Reading between the lines: Old Germanic and early Christian views on abortion

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ARTICLE XI


[Elsakkers, unpublished]
Emmenagogues and Purgatives for Women’s Diseases in Early Medieval Recipe Books

Early medieval recipes for emmenagogues, ‘agents that provoke menstruation, regardless of whether or not a fertilized egg is present and implantation has occurred’, and purgatives, ‘vigorously laxative drugs’, have a lot to tell us about women’s diseases and female pathology. They are associated with fertility management, because, as we know and the ancients also knew, both can act as contraceptives (like our modern ‘morning after pill’) and abortifacients. However, we tend to forget that early medieval women used emmenagogues and purgatives to promote fertility and to cure a variety of complaints that were associated with and caused by menstrual retention. In this article I will try to explain what female complaints early medieval recipes for emmenagogues and purgatives were reputed to cure, why menstruation was considered to be so important for women’s health, and whether there is evidence that these menstrual regulators were prescribed, or could have been prescribed, as an abortifacient. The recipes discussed in this article constitute a small sample of early medieval recipes for women’s diseases found in relatively small recipe books. The recipes are probably all Greek in origin, and were originally translated and/or adapted in northern Italy between the sixth and the eighth centuries.

In classical and medieval gynecology menstruation is considered a sign of good health. Amenorrhea - ‘the absence of menstruation’ - is a sign of bad health. Menstruation indicates that a woman is not pregnant, but it is also a fertility indicator: a menstruating woman is considered to be physically capable of conceiving a child, as the ancient Greek physician Soranus also noted in the late first century A.D.:

Soranus, Πυργακόλον - Gynaecia
1.29. (...) menstruation, consequently, does not contribute to their health, but is useful for childbearing only; for conception does not take place without menstruation.3

The following ‘question and answer’ on menstruation from Aristotle’s Problemata in the late eighth-century Lorscher Arzneibuch informs us that a healthy woman should menstruate regularly, so that she will be relieved of the excess blood she produces.

Lorscher Arzneibuch (MS c. 795)
11. Quare menstrua mulieribus fient? Resp: Quia faeminae naturae plus pinguioris sunt et humidioris et ideo amplius superfluitatem sanguinis leuigationis causa habundant.4

According to ancient and medieval medical theory a failure to menstruate causes blood to accumulate in a woman’s body. If a woman of reproductive age who is not menstruating is pregnant, her menstrual blood was thought to serve as nourishment for the fetus. If the woman is not pregnant and not menstruating, the accumulation of blood in her body can give discomfort and result in serious complaints. Menstrual retention or amenorrhea, can be caused by malnutrition and a variety of other medical conditions.5 The most important disorder,

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1 ‘It expels, purges, and cures’ (St. Galler Receptarium I A60, quoted in full below, p. 26). I owe a debt of thanks for help with this paper to: Jacqueline de Ruiter, Clare Pillsworth, Wilken Engelbrecht, Enka Langbroek, Ann Hanson, Fabiola van Dam, Louise Cilliers, Thea van der Linden, Marjetje van Winter, Bert Okken and the Leyden University Library.


3 Temkin 1951 [1991], p. 27.


5 Riddle mentions febrile and chronic diseases, malnutrition, mental depression (Riddle 1992, p. 27).
besides infertility, that ancient gynecology associates with menstrual retention is suffocation of the womb. Both conditions are considered to be due to an unhealthy accumulation of excess blood in the woman’s body. Soranus summarizes as follows:

Soranus, Γυναικεία - Gynaecia
3.7. Now of those who do not menstruate, some have no ailment and it is physiological for them not to menstruate: either because of their age (as in those too young or on the contrary too old) or because they are pregnant, or mannish, or barren singers and athletes in whom nothing is left over for menstruation, everything being consumed by the exercises or changed into tissue. Others, however, do not menstruate because of a disease of the uterus, or of the rest of the body, or of both: ‘of the uterus’ if <the> condition of so-called imperforation is present, or callosity, or scirrhous, or inflammation, or if a scar has formed on a sore, or a closure of the orifice (from long widowhood among other causes), or a flexure; ‘of the rest of the body’, e.g. when it is subject to undernourishment, great emaciation and wasting, or to the accumulation of fatty flesh, or cachexia, or fevers and long ailment, or if through hemorrhoids, vomiting, or nasal hemorrhage, the substance is taken instead to these parts.6

Regular menstruation - i.e. regular purgation or cleansing of the matrix or womb - was considered a prerequisite for conception. Amenorrhea is therefore a serious condition if a woman wishes to conceive. It can be equally distressing if the woman is not planning on becoming pregnant or does not wish to have any more children. In a marginal note on ‘bloodletting’ in a tenth-century manuscript from Trier ‘bringing on the menses’ and ‘fertility’ are linked. The gloss describes where the incisions for bloodletting must be made in women who do not menstruate and ‘who do not conceive’:

Codex Trevirens nr. 40 (MS 10th century)
De subitus talis duas incidimus . propter podagricos et nefr eticos . uel sciaticos . aut mulieribus que menstrua non purgant . et que non concipiunt.7

Eliminating excess blood, in this case through phlebotomy, is apparently the standard procedure for both retention of the menses and infertility; the cure should ultimately restore the woman’s menses, so that her body will function normally again, that is, so that she can conceive.

