster-Brandis 2008, 425. The stone šadânu has been identified as magnetite through the inscription on a duck weight made of this stone, although the word probably included similar minerals, such as haematite (Schuster-Brandis, ibid., 424 f.). Both haematite and magnetite belong to the group of the iron oxides.

55See also BAM 235: 2, another text against gynaecological haemorrhage.

56Magnetite is also used beside other minerals (e. g. alum) in a suppository for the same purpose in BM 42313+: 34’ f.

57Cf. above fn. 49 for the astringent properties of ochre and Weser 2005 for positive biological effects of iron compounds in connection with the use of red ochre in Egyptian medical papyri. Note that Dioscorides in his *De materia medica* (5-93) recommends iron rust as astringent, which (applied in a suppository?) could stop women’s excessive discharges (menstrual flow). He reports a decoction of it (taken as a drink) to be an effective contraceptive.
Wool provided the basic material for suppositories in Mesopotamian medical recipes. Reddyed wool was an important material in Mesopotamian rituals and because of the colour symbolism involved, it is hardly surprising that it is found often in recipes against the abnormal flow of blood, e.g. in BAM 237 i 6′, i 31′, 41′, where it is used as part of a string twined together with the sinew from a dead cow in a prescription for an amulet to be worn around the waist. In BAM 237 ii 36′, atbaru-stone (a basalt) is wrapped into red wool for a suppository; in iii 1, 4, 5 we find red wool again in use for amulets, and in iv 7 once more for a suppository.

The ingredients of the potions

a) plants

Most of the plants used for potions in K. 263+ are well known in Mesopotamian medicine and also occur in other gynaecological texts, while others are so far unique to this context.

– elikulla-plant (? Rev. 28):

K. 263+ presents the first attestation of this plant in recipes against gynaecological haemorrhage. Yet, this reconstruction seems plausible given the prescription of elikulla (irkulla) in a compound recipe for a potion against bloody urine and “discharge” (mūṣu) of the penis (Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 4: 4′).

– illūru (rev. 26):

Although this plant name is only partly preserved in K. 263, parallels in BAM 237 make this reconstruction likely. Illūru is a plant with characteristic red flowers and fruit, and in omens its colour is sometimes compared to the blood of a sacrificial lamb, which provides us with another example of colour symbolism involved in the choice of medical ingredients. Thus, in BAM 237 i 28 and 30 it is likewise prescribed in a potion with beer in two recipes against naḫšātu.59

– imḫur-līm (obv. 13):

This unidentified plant is an almost ubiquitous drug in Mesopotamian medical texts (the literal translation of its name being “it withstood a thousand (ailments)” and is often found in the gynaecological corpus as well, within the context of haemorrhage e.g. in BAM 237 i 37′ (potion against naḫšātu).60

– karān šēlibi “fox-vine” (obv. 16):

This unidentified plant is mentioned in pharmaceutical lists as a plant (to be used in a salve) specifically for a woman in difficult labour (BAM 380 rev. 25–41, esp. 33 f. // BAM 381 iii 17–36, esp. 28 ff., discussed in Stol 2000, 53 f., see also SpTU 4, 153: 23, 26), but I do not know any parallels for its use against gynaecological haemorrhage. However, “fox-vine” is applied in potions against “discharge” (mūṣu) and pus emitted from the penis (Geller 2005, 66 f. No. 4 i 20′).

– kirbān eqli (“field clod”)-plant (rev. 28, 30):

58See CAD I/J; s. v. illuru sub 1a.
59See also ibid. iv 11, in a recipe against the nīṭu-disease (see for this ailment below with fn. 69).
60In pharmaceutical lists, it is especially mentioned as a plant against infertility (Stol 2000, 53 f.)
I do not know any other references for this plant within the gynaecological corpus. The name of the plant might have been connected symbolically to female haemorrhage, because “field” like “(watered) meadow” can refer to a woman’s body, while “clod” could be associated with clotting (of blood).  

-- maštakal (obv. 2, 19):

The soapwort plant maštakal was widely used in Mesopotamian medicine and magic because of its purifying properties. Although in K. 263+ it is used only in a potion, mašktakal is also applied in other gynaecological recipes in a suppository, e.g. in BAM 237 i 39’ against naḫšātu (together with other minerals). An interesting parallel for the application of maštakal in connection with the abnormal flow of blood, in the context of pregnancy and birth, is offered by the Late Babylonian commentary text SpTU 4, 153, which adds an informative explanation for the use of maštakal:

7) ú.in₄.uš sim₃-bar? 64 ana tak-ša-a-tú šá munus.peš₄ e-ú munus šá₇ (text: šū) ú.tu-ma máš.meš la ip-par-ra-su sum-s{u} 8) šá munus.peš₄ šá₃ 4 itt.meš-šú u mūd i-ta-namma-ru sum-sú: ína u₄₅-mu še BAD{gami/gimirti}₇-šu sum-sú ína u₄₅-m[ö]₃ x₉ sum-su ína šu-uṣu še-ṣu u mūd i-kal-lu-u …