‘Menstrual retention’ was a much broader concept in ancient and medieval medicine than it is today. It not only refers to the bleeding associated with women’s monthly periods, but it also includes other kinds of uterine bleeding, such as the bleeding connected with birth (lochial discharge). Remedies for menstrual retention - often strong, emmenagogic purgatives - were also used to induce contractions in situations of difficult birth, and to expel a dead fetus or the afterbirth. ‘Menstrual retention’ can refer to a woman’s monthly cycle and to pregnancy, birth and miscarriage. Medieval recipes that restore or induce the menses were therefore associated with fertility and with infertility, because, once a woman’s menstrual irregularities and problems were resolved, she would be healthy enough to be able to become pregnant. In ancient and medieval gynecology ‘inducing the menses’ is synonymous with ‘restoring a woman’s health’.

The recipes in the early medieval recipe books give us a glimpse of ancient gynecology. They contain many prescriptions that are concerned with menstrual disorders. The problems remedied range from too much (proflavi- um) or too little to a complete absence of menstruation. They have to do with (in)fertility, conception, miscarriage, pregnancy, birth, contraception, abortion, suffocation of the womb and other female complaints and conditions. The most common complaint is menstrual retention, and most early medieval recipes for women’s diseases seem to be emmenagogues or purgatives, although we also find prescriptions for excessive, abnormally

6 Temkin 1951 [1991], p. 133.
7 The gloss was written in the margin of MS Trier Stadtbibliothek 40 (10th century), f. 24r, in a paragraph on bloodletting (f. 21v-24r), cf. Ferckel 1914, p. 135.
heavy or prolonged menses. Many recipes do not explain why the menses must be restored or induced, that is, whether cessation of the ‘menses’ has to do with missed monthly periods, pregnancy, birth, miscarriage, abortion, or other female disorders. When reading early medieval recipes on menstrual dysfunction, we must not forget that ‘menstrual retention’ and the expression ‘to bring on the menses’ can implicitly denote a much larger area of women’s complaints and diseases than we may think.

EARLY MEDIEVAL RECIPE COLLECTIONS

The early medieval recipes for emmenagogues and purgatives discussed here constitute a small sample of the available recipes. They are all in relatively small anonymous recipe books. Although we also find women’s recipes in some of the theoretical medical treatises and in the large, often bulky, handbooks, herbals and popular encyclopedic works, such as Marcellus Empiricus’s De Medicamentis, Dioscorides’s De Materia Medica, the Herbarium of Apuleius and Pliny’s Naturalis Historia, this article focuses on the smaller anonymous recipe books, because there is a greater chance that (some of) the recipes in this more practical genre were also known and used outside the walls of the monasteries that housed the manuscripts that have come down to us.

Recipe books were probably used by literate, semi-literate, secular and ecclesiastical practitioners. It is possible that some of the recipes came from the oral tradition and/or were also known among the illiterate practitioners. In Italy there is evidence for a medical school in Ravenna and perhaps also for one in Milan. Between the sixth and the eighth centuries medicine was taught, and medical texts, including recipe books, were translated from Greek into Latin in northern Italian medical schools. From the sixth century onwards medicine slowly also became one of the areas of expertise of monks, because taking care of the sick was one of the duties laid down in the Benedictine Rule. Monasteries housed scriptoria and libraries, and became important centers for the dissemination and preservation of Greco-Roman medical knowledge. However, lay practitioners - both male and female (midwives) - continued to practice medicine throughout the early medieval period. Moreover, secular scribes and notaries could also be engaged to copy medical texts. Recipes and recipe books could therefore have been translated and compiled in a secular and in a clerical or monastic setting.

8 For a recipe for excessive menses, see, for instance, recipe 5.1.39 in the Lorscher Arzneibuch (Stoll 1992, pp. 346-347) or recipe 44 in the Antidotarium Bruxellense I (Rose 1894, p. 376).
9 One of the manuscripts is a so-called ‘folded manuscript’, which may indicate that it was used by an itinerant doctor (MS St. Gall, Codex Sangallensis 217, cf. Köpp 1980). The fact that there are often many greatly diverging, variant versions of the same recipe, may also indicate usage.
10 Evidence for secular male and female practitioners in southern and northern Italy has been collected by Clare Pillsworth, cf. Clare Pillsworth, More to Life than Leeches? Medicine and Healthcare in Early Medieval Northern Italy, forthcoming. Clare kindly sent me draft versions of some of the chapters of her book.
12 The order of Saint Benedict was founded in early sixth-century Italy (c. 529); chapter 36 of the Benedictine Rule stipulates that monks should take care of the sick, cf. http://rule.kansasmonks.org/ and http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0011-//P11.HTM (last accessed February 3, 2010). On early medieval medicine, including ‘Mönchsmedizin’ or ‘monastic medicine’, see, for instance: Schipperges 1964 and MacKinney 1937.
13 On Greco-Roman medical knowledge available in early medieval monasteries, cf. the famous quote on required reading for monks in Cassiodorus’s (c.485-c.585) Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum, ‘Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning’: ‘Even if you do not have knowledge of eloquent Greek literature, you have first the Herbal of Dioscorides who discusses and sketches accurately the herbs of the fields. After this read Hippocrates and Galen translated into Latin, i.e. the Therapeutics of Galen addressed to the philosopher Glaucion and a certain anonymous work that has been collected from various authors; then Caelius Aurelius Medicine and Hippocrates Herbs and Cures and various other works written on the art of medicine that, with with Lord’s aid, I have left to you in the recesses of our library’ (Halporn and Vessey 2004, p. 166).
14 Christie 1995 mentions guilds for document-writers in Lombard Italy (p. 191); see also: Pillsworth, forthcoming.
An important feature of the early medieval recipe books is the fact that Greco-Roman medical learning was adapted for practical usage. Early medieval recipes contain no theoretical introductions or lengthy explanations of symptoms, diagnoses, or therapies; at the most there is an - often vague or cryptic - reference to symptoms. Basically there are two kinds of recipe books: *antidotaria* and *receptaria*, but hardly any of the early medieval recipe books that have come down to us conform to the definition.\(^{15}\) *Receptaria* are anonymous, and the order of the recipes is usually *a capite ad calcem*, which means that the complaints and cures are discussed ‘from head to foot’. The recipes in the *antidotaria* are frequently ascribed to an authoritative, ancient medical author, and often arranged according to their ‘Arzneiform’ or ‘medicinal form’ (potion, pill, plaster, pessary, etc.). The recipes in the *antidotaria*, called ‘long recipes’, ‘Vollrezepte’ or *antidota*, are multifunctional and prescribed for a series of complaints or symptoms. They are complex, require many ingredients (*composita*), and often make use of exotic, non-indigenous ingredients. The recipes in the *receptaria* are short, hence the name ‘short recipe’ or ‘Kurzrezept’. They usually offer a remedy for one complaint, and are often composed of one main ingredient (*simplicia*). The ingredients or components are simpler and often indigenous; the short recipes can also include elements from the folk tradition, such as prayers and amulets.

The recipes were written in early medieval Latin, and most of them were ultimately based on classical and late antique sources. The recipe books that were compiled in the early medieval period reflect the knowledge of Greco-Roman medicine in sixth-, seventh- and eighth-century Italy. No two early medieval recipe books or collections are the same, and in a sense each collection represents a unique and original compilation. Many recipes were corrupted during transmission as a result of scribal errors, transliteration, translation and dictation mistakes, additions and omissions, condensation and supplementation, etc. Even so, we still can recognize the Greek or Mediterranean origin of many of the names, indications and ingredients. Sometimes recipes were adapted to their new European environment by replacing ‘exotic’ or unavailable ingredients with more indigenous and more readily available ones (*quid pro quo*), and sometimes folk remedies from the oral tradition were added. The recipes that have come down to us are probably relatively far removed from their source texts. Centuries of copying and recopying, editing and emending produced recipes written in a spelling that often seems erratic, and the overall result is frequently a recipe that is hardly intelligible. Sometimes the early medieval Latin is so corrupt that it hardly seems possible that the recipes could have ever been used in actual practice.\(^{16}\) On the other hand textual instability can also be interpreted as flexibility, and thus point to usage.

The following recipe for late menses in the *Lorscher Arzneibuch* illustrates the textual flexibility and instability of early medieval recipes.

**Lorscher Arzneibuch** (MS c. 795)

5.33. Confectio dithon thion, quod facit ad omnia uitia stomach i, ad ptisicos, ad egros longi temporis confortandos, ad disintericos, ad leptopyrias ex cludendas, ad dolorem fuucium et ad sinancis, ad eos qui uigilias patiuntur et ad eos quibus aposthemate nascuntur intrinsecus.

Accipit haec: Piperis ~ I, mellis Attici lib I, uettonicae ~ V, saxifrage ~ V, cassiae fistole ~ III, fu ~ VI, asari ~ VI.

Sicca tundis, cernis subtilissime et commisces in mortario melle despumato. Dabis autem cocliare plenum ex condito cum calida mixto, si maior ualitudo fuerit, per VII dies, si uero initia occupauerit, tres sufficient. *Haec potio datur etiam mulieribus quae tardius purgantur.*\(^{17}\)

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\(^{16}\) Both the *Glasgower Antidotarium* and the *Reichenauer Antidotarium* are rather corrupt.

A medieval recipe should consist of an indication, that is, the symptom or list of symptoms, a list of ingredients plus amounts, and short directions for its preparation and usage - in this order. The indication at the beginning of the recipe quoted above shows us that it was originally devised as a remedy for stomach complaints, tuberculosis, fevers, and other disorders. The indication for late menses - *haec potio datur etiam mulieribus quae tardius purgantur*, ‘this potion is also given to women whose menses are too late’ - was added at the end of the recipe, instead of at the beginning where it belongs, clearly demonstrating that it is a later addition.

MENSTRUAL RETENTION: general recipes

As we said above, most recipes for women’s complaints are emmenagogues or purgatives. We find them in almost every early medieval recipe book. The reason there are so many recipes for ‘menstrual retention’ - in the widest sense of the word - is the fact that a menstruating woman was considered to be a healthy woman. Some recipes reflect this principle by simply stating that the recipe is beneficial for women’s health without naming any symptoms. For instance, some versions of the *antidotum gera galieni fortissima*, a long, multi-purpose recipe that cures a variety of diseases and disorders, list no symptoms for its usage by women - all they say is that the potion will cure any female complaint: *mulieribus salubris*, ‘for women’s health’ or *mulieribus sanat*, ‘it cures women’.

The following emmenagogue restores the menses. No additional information is given; the recipe only tells us that the menses are absent.

**Berliner Antidotarium** (MS 9th-10th century)


The recipe for an emmenagogic plaster in the *St. Galler Antidotarium* will restore menses that have been gone for three years - implying that menstruation was important.