“Maštakal (and) simbirru-plant” are for cooling a pregnant woman, as they said: 65 You prescribe (it) for a woman (lit. “give it to her”) who has given birth and (whose) blood does not stop. You prescribe (it) for a pregnant woman who is in her third or fourth month and keeps discovering blood: you prescribe (it) on an auspicious day, all (day) long(?), (or) you prescribe (it) on a … day, so that she cools down in her flesh and the blood will be held back …”

We can infer from this text that Late Babylonian healers from Uruk connected the flow of blood with heat, which is similar to the Hippocrates, who described menstrual blood as “hot”. 66 The stopping of haemorrhage is seen in this Late Babylonian text as a cooling process. 67 Regarding the internal application of maštakal in K. 263+ as an ingredient of a potion (see below), the administered dosage would have been relevant, because in higher doses soapwort can cause diarrhea.

BAM 237 ii 34’–35’ presents a parallel for the application of maštakal seeds in a potion against naḫšātu. 68

61Following an initial suggestion by M. Geller. For the woman as a (fertile) field see Stol 2000, 1 f.

62See moreover BM 40152 rev. iii 27, 29 against abnormal flow of blood (also for a suppository).

63Note that in a Middle Assyrian explanatory plant list from Assur, seeds of maštakal are also prescribed in a suppository (placed inside the nose) to stop nosebleed, after it has been dipped into “blood of haematite” (Köcher 1955, 7 No. 1 Rev. V 20f.; Böck 2010b, 168). This means that maštakal was already known as a haemostatic in the 2nd millennium BCE.

64An erroneous writing for the simbirru-plant?

65The phrase ša iq[i]bū (written e-ö) “which they said” refers to an explanation (probably given orally by the teacher; cf. CAD Q, s. v. qabū sub lb); here the following sentences after iq[i]bū seems to explain the phrase “for cooling a pregnant woman”.

66See King 1998, 32 f., 90; citing e.g. Hippocrates, Diseases of Women 1.1 (Litttré 1962, 12 ff.; Hanson 1975, 572), Barren Women 217 (Litttré 1962, 418) and Regimen i.3-4 (Loeb IV, 280); see also Totelin 2009, 197.

67Soapwort has modern medical uses as an expectorant and laxative, without an astringent effect. According to Dioscorides, De Materia Medica 2-193, however, soapwort draws down the menstrual flow and is an abortifacient. Thus, as King (1998, 86 f.) has demonstrated in connection with the herb agnos castus (chaste tree) in Hippocratic medicine, which is used for opposite purposes (i.e. as cooling astringent in severe flux, but also to bring on birth and as abortifacient; see also Dioscorides, De Materia Medica i-135), these contradictory uses are interrelated with cultural conceptions about the female body and the image of the goddess Artemis who is linked with this herb. Similar cultural concepts could have triggered the use of maštakal as astringent in the present recipes against haemorrhage.

68See also Stol 2000, 53 f., for the discussion of a pharmaceutical list (BAM 380 rev. 30 // BAM 381 iii 23 f.), where maštakal is mentioned especially as a plant for a potion against haemorrhage (naḫšātu). See also BAM 237 iv 13, where it is applied in a potion of beer against the nītu-disease.
kid.kid.bi numun ú.i[n.nu.u]š ḥad.du súd ina a šed; ta-ma-[ḥa-ḥa] lén 7-šú šid-nu la pa-tan nag-ši-ma [min]

“Its ritual. You pound dried seed of maštakal, soak it in cold water, you recite the incantation seven times, you give it to her to drink on an empty stomach and [ditto (i.e. the naḥšātu will stop)].”

– nīnû (obv. 15):

This unidentified plant known as drug and spice is used for a potion of beer together with other plants in BAM 237 iv 1. It can also be found in BM 42587+, where nīnû is combined with other plants in the preparation of suppositories against female ailments (l. 6, 14, 29, see Finkel 2000, 168 f.). Nīnû-plant is also part of compound recipes (suppositories) for rectal haemorrhage (Geller 2005, 132 f. No. 21 rev. 29 f., 31 ff.).

– nuḥurtu (rev. 25):

This unidentified plant is also used for potions in other gynaecological recipes, but is mostly written ideographically (ú.nu.luḫ.ḥa), e.g. in BAM 237 i 32’ (see also ii 17’, iv 4 and 13 – the last recipe is against the niḫtu-disease, which also seems to be connected to haemorrhage69):

ú.nu.luḫ.ḥa súd ina kaš.sag min “You pound nuḥurtu-plant, in fine beer ditto (i.e. you give it to her to drink, and the naḥšātu will stop).”

It is noteworthy as well that nuḥurtu is also prescribed together with alum and yellow kalā-mineral in potions against haemorrhage from the penis and anus (combined with diarrhea, see Geller 2005, 140f. No. 22 rev. iii 14’ ff.; ibid., 212 ff., No. 35: 19 ff., 33, 42 ff.; ibid., 218 f., No. 36: 6’ f.; cf. ibid., 68 f. No. 4 ii 17’ ff., No. 35 ll. 1–5).

– puquttu (obv. 17), a thorny plant:

M. Stol (2000, 53 f.) discusses a pharmaceutical list, in which puquttu is named beside maštakal as a plant to stop haemorrhage in pregnant women (naḥšātu, see above). In K. 263+, the seeds of this plant are crushed and given to drink in beer. In BAM 237 iv 14, puquttu is used for a potion with beer as well (again in a recipe against the niḫtu-disease); see also ibid. iv 8 (beside other plant substances).

– tamarisk(bīnu) seed (obv. 18):

In BAM 237 iv 2 and 6, tamarisk (root/wood) is applied in suppositories together with other substances; see also ibid. iv 20 (a recipe against the “crab”-disease). Once more, Dioscorides (De Materia medica 1-116) provides us with a parallel for its use against female fluxes: “It [i.e. the fruits] is given in drink to women troubled with colic, to those who have flowing forth from the vulva … For hip baths it (a decoction of the leaves) is good for women troubled with a discharge of fluid from the vulva …”

– tarmuš (obv. 14):

This plant can also be found in a fragmentary recipe against naḥšātu in BAM 237 iii 37, and moreover in prescriptions for renal/rectal haemorrhage (e.g. Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 4 i 4’).

69Written ni-ṭē meaning “bloody excrement”, cf. CAD Ni/2, s. v. niṭu. The reading ni-ṭē “haemorrhage” was suggested by Kirsch 1996, 13. A differing interpretation is suggested by Scurlock (1991, 173 n. 133) who understands the signs as a logogramm Ḣ.KUM, which she connects to childbirth fever, because the sign NE also has the reading izi or kūm = unnu “heat, fever” and emēmu “to be hot”. Labat (1957–1971, 109) similarly assumed that the term could designate an inflammation of the uterus.
b) mineral substances:
– gabû/aban gabî “alum” (obv. 12):

Alum (alunite) is well-known for its astringent and antiseptic properties. It can be found in other gynaecological recipes, e.g. in BAM 237 i 1′ (as part of an ointment applied to the vulva). It also occurs as an ingredient in potions, e.g. in BAM 237 iv 3 (beside other minerals). In connection with haemorrhage, the use of alum has to be noted in SpTU 4, No. 153. The beginning of this text presents the following lines describing the subsequent treatment with different “mixtures” (maššîtu), which are probably “applied” (našû) in the form of suppositories:

1. diš munus múd.meš-šú du.meš-ma la hipster ra-su ana pa-ra-si na₄, gab-ú im.kal.g[uğ ...]
2. šá lu-ub-bu-kù sum-šì egir šá lu-ub-bu-kù u úš-e sum-su egir maš-šît an-ú[î šá na₄, gab-ú]
3. u im.kal.gug sum-su na₄, gab-ú tu-qal-la im.kal.gug lib-bu-ú[...]
4. dû-ušú.meš an-nu-tu ma-la iq-bak-ka l.ta.âm ina-aš-šî ki-i ru-tib-ti i-x[ x ]
5. ú.kur kur ú.maš.tab.ba ú.sim-bir-ri šim.gam.ma 4 ú.meš šá ana maš-šî-ti e-ú šá úš-e ši-i x[ x ]

“If a woman’s blood flows and does not stop, to stop it: you prescribe (lit. “give her”) alum, reddish kalgukku-mineral, [a mixture] for ‘soaking’; thereafter you give her the (mixture) for ‘soaking’ and ‘damming up’ (the flow); thereafter you give her this mixture [of alum?] and reddish kalgukku-mineral: You roast alum, kalgukku – this means: [...] you make [a suppository]. These drugs, as much as one has told you (to be appropriate), she applies one at a time, until the wetness [...]”

“Atâ’îšu-plant, māšu(“twin”)-plant, simbirru-plant, ṣumlalû-plant, four plants which they said are for a mixture for ‘damming up’ … After she has applied the (mixture) for ‘soaking’, thereafter you give her this mixture, thereafter (again?) the mixture of alum and reddish kalgukku mineral.”

The application of alum in a suppository to stop the flow of blood can also be found in BM 38624 obv. i’ 11′–13′. Noteworthy in this context is also a recipe against the permanent involuntary flow of male semen caused by witchcraft (Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 104 f., 112 Text 2.5 sub 3. ll. 1–7), making the patient concerned impure “like a (menstruating) woman”, which recommends a potion containing a number of drugs including alum, iron

---

70See Brander/Pugh 1971; Encyclopedia Britannica Reference Suite 2007. In the Hippocratic treatise Haemorrhoids (7, 149.25–150.4, see Totelin 2009, 267) and by later medical writers, Egyptian alum is recommended for the treatment of this ailment. Dioscorides describes alum in his De Materia Medica 5-123 as astringent, good for bloody discharges, but recommends it at the same time as abortifacient and contraceptive.