**St. Galler Antidotarium** (MS 9th century)

[42]. *Emplastrum prouocans menstruorum sanguinem inpositum super umbili cum probatum etiam si per triennium menstrua non fuerit*, utere autem post balneum, id est: lupinu agreste, absentium, herba laterium quod est de cucumeris agrestis radices - singul. myrta scrip. XII, ruta scrip. XII, tundis et teris et cum fel taurinum colligis.

I have italicized the passages on women’s diseases in the recipes quoted in this paper.

18 Many recipes deviate from this order.

19 A purgative cleanses or purifies the body, thus restoring health and humoral balance. When used in connection with women’s diseases the word is (nearly) synonymous with the word emmenagogue. It then takes on the meaning ‘induce menstruation’. The recipes quoted in this paper all directly or indirectly claim to be purgatives or emmenagogues. Most of the ingredients are known purgatives, emmenagogues and/or abortifacients. The ingredients of the recipes in this article were checked for their purgative qualities in Keller 1988, Daems 1993, Lieberknecht 1995, pp. 55-84 and Duke 1985. The most frequently mentioned abortifacient herbs are pomegrates, silphium, pennyroyal, artemisia, rue, Queen Anne’s lace, myrrh, squiring cucumber, juniper, aloes, dittany, chaste tree, birth wort, asarum, male fern, willow, cypress, and the mint family (Riddle 1997, pp. 40-63).

20 Cf. recipe 24 in the *Reichenauer Antidotarium* and recipe 102 in the *Glasgower Antidotarium*; both are versions of the *antidotum gera galieni fortissima*. The former is beneficial for *mulieribus salubris* and the latter claims that *mulieribus sanat*, cf. Sigerist 1923, p. 44 and Sigerist 1923, pp. 115-116.

21 Sigerist 1923, p. 74.

22 Sigerist 1923, p. 86.
Other recipes do not mention what kind of menstrual problems the woman is having, they only tell us that the remedy recommended - usually a potion - will work as an emmenagogue and quickly provoke the menses:

\[ \textit{menstrua mulieribus prouocat} (\ldots) \text{ et cum omni celeritate parebunt.} \]

\textbf{Lorscher Arzneibuch} (MS c. 795)

2.254. \textit{Antidotum ad menstruum prouocandum probatissimum, quod sine dubio dare oportet.}

\textit{Recipit haec: Pegan\textsuperscript{a} folia uiridis id est rutae, alaeae semen id est maluauisico, leucuiu semen id est uiola, molochonia semen id est malua, apiui semen, petrosilinoi semen, marratioi semen id est feniuli, gliconi id est pulei, calantimts id est mentastroi albo, agallafis semen id est vrtica maior, saturegia, asaro radices, semen artemissiae maioris, saxifracte, uetonicar, cariofilo, cinamo, costo, iresu, repontico, piper ana omni, mel quod sufficit. Dabis in modum auelane maioris cum uino; dabis per dies tres et abstineat ab omni agramina et aceto et elixas carnes et solubiles cibos uset.}\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Reichenauer Antidotarium} (MS 9th-10th century)

[3]. \textit{Antidotum pancristum qui ad omnes fortitudines necessarium est qui sic acc\textsuperscript{ii} mus in simulitudinem fabe egypti- tiache colligis in aqua calida pensu solido I, cyatis III. Epaticis cum uino calido. Epileptitcs caducis cum aqua calida ipsa men\textsuperscript{<sur>}. Stomatitcs cum pusca calida. Hictericis cum uino. Fieberaitingeni cum aqua calida. Cauculous et stranguirios similiter dabis et qui typum patiuntur cum hydromelle, quartanis . . . tertiain . . . hora . . . sanantar. Dentes dolentibus . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . accipient cum uino aut cum calda aqu aut cum condito detur. Tortiones iuxta iures cum aqua calida detur. Inflations habentes unter supra datur. \textit{Menstrua mulieribus prouocat} cum hydromelle aut cum suco fenigreci et cum omni celeritate parebunt. Ad morsum serpentis cum mel bibatur, et de ipso medicamine in plaga mponis et ad uenenum mirifice prodest cum suus gentiane. \textit{Recipit haec: Calamu aromaticum, cardamomu, costau ana < V, castoreu, eufurbi, amomu, piretru, spica nardi, dauci cretici semen, rute agrestis semen, cassia, rosa sicca, fenuculi semen ana < IIII, sisiles < XII, opiu < XX, crocu < XV, ziniber < IIII, appii semen, yosquiamu ana < IIII, me u, piper albu ana < IIII, mel atticum quantum opus fuerit misces haec omni simul tritas diligentissime et siciam miscis postea mel.}\textsuperscript{24}

Sometimes we find variant versions of the same recipe \textit{ad menstrua prouocanda} in different recipe books:

\textbf{Liber de muliebria} (MS 8th-9th century)

58. Item \textit{ad menstrua prouocanda} bratena, apio radices, finiculo, libestico, petrosilino quoquis in uino et dabis bibere. Et tanacita et februfugia et artemissia cum butero mittis super umbilicum.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes} (MS 9th century)

[8.] Item. \textit{Ad menstrua prouocandum}. Bratena, apii radice, finiculo, liuistico, petrosilino coques in uino et dabis bi- bere, et tanaceta et februfugia et artemissia cum butiro mittis super umbilicum.\textsuperscript{26}