71For libbû in commentaries see CAD L., s. v. libbu sub 4a–2′ b’.

72The text seems to specify mixtures applied “for soaking/making tender/bringing relief” (ša lubbuku), “for damming up” (ša sekērî (= úš-e) or for both purposes. One mixture consists of four plant ingredients, another one of alum and kalgukku-mineral. Note in this context BAM 303, which describes four maššāti ša lubbuki “four mixtures for ‘soaking/making supple/giving relief’” (l. 23′; written hi-tû in ll. 7′, 13′), which are used “for the one inflated with wind and for making stiff (muscles?) supple” (l. 22′, cited in CAD Š, l. s. v. šaggu sub a; cf. CAD L., s. v. labâku sub 2b; Köcher BAM III, p. XXII). Since the purpose of the treatment in SpTU 4, No. 153 is to stop the flow of blood (i.e. a surplus of liquid), it seems that the verb labâku “to soak, to moisten” is used in a transferred meaning here, either in the sense of “to absorb (liquid), to suck up” or “to make supple = to bring relief”. Note that ruṭibû “wet place” is also the name of a disease, cf. CAD R., s. v. ruṭibû sub 2.

73Cf. below n. 78.
and pomegranate rind mixed with grape juice – i.e. *materia medica* which are used in Babylonian gynaecological recipes against female fluxes and which were believed to be astringent in Greco-Roman sources.\(^7^4\)

– *bissur atānī* “donkey mare’s genitals”-shell (obv. 20) and *kapāsu*-shell (obv. 21):

Shells like *bissur atānī* and *kapāsu* are well-known for their metaphorical connection to the female genital organs, i.e. vagina and womb, and very popular in gynaecological recipes.\(^7^5\) Moreover, shells were connected to pregnancy and birth (see M. Stol 2000, 51 f.). It is interesting that Dioscorides ascribes to fossilised oyster shells (*ostracites*) – a teaspoon of it given to drink in wine – the power to stop menstrual flow (*De materia medica*, 5-165).

– *kakkusakku*-stone (rev. 24):

This stone is not attested very often in medical texts,\(^7^6\) but a parallel occurrence of this stone in BM 40152 (rev. iv 9'), also a tablet with recipes against haemorrhage, strongly supports the reconstruction here. It is possible that the element *kakku* in the name, which means “weapon” in Akkadian triggered its use in the present context,\(^7^7\) because it is reminiscent of the phrase “to be hit by a weapon”, a common expression for haemorrhage in the medical texts.\(^7^8\)

– *šadānu šābitu* “magnetite”(?) (rev. 33):

This stone is often applied in gynaecological texts, e.g. in a recipe for an ointment against sorcery and miscarriage (LKA 9 rev. iii 8’ ff.):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{na}_4, & \text{ka}, \text{gi}, \text{na} \text{ dab}, \text{ba} 9’ \text{ kù, gan sa} & \text{ha, n} & \text{a, şuba } \text{ù ge} & \text{sîn, ka} & 5’, \text{e} 10’ \text{ ḥad, du } \text{tā’-sāk i} & \\
& \text{na mūd } & \text{burus}, & \text{habrud}’, \text{da munus } & \text{11’ } & \text{ḫi, ḫi, ma } & \text{ina} \text{ i, gi} & \text{s šu}, \text{mīn } & \text{šu}, \text{ti, } & \text{ma } 12’ \text{ ) ugu } \\
& \text{ša} & & \text{ṣa } & & \text{em} & & \text{ṣi, } & & \text{ṣa } & & \text{ù sag, du, } & \text{sa } 13’ \text{ ) šēš-ma }
\end{align*}
\]

“This you dry and pulverise magnetite, antimony and ‘fox vine’-plant, mix it with the blood of a female partridge, give(?) it in cypress oil and rub her upper abdomen, her lower abdomen and her head (with it).”\(^7^9\)

The association involved here is that the magnetic properties of the stone will cause the foetus or, in the case of K. 263+, the blood to cling to it and remain within the body.\(^8^0\)

– ‘right’ *šubû*-stone (obv. 23; rev. 34):

The texts often mention two varieties of *šubû*-stone: right/left *šubû*. A. Schuster-Brandis (2008, 446 f.) suggests that *šubû* could be a kind of shell or a cowry snail and that the designation “left/right” could describe the form of the shell.\(^8^1\) Note a parallel recipe to K.