The recipes quoted above all cure one complaint except the \textit{antidotum pancristum}. The \textit{antidotum pancristum} mentions women’s complaints in passing as part of a long list of indications for many different complaints and illnesses, such as stomach disorders, headaches, epilepsy, tuberculosis, melancholy, etc. References to women’s diseases are often concealed in the long multi-functional recipes. Occasionally we find gynecological recipes in a separate section, and there are also a few short recipe collections for women’s diseases.\textsuperscript{27}

The \textit{antidotum hiera} (egia, iera, eia, gera, egyas, gyra, ygia) is a multi-purpose purgative like the \textit{antidotum pancristum}.\textsuperscript{28} The \textit{Lorscher Arzneibuch} contains at least thirteen versions of this popular long recipe scattered

\textsuperscript{23} Stoll 1992, pp. 238; \textit{‘Lorscher Arzneibuch’} 2.254. Ein hochwirksames Mittel zum Herbeiführen des Monatsflusses, das man ohne Zaudern geben darf. Zutaten: Blätter von frischem Peganon (das ist Raute), Althaeasamen (das sind Eibisch-samen), Samen vom weißnen Veilichen (das ist Levkoje), Samen von der Moloche (das ist die Käsepappel), Eppichsamen, Petersiliensamen, Marathumsamen (das sind Fenchelsamen), Glechon (das ist Poleimzne), Kalamintne (das ist Weiße Rößminzne), Samen der Akalephe (das ist die Große Brennessel), Bohnenkraut, Haselwurz, Samen vom Großen Beifuß, Steinbrech, Batunge, Gewürzmelnken, Zint, Kostwurz, Schwertviltte, Rhabarber und Beifuss: alles zu gleichen Teilen, meiu ohne Zaudern geben darf. Die Patientin soll weder scharf Gewü rztes noch Essig zu sich nehmen, sondern nur gekochtes Fleisch und Leichtverdauliehe cibos.

\textsuperscript{24} Sigerist 1923, p. 40. The dots represent gaps in the text.

\textsuperscript{25} Egert 1936, p. 41. (Egert II) Egert 1936 contains three gynecological treatises: \textit{Liber de causis feminarum} (Egert I), \textit{Liber de muliebria} (Egert II) and \textit{Liber de muliebria} (Egert III).


\textsuperscript{27} Gynecological recipes are in a separate section of the \textit{Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes} (Köpp 1980). The recipe books published by Brütsch 1922 (\textit{De diversis causis mulierum}) and Egert 1936 (\textit{Liber de causis feminarum, Liber de muliebria causa, Liber de muliebria}) are short gynecological handbooks. The three recipe books in MS Leningrad, Cod. lat. Petropol. F.v.VI nr.3 published by Egert are designated as Egert I, Egert II and Egert III.

\textsuperscript{28} The title is explained by Sigerist, cf. Sigerist 1923, pp. 169-170. Stoll calls these recipes ‘Heiligmittel’ or ‘Gesund-Mittel’. 288
over its five books. We find many different descriptions of menstrual retention: *mulieribus quae non purgantur menstrua mouet* (1.30); *mouet etiam menstruum sanguinem ([5.3.2.]); ad sanguinem menstruum (menstruum) mulieris qui se celat prouocandum (1.33; 2.235); prouocat enim sanguinem mulieribus (2.223); ad mulieres, quae non purgantur (3.19).

Two examples:

**Lorscher Arzneibuch** (MS c. 795)

1.33. Antidotum egia alia, cuius confectio talis est: Lini seminis frixi = VI, nucleorum pini purgatorum liä I, gingiberis + III, bacarum lauri + III, myrae + III, cassisae + croci ]. Bacas et gingiber et casia et lini semen tundis, cernis; nucleos et crocum in mortario fictili teris et sic species supermittis et postea mel mittis et omnis simul terenda commisses. Ad omnes necessitates infra scriptas coel I comendendum da et in uase utero serua. Facit enim stomachum dolentibus, splenetics, ydropicis et qui cybum non digerunt, tussicis et nefricetis et qui dolore uesic afficiuntur, pleuretics quibus latera dolent siue dextrae siue sinistrvm, suspiriosis qui graue suspirant id est anhelant, et daemoniacis et lunaticis et ad uenerem invalidis et ad eterum, et dum non erigint eterum, sed diffundunt sperma, ad eos qui per somnum minunt et ad sanguinem menstruae mulieris qui se celat prouocandum et ad eos qui malo sunt colore, sciaticis, podagricis, paraliticis et tertianis.

**Lorscher Arzneibuch** (MS c. 795)

2.223.[1] Antidotum egia. Piperis albi ~ I を迎 VIII, gingiberi ~ I et siliquis VI, ameu sperma Ἐ VIII, anesi semen Ἐ VIII, petrosilini Macedonici so I, api seminis so I, feniculi seminis so I, carei so I II se II, libestici so I II et se VI. Omnia puluera facis, mellis optimi lib III colligis, ut satis mollis et ut pro electuario accipiat cocliare per dies singulos terendum prius quique diebus continuos et dabis eiusem: Omnes uentositates stomachi tollit, maxime *mulieribus*, *sanguinem* et stomachi dolorem tollit, reuma mitigtat, duritiam dissolvit, utriq ingen capitis tollit, suspirium conpescit, strioreo pectoris sedat, epatis tensionem soluit.

There are also versions of the *antidotum hiera* in other early medieval recipe books, and again no two versions are the same. A few examples:

**Reichenauer Antidotarium** (MS 9th-10th century)

[33]. Antidotum gera quod utebatur ptolomeus imperator, id est logadion quod nobis proditum est ad antiquam passionem, id est maniaca et omne quod ex melancolea contingit. In anno semel datum purgat omnes humores et super prestat corpori digestionem. Non facit augustiam neque festinationes aliquas et sanum reddit corpus et ad claritatem

29 Cf. Stoll 1992, recipes 1.30 (pp. 116-117), 1.33 (pp. 118-121), 2.223 (pp. 222-227), 2.35 (pp. 232-233), 3.19 (pp. 250-252), and [5.3.2.] (pp. 354-355).


32 See, also: Bamberger Antidotarium, recipe 48: *menstrua mulieribus educit* (Sigerist 1923, p.34), Berliner Antidotarium, recipes 1-3: *mulieribus quibus menstrua non ueniunt deponit, menstrua mouet*, und *ad sanguinem menstruarum mulierum qui se celat prouocandum* (Sigerist 1923, pp. 67-68), Reichenauer Antidotarium, recipes 33 and 37: *facit et ad prouocanda menstrua mulierum* (Sigerist 1923, pp. 46-47) and *menstrua mouit* (Sigerist 1923, p. 48).
In the following sections I will discuss the various complaints and disorders that are associated with ‘menstrual retention’ and require the use of emmenagogues and purgatives: scant menses, matrix pain and duritia, fatigatio, imbecillitas and depression, suffocatio, hysteria and wandering womb, dead blood, difficult birth, miscarriage, contraception and abortion.

SCANT MENSES

Scant menses, that is, ‘infrequent or very light menstruation’ (oligomenorrhea) or ‘a diminution of the flow or a shortening of the period of menstruation’ (hypomenorrhea), can be cured by taking an emmenagogue and/or purgative. Scant menses are called stillatim purgatio or plus minus purgare in the early medieval recipes. The following versions of the antidotum atrianu cure partially blocked or scant menses; they help bring on the menstruation they cure partially blocked or scant menses; they help bring on the menstruation.


Bamberger Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century) 19. Antidotum atrianu qui facit ad omnes disperationes mortis quem dabis in omnes causas fabe magnitudinis cum aqua calida <c=pati dolentibus cum idromelli aut condito renes dolentibus siue colicis, cum aqua superscripta calida siue eruginosi et fribантitantibus cum aqua calida epatisticus, cum aqua calida sthematicus, cum esca calida eruginosi siue nefretics, cum uino uolentibus placidae in uissa habetesibus qui uirina cum tormente facienti cum apozima et qui ex perfractione febrium patiuntur tertiatis siue quartanis dabis ante hora accessiosis, dentu uero dolentibus et cara satis granum antidoti adpositus protest, sanguine excretanetis cum pusca frigida sciaticus cum careno aut cum idromelli, inflacione patientibus cum aqua calida ommem perfractionem expellit. Menstrua malibericus que plus minus expurgat mi re celeritates coegit et febriunt , ad tercianas, ad quartanas, dentes uero dolentibus aut cauis ut granas antidote adposita

Glasgow Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century) [155]. Antidotum atrianu notas omnis qui ex profundo mortis reducit ad pristina sanitatem, quod grece dicitur autora, conueniunt potiones magnitudinis fabe egyptiace. Recipit et calamo aromatico Z septe, costu Z sex, sisileos Z sex, cardamomum Z quaquar, crapobalsamo Z octo, ameus Z quaquar, saccapino Z quaquar, careno aut cum idromelli, inflatione patientibus cum aqua calida ommem perfractionem expellit. Si calamu aromatico Z non inueneris mittis murra - I et brium - I. [34]

33 Sigerist 1923, pp. 46-47.
34 Sigerist 1923, p. 78.
35 Many of the recipes called antidotum theodoritum and antidotum atrianu contain nearly the same list of indications.
36 Sigerist 1923, p. 27.

The **antidotum Galeni** seems to be a powder for scant menstruations:

**Berliner Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)**


The following four versions of the **antidotum theodoritum** (teutorito, teodoriti, teodori) claim to be excellent purgatives (**purga<em>t</em> optime**) that also remedy scant menstruations: *et mulierum causas quibus stillatim purgatio fiunt,* and [for] diseases of women for whom menstruation comes in drops.

**St. Galler Antidotarium (MS 9th century)**


The versions in the **Lorscher Arzneibuch** and the **Bamberger Antidotarium** add a passage on *suffocatio* or ‘suffocation of the womb’, which is also caused by menstrual retention and will be discussed below: *et quae matrice suffocantur,* and for those who are suffocating in the womb.

**Lorscher Arzneibuch (MS c. 795)**

3.41. Confectio antidoti teodoriti quod non solum praesentes infirmitates sed etiam uenturas prohibet. Aloe dfr LX, agari dfr XXIII, croci dfr VI, agari dfr VI, reupontici dfr VI, mastic dfr VI, nardustacius dfr VI, cinamomi dfr VI, pipier albo dfr IIII, camitrios dfr VI, mirrabalo dfr VI, asari dfr IIII, pipieris nigri dfr II, gentianae dfr II, squinaoantes dfr II, gingiber dfr II amomoi dfr III, meu dfr II, interionis dfr VI, diagridii dfr XII, costi dfr VIII, cassiae dfr III, castorei aut anacardias dfr III, mel quod sufficit. Dabis autem ad omnes infirmitates, cefalargicis, stomaticis, spleneticis, pleureticis et quibus esca esce secisit in stomacho, et quacumque mala circa uentrem et stomachum sunt, et ad eos, qui ex longo tendo non reuuerant, ad aurigenos et ad malum colorem habentes, ad initia ydropicis, ad tissicum, nefreticos, ad colicos et qui totum corpus regravantur. Confortat mirifice, ad eos qui longam egritudinem patiuntur et febrit et qui assidue tipum patiuntur datur in accessione, ad podagram et ad mulierum causas quibus purgatio stillatim fit et quae matrice suffocantur, ad uentrem et omnium interaneorum uicia purgat optime; qui acceperit uernum et autumnum semel uel bis, non solum praesentes infirmitates sed etiam uenturas prohibet.40