---

\(^{74}\)See also the next recipe in this text for the same purpose (ibid., ll. 8–11), where we find, among other substances, magnetite, *maštakal*, *nuḫurtu*-plant and tamarisk leaves to be drunk in beer or wine, drugs also used in K. 263+. More agreements in the drugs used against gynaecological haemorrhage and bleeding/“discharge” (*mūṣu*) from the penis found in other recipes comprise the use of alum, “fox-vine”, *imṯur-lim*, *maštakal* (seed), tamarisk seed, *tarmuš*, *puquttu* (seed) and *ninû* (Geller 2005, 64 ff. No. 4 i 2′–12′, 20′–33′). For pomegranate peel against uterine haemorrhage and female fluxes see e.g. Soranus, *Gynaecology Book III*, p. 44; 49; Temkin 1991, 162; 167; for its astringent effect see Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica* 1-153 (also 1-151 f.); for preparations of grape/raisin juice/wine given as astringent see Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica* 5-3.

\(^{75}\)See e.g. BAM 237 i 11, in a compound recipe for a potion against the *nītu*-disease. It can also be found as component in amulets, e.g. BAM 237 i 5’ (against *nīḫītū*).

\(^{76}\)See CAD K, s. v. *kakkusakku*. In the other attestations, *kakkusakku* is included among amulet stones.

\(^{77}\)I owe this observation to I.L. Finkel.

\(^{78}\)Cf. below, Geller 2005, No. 1 iv 3; No. 4 ii 17’; No. 31: 6’; No. 35: 27 and Stol (2012, 273) for the phrase “woman who is hit by a weapon” as an euphemistic expression for menstruation. Another comparative expression for haemorrhage used in texts about rectal diseases is “like a woman (who suffers) from *naḫštātu*” (Geller 2005, No. 22 ii 14’; No. 35: 19; No. 36: 2).


\(^{80}\)Magnetite is also used to stop the flow of blood in BM 38624 obv. i’ 20’f. (fragmentary).
263+ rev. 10ff. in BM 40152 rev. iii 9–13, which also uses powder of magnetite and šubû-stone together:

9) diš ki.min KU.KU na₄šuba na₄.kur-nu dab 10) m;₄.a.x? nita? sim₄(text: zi)-pi/qi-niš nîš hazi 11) ina kaš sig-as ina še-ri₄m ba-lu pa-tan 12) la-am qir-ša ana ki gar-nu nاغ₄-mar 13) nî.md.me₄₄-sa til.me₄₄-su

“If ditto, you sift² and mix together powder of šubû-stone, magnetite (and) male(?)...stone together, you throw (it) into beer, you give (it to her) to drink on an empty stomach, in the morning before she sets her foot on the ground, and her blood will stop.”

– urîzu-stone (obv. 22, rev. 33):

Urîzu-stone is given once as a simple in beer, another time urîzu powder is combined in a potion together with magnetite and šubû powder. For its combination with other minerals in the preparation of suppositories against haemorrhage see above.

c) animal substances:

– dove’s egg (shell, obv. 7(?), 11):

In BAM 237 i 34 ′, this substance is used for a suppository against nahšatu. Interestingly, lime carbonate (calcium), the main substance in egg shells, is said to be a mild astringent.⁸² Further parallels can be found in the Egyptian medical papyri and in Medieval Jewish medical treatises. For instance in case nine of the Papyrus Smith, pounded ostrich egg is applied as an astringent to dry a skull wound on the forehead.⁸³

In the Book of Women’s Love (Sefer Ahavat Nashim), we find the following recipe, which shows that the white colour of the shell might also have been important in the use of eggs:

“To stop [the menstrual flow], according to the Ishmaelites: [Take] the dung of a white pig and eggshells, knead everything together and make a pastille and put it under a frying pan until it is baked. Then make a powder of it, prepare a pessary and insert it in the womb; it will stop [the haemorrhage]; it has been tried and tested.”⁸⁴

– Gazelle horn (probably to be added in the lacuna in K. 263+ rev. 30) is also used for a potion in beer in BAM 237 iv 14 (in a recipe against the nîtu-disease), in other instances we find stag horn as well. Hippocratic recipes against abnormal uterine fluxes in Diseases of Women², e. g. 192, 199 (Littré 1962, 371 f., 382 f.) similarly apply roasted stag horn mixed with barley flour in wine or water. Burned stag horn is also recommended by Dioscorides in De Materia Medica 2-63: “It is ... good for women troubled with excessive [menstrual] discharge, given in some liquid suitable for that suffering.”