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37 Sigerist 1923, p. 123.
38 Sigerist 1923, p. 74.
39 Sigerist 1923, p. 78.
40 Stoll 1902, pp. 264, 266; *Lorscher Arzneibuch* 3.41. Herstellung des Heilmittels ‘Gottesgeschenk’, welches nicht nur bereits vorhandene Krankheiten vertreibt, sondern auch zukünftige fernhält. 60 Drachmen Aloe, 24 Drachmen Leuchtenschwamm, 6 Drachmen Safran, 6 Drachmen Watersschwertlilie, 6 Drachmen Rhabarber, 6 Drachmen Mastix, 6 Drachmen Indische Narde, 6 Drachmen Zimt, 4 Drachmen weisser Pfeffer, 6 Drachmen Gamander, 6 Drachmen Behenbalsam, 4 Drachmen Haselwurz, 2 Drachmen langer Pfeffer, 2 Drachmen schwarzer Pfeffer, 2 Drachmen Enzian, 2 Drachmen Bartgrasblüte, 2 Drachmen Ingwer, 3 Drachmen Kardamömeln, 2 Drachmen Bärwurz, 6 Drachmen Koloquintenleisch, 12 Drachmen Springwurszaft, 8 Drachmen Kostwurz, 3 Drachmen Röhenkassie, 4 Drachmen Bibergeil oder Elefantenlause, Honig in ausreichender Menge. Man verabreicht es gegen alle Krankheiten, bei Kopfweh, Mund- und Magenleiden, Milzsucht, Seitenstechen, Sodbrennen und Aufrüpens, bei allen Beschwerden, die den Darm oder den Magen betreffen, man gibt
**Bamberger Antidotarium** (MS 9th-10th century)

44. Antidotum teutorito ad omnes infirmitates, cefalargicis, pleureticis, peripleumonicis, spleniticis et quibus esca aciscit in stomacho et quidquid mala circa stomachum abit, ad eos qui ex longa egritudine non reparantur, ad aurginousos, ad malum color habentem ad initias itropicis, ad tisicos et qui totum corpore graunautur, confortat mirifice, ad eos qui longa egritudine patiuntur et febriuntur et qui adsidue tipum patiuntur. Datur in accessione dragma quatuor ad podagra et mulieribus causa quibus still ant et matricem suffocantur ad uentrem et omnium interanearum dolore uel uitia purgat optime. Qui accipit unu uernum et autumnu non presentem infirmitatis sunt uitia sed uenturas proibit. Recipit hec species: aloepatite - LX, agarico - XXIIII, a guro - VI, reopontico - VI, mastice - VI, nardustacius - VI, mirobalano - VI, asaro - VII, piper longo - II, piper nigro - II, gentiana - II, squinoentus - II, gingiber - II, ammo - II, meu - II, interionis - VI, dagridio - XII, costa - VIIIIS, casiafistule - III, mel quod sufficit, quando das - I et addis scamonia £ 1.42

The four variant versions of the *antidotum theodoritum* discussed above illustrate the textual variability of early medieval recipes, and clearly show us that these texts underwent many changes in the course of transmission, often adding and deleting symptoms and ingredients.

**MATRIX PAIN AND DURITIA**

The onset of menstruation, blocked menses and other menstrual complaints are associated with a variety of discomforts, complaints and symptoms, such as headaches, cramps, sore breasts, stomach and womb pain, *duritia matricis*, ‘hardness of the womb’, fatigue, constipation or diarrhea, cravings, energy loss, mood swings, depression, insomnia, etc. Nowadays many of these symptoms are called PMS or pre-menstrual syndrome. *Duritia* and pain in the womb or stomach area can be symptoms of PMS, menstrual retention, a tumor, growth (myoma), or other disorders, but they can also be due to a ‘hardness’ in the stomach area that is associated with pregnancy, birth pains, and postpartum pain. Taking an emmenagogue or purgative in order to cleanse the womb was considered an effective method to relieve pain in the womb. 43 The following two short recipes containing purgative ingredients are potions for *matrix* pain and stomach pain.

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41 Sigerist 1923, p. 33.
42 Sigerist 1923, p. 73.
43 There are many more recipes for *matrix* pain, see, for instance: the recipe books edited by Brütsch 1922 and Egert 1936.
St. Galler Receptarium I (MS 9th century)

A58. *Ad matricem multorum.* Herba artemisia et gallamentis et fafatia quae in fontis nascitur pariter teris in uino et dabis ei bibere, sanat.44

Glasgow Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)

40. Antidotum. Colice semen, cauculi semen, herbe cerbarie, appii semen, lactuce semen in uncii singulis. Hec semina teris et cernis et missis et ex melle coquis, postea mittis in eum opobalsamum modicum, hoc autem ex calfactoria ad matricem et ad sthomaci prodest, dum dabis ex aqua calida.45

The following recipes in the Glasgow Antidotarium and the *Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes* are plasters with purgative ingredients that should relieve womb pain.