A special feature of K. 263+ is the recipe in ll. 8 ff., where a male bird, probably a partridge, is beheaded and its blood to be collected and later drunk by the patient.⁸⁵ Very close parallels to this recipe can be found in the potency ritual series ȘÅ.ZILGA:

⁸¹ Cf. CAD Š/III, s. v. šubû A, where an identification with agate is proposed.
⁸² References to the astringent affect of egg shells and calcium carbonate can often be found in older pharmacological and medical handbooks (e. g. London Medical Gazette or Journal of Practical Medicine, Vol. 18, 1836, 119), while modern pharmacological handbooks only note its use as antacid in connection with gastrointestinal complaints and its constipating effect, see the overview in Tegethoff/Rohleder/Kroker 2001, 307 f.; Moini 2008, 261 ff. Yet, calcium carbonate is used as astringent and haemostatic in traditional Indian medicine, in the form of red chalk (a kind of mineral earth), see Nadkarni 1976, 42.
⁸³ Westendorf 1999, 720.
⁸⁴ See Caballero-Navas 2004, 168. In this treatise potions and suppositories to stop haemorrhage containing egg white are also used (see ibid., 164; 166).
KUB 4, 48 i 12 ff.; Biggs 1967, 54:

nam.ḫabrud.da nīta sag.du-su kud-is 13) múd.meš-šu a-na ša me-e šub-ma …
 a.meš šu-nu-ti 15) ina mul tuš-bat ki-ma4mutu 16) nag-šù-ma šà.zi.ga gatu kudu-sù

“You cut off the head of a male partridge, throw its blood into water … you let this water stand outside overnight, you give (it) to him to drink at sunrise, and he will get potency.”

BAM 272: 12 ff., Biggs 1967, 54:

dam udu.máš ina dug.bur.zi nu al.šeğ6 ga tamahṭar “you collect the blood of a billy goat in an unfired namzitu-vessel”

In the last prescription, half of the blood is used for an ointment (mixed with oil), the other half is “crushed” in water and given as a potion. There are more parallels for this treatment: in 1st millennium texts from Assur against the abnormal flow of a woman’s blood (BAM 235) and against rectal haemorrhage (Geller 2005, 214 f. No. 35: 30ff.):

BAM 235: 4 f.:

[diš] munus giš.tukul mu[ḥ-ṣ]-a-at múd buruṣ5 (.ḥabrud.da).mušen75 […] /
[û].nu.luḫ.ḥa diš-niṣ sûd ina kaš nag-ši […]

“If a woman is ‘struck by a weapon’ (bleeds): you pound the blood of a partridge/raven, …] (and) nuḥurtu-plant together, you give (it) to her to drink in beer […]”

BAM 99 (Geller 2005, 214 f. No. 35: 30ff.):

[diš na ina dūr-šu múd ú-ta]b-ba-ka na bi qer-bê-nu gig / [ana gig-šú nu] gid.8 a-
múd gud ina geštin al.šeğ6.gâ / […] / [………………. ba-lu pa-tan nag.ša-ma ti-uṭ]

“If a man passes [blood from his anus], that man suffers internally. [In order for his illness not] to be prolonged, he keeps drinking bull’s blood in boiled wine, […] on an empty stomach and he will recover.”

The remarkable similarity of the recipe in K. 263+: 8 ff. to recipes in ŠÀ.ZI.GA, together with the fact that K. 263+ uses many very simple recipes containing only one ingredient, might indicate that in contrast to elaborate, expensive recipes with many ingredients as in BAM 237, which must have had especially elite women as a target patient group, the recipes in K. 263+ could have been used for patients from not so well-to-do social backgrounds as well. Throughout this article I have mentioned agreements, within the medical cuneiform texts, in the use of several drugs for different kinds of haemorrhage/discharges (renal, rectal and gynaecological/obstetric), which point to a degree of effectiveness of these drugs as haemostatics (see for an overview Table 1 below). Moreover, the intercultural parallels cited in this article reveal a fascinating continuity of usage for quite a number of the materia medica in Mesopotamian texts to stop (gynaecological) haemorrhage (see below Table 2), which could probably be carried further if more of the medicinal plants were identified. These agreements suggest that Mesopotamian medicine has more in common with the traditions of its neighbours than is often expected, and that some of these traditions survived for many centuries.

85On blood of various animals (e. g. pigeon and partridge) as materia medica against different ailments including bleeding from the spinal chord and brain see Dioscorides, De Materia Medica 2-97. It is likely that the blood of a goat formed an ingredient of another recipe in K. 263+ Rev. 25 f.

86For further parallels concerning the medical application of animal blood see e. g. RA 15, 76: 14 (recipes against scorpion’s stings?): šurēru qaqqassu kud-is “you cut off the head of a lizard, (anoint the surface of the sting with its blood)”, see also ibid., 18 where the blood of a gecko (pisallurtu) is used.

87In a similar way, Totelin (2009) describes the recipes in the Hippocratic Corpus which include exotic, rare and extraordinary ingredients as a kind of “Haute Médiciné”.

Steinert Page 18
Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag stellt einen Ausschnitt aus einem Forschungsprojekt zur mesopotamischen Frauenheilkunde dar, das einen medizinhistorischen und interdisziplinären Ansatz in der Untersuchung medizinischer Keilschrifttexte verfolgt.


Footnotes

Anschrift der Verfasserin: Ulrike Steinert Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies University College London Forster Court, Gower Street London WC1E 6BT, GB u.steinert@ucl.ac.uk

4See also rev. 32.
5Another possible restoration would be [ū.tar-m]uš₉.
6See CAD M/1, s. v. *maḫāru* sub 1d “to collect liquid in a container”; for parallels see also CAD P, s. v. *parsītu* sub b and below; see also AMT 35,3 rev. iv 4’ ff. // BAM 434 obv. iii 7 ff. // BAM 445+ obv. 36 ff. (Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 155, 157 Text 7.7: 73–75): [dū.dū.bi?]...][su ina pursīti tamaḫḫar / šipta sebišu ana liłli tamannū-ma [a[m]]lu šu umušamna ipitaššāš / sā itananandaru lā ikaššassu “[Its ritual(?);] You slaughter a [...]¬bird, you collect its [blood?] in a bowl. You recite the incantation seven times over it. Then this [m][a]n rubs himself daily (with it). That which he fears will not reach him.” (ritual against physical and psychological problems caused by witchcraft, cf. ibid. 72: [k]a.inim.ma uš11.būr.ru.da. kam “[wo]rlding (of the incantation) to undo witchcraft”).
7See also AMT 97.6: 11 for goat’s blood in a medical text.
8The trace of the first visible sign could also be the end of mā/gi₆, e. g. an.zah gi₆ (kutpû) “black frit” or ú.gamun.gi₆ (zibû) “black cumin”.
9I expect two more plants to follow after kirbān eqli (ú.lag.ašà). The only plant known to me beginning with the sign UGU is *elikulla*. The usual writing for it is ugu-ka₄-na. Unfortunately, the beginning of the sign after UGU does not look like ku₄(NUMUN) or KU, but it could be the beginning of GŪ, presenting a hitherto unattested spelling ugu-[ā-ul-la].
11This orthography is very unusual, cf. CAD M/1, 78 f. sub 3c, *maḫḫas* is normally written sig-as or syllabically.
12From parallels one would expect lām šēpša ana qaqqari išakkanu “(she drinks it in the morning) before she sets her foot on the ground”, see e. g. BAM 403: 7; AMT 34.3: 4; AMT 59.1: 28.
13Probably the precative particle lū plus a fem. plur. stative form of sekēru “to block” has to be restored here.
14Fincke suggested in her database of the Babylonian texts in the Nineveh collection that the last two lines present a colophon, but the last two signs in l. 25 [ū₄.ki] do not support this interpretation. Cf. discussion below.
15The Goat-Star (“She-goat”) is identified with the constellation Lyra and associated with the healing goddess Gula.
16E. g. (saw)dust (Akk. eperu)?


19Reading *palku* for *palgu* “canal”.

### Appendix

**Table 1**

Common *materia medica* in Mesopotamian medical texts to stop different kinds of haemorrhage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gynaecological/obstetrical haemorrhage</th>
<th>Renal haemorrhage/ bloody urine/mīgu “discharge”</th>
<th>Rectal haemorrhage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>atī‘isu</strong></td>
<td>SpTU 4, No. 153: 5</td>
<td>BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 4 i 5’, potion)</td>
<td>BAM 95 (Geller 2005, 132 f. No. 21 rev. 29; suppository)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bīnu (tamarisk)</strong></td>
<td>Seed: K. 263+ obv. 18 (potion)</td>
<td>Seed: BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 4 i 6’, potion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaves: BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 66 f. No. 4 i 24’, potion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaves: Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 104 f., 112 Text 2.5 sub 3. ll. 8 ff. (potion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>elkulla/irkulla</strong></td>
<td>K. 263+ rev. 28 (potion)</td>
<td>BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 4 i 4’., potion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>inḫur-līn</strong></td>
<td>K. 263+ obv. 13 (potion) BAM 237 i 37’ (potion)</td>
<td>BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 4 i 4’., potion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>karūn šēlibi “fox vine”</strong></td>
<td>K. 263+ obv. 16 (potion)</td>
<td>BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 66 f. No. 4 i 20’, 31’, potion/injection)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>maštal</strong></td>
<td>K. 263+ obv. 2, 19 (potion) BAM 237 i 39’ (suppository); ii 34’–35’ (potion) SpTU 4, No. 153: 7</td>
<td>(seed) BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 4 i 18’, potion)</td>
<td>AMT 43,1+AMT 57,6 (Geller 2005, 140f. No. 22 ii 18 ff., suppository)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 104 f., 112 Text 2.5 sub 3. ll. 8 ff. (potion)</td>
<td>BAM 95 (Geller 2005, 132 f. No. 21 rev. 29 f., 31 ff. (suppository)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nīnū</strong></td>
<td>K. 263+ obv. 15 (potion)</td>
<td>BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 ff. No. 4 i 30’, injection?)</td>
<td>AMT 43,1+AMT 57,6 (Geller 2005, 140f. No. 22 rev. 14 f.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AMT 43,1+AMT 57,6 (Geller 2005, 140f. No. 22 rev. iii 14’ f.)</td>
<td>BAM 99 // (Geller, ibid., 212 ff., No. 35: 19 ff., 33, 42 ff., BAM 100 // (Geller, ibid., 218 ff., No. 36: 6 f. (potions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nuḫurtu</strong></td>
<td>K. 263+ rev. 25 (potion) BAM 237 i 32’, ii 17’ (potion)</td>
<td>BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 68 f. No. 4 ii 18’, potion)</td>
<td>BAM 99 // (Geller, ibid., No. 35 ll. 1–5, suppository)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gynaecological/obstetric haemorrhage</td>
<td>Renal haemorrhage/bloody urine/mūgu “discharge”</td>
<td>Rectal haemorrhage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>puquttu</em></td>
<td>K. 263+ obv. 17 (potion)</td>
<td>(seed) BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 ff. No. 4 16′, 22′, potion/injection)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>sumlalā</em></td>
<td>SpTU 4, No. 153: 5</td>
<td>BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 44, 4′, 21′, potion/poultice)</td>
<td>BAM 95 (Geller 2005, 132 f. No. 21 rev. 32; suppository)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tarmuš</em></td>
<td>K. 263 obv. 14 (potion) BAM 237 iii 37 (fragm.)</td>
<td>BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 4 i 4′, 21′, potion/poultice)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alum</td>
<td>K. 263+ obv. 12 (potion) SpTU 4, No. 153: 1, 6</td>
<td>BAM 112 (Geller 2005, 64 f. No. 4 i 8′, potion)</td>
<td>BAM 95 (Geller 2005, 132 f. No. 21 rev. 31 ff.; suppository)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kalû</em> (yellow ochre)</td>
<td>K. 263+ obv. 4 (suppository)</td>
<td>Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 104 f., 112 Text 2.5 sub 3. ll. 1–7 (potion)</td>
<td>AMT 43,1+AMT 57,6 (Geller 2005, 140f. No. 22 rev. in 14′ f.); BAM 99 // (Geller, ibid., 212 ff., No. 35: 19 ff., 42 ff.; BAM 100 // (Geller, ibid., 218 f., No. 36: 6′ f. (potion))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetite</td>
<td>K. 263+ rev. 32, 38 (suppository); rev. 33 (potion) BAM 237 i 45 f. (suppository)</td>
<td>Abusch/Schwemer 2011, 104 f., 112 Text 2.5 sub 3. ll. 8 ff. (potion)</td>
<td>AMT 43,1+AMT 57,6 (Geller 2005, 140f. No. 22 rev. in 16′ f.); BAM 99 // (Geller, ibid., 214 f., No. 35 rev. 45 f.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2**

Agreements in the use of identified haemostatic *materia medica* in K. 263+, Dioscorides’ *De materia medica* and other sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>K. 263+</th>
<th>Dioscorides</th>
<th>Other sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cedar</td>
<td>Resin (suppository)</td>
<td>– Resin (“dries out extraordinarily”) – Berries (potion) (1-105)</td>
<td>– Egyptian medical papyri (as astringent) – Pliny, <em>Natural History</em> Book 36, Chapter 37 – Agricola, <em>De Natura Fossilium</em> – Book of Women’s Love (to stop the menstrual flow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Red) ochre</td>
<td>Suppository</td>
<td>With pomegranate juice against women’s discharges (menstrual flow; 5-144 and 5-108)</td>
<td>– Agricola, <em>De Natura Fossilium</em> – Book of Women’s Love (to stop the menstrual flow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron (stone)</td>
<td>Suppository</td>
<td>Iron rust (in a suppository?) to stop women’s excessive discharges (menstrual flow; 5-93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alum</td>
<td>Potion</td>
<td>as astringent, good for bloody discharges, abortifacient; 5-123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shell</td>
<td>Potion</td>
<td>Shell Potion Fossilised oyster shells (Potion in wine stops the menstrual flow; 5-165)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove’s egg shells</td>
<td>Potion</td>
<td>Papyrus Smith 9 (to dry a scull wound); The Book of Women’s Love (powdered egg shells and pig dung, fried and powdered, suppository), Caballero-Navas 2004, 168</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazelle horn</td>
<td>Potion</td>
<td>Potion (stag horn against excessive menstrual discharges; 2-263)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abbreviations**

(for all other abbreviations see R. Borger’s *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur* (HKL))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**Soranus III**  

**SpTU 1**  

**SpTU 4**  

**References**


K. 263+10934 Obverse

1. .
K. 263+10934 Reverse

2.