Glasgow Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)

[347]. *Ad matricem doloris.* Semen de appium et semen petroslino et semen ameos et semen de senapis et tus masculum et cere et mel et oleum quinquex in uilla rude et facis pusillum et inponis super locum dolencium.46

Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes (MS 9th century)

[6]. Item. *Ad matricem multorum si tenuerit cum dolore* siue rensi siue peecenis siue coxis uel uentre uel sedere uel aut dormire non poterit et percelitata fuerit. Aphii semen et adipe anserino = I teris ita ut spissum fiat et in usu adponis.47

The long recipe in the Bamberger Antidotarium cures many other complaints as well:

Bamberger Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)

6. Antidotum =< caritus facit ad indignatione stomachi et ad lateris dolore et ad renum dolorem, ad colum, ad ter-tianas, ad quartanas et ad eos qui sanguine umont ed ad uentris dolorem et tortiones, ad eos qui non dormiunt facit et a< d> matricis dolore uel ad mentis aci diroin epaticis si gutta aceti in potione mittas. Confectio eius hec est: storage dr. quatuor, morra trogente < quatuor, galbani < quattuor, opiu teueu < quattuor, cassia fistula < quattuor, amomu < quattuor, costu < quattuor, crocu < quattuor, pipur nigrum ' tres, pipur longum ' tres, castoreo < tres, filio < quattuor, mel dispumatum quod sufficit. Sane qui accepturus est orciolum cum aqua calita in manibus teneat.48

The *epithima diamellilotu* is a plaster for *duritia* or ‘hardness of the womb’ that is made up of emmenagogic and purgative ingredients.

Reichenau Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)

[128]. *Epithima diamellilotu* faciens stomachicis, epaticis, splenicis, ad dolorem usicrum, ydropolis, ypocondriacis, perpleumeonicis, nefreticis, ad neruorum conpacientia, *ad duritiam matricis,* ad inflammationem et indigestionem stomachi et frigidorem et ad perimploma intrinseca. Recipit haec: Aloe unc. I sem., ammoniacu unc. II, storace dr. quatuor, murra - I < I, anesu < II, squinuantu < I S, piper nigrum < noue, cinnamomum < I, storace < sex, umbra < sex, are < sex, costu < sex, crocu < quattuor, pipur nigrum ' tres, pipur longum ' tres, castoreo < tres, filio < quattuor, mel dispumatum quod sufficit. Sane qui accepturus est orciolum cum aqua calita in manibus teneat.49

Pain in the womb or stomach area during or after childbirth can be relieved with the plaster plus potion described in the *St. Galler Receptarium I.* The recipe in the Bamberger Antidotarium cures all kinds of matrix pain, including postpartum pain.

St. Galler Receptarium I (MS 9th century)

A71. *Si de partu stomachus doluerit.* Marrubio et euisco simul coque, cataplasm superpone, sanat; et postea bona potione bibat.50

Bamberger Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)


44 Jörimann 1925, p 18. Jörimann claims that this recipe is for “Geburtshilfe”: “Ein weiteres geburtshilfliches Rezept dient zur Gesundung des Mutterleibes (A.58). Die Frau trinke Artemisia, Gallamentis und Fatafia in Wein” (Jörimann 1925, p. 153). I think this is a general recipe for disorders of the matrix, and that this potion probably also cures menstrual pain.

45 Sigerist 1923, p. 106.

46 Sigerist 1923, p. 146.


48 This recipe follows a recipe for a purgative to provoke a girl’s first period (menarche), cf. Köpp 1980, p. 29.

49 Sigerist 1923, p. 23.

49 Sigerist 1923, p. 62.

siseleos < quatuor, amomu < quatuor, castoreum < noue, opiu < noue, petrosilino macedonicu < quindecii, piper longum < quatuor, reuponticum < quatuor, mel quod sufficit. Hoc antidotum duricia sanat non solum et motions habentes, uerum etiam ex aqua ut ydromelli datus ad cipitii dolore patientibus convenit et maniacis ex interuallum potui datus iubat et ualidam frenesem somnum delicatble. Cura<e> autem et dolores aurium potui datum et ocumurn et aliorum membrorum reuma resitist, dentium uero dolore conpsect, alenitum enim et omnen asam curat, et ut semsem diuturnam curat pleuritics, pleumonics et serta diafragma doloris habentiis obtine convenit, sputum subtilem conspessa facilem et eleuat cum ydromelli datus empopticis, cum eximieli aut cum poligini sucum emendet autem stomacho fastidium pausa<e> et singultum et non continentes stomacho cuos et uomitum conpsectit et ad uentositatem et acidas erupationes sanat. Conuenit autem epaticis, spleniticis et icterics et melanolics flegma uero per intestinum deponit et ad omnem passionem uessice aurerum uel satuariassis maxime convenit, paula autem et dolore hili uel colini, hilo minus et sumnum curat et paraliticis siue tremoulidos, qui etiam bibere non possunt per meatum curati cum apozaima feni greci curat et dolore matricis siue post partum conpsectit et omnem dolore matricis non solum potui datum sed et qui reuma tizetur cum in uino calidum facit autem artitisc, podacrics, sciaticis siue uenenosis animalibus perucus potui datum. Curat et similiter unctis in loco in quo percussus fuerit, pusaent enim febris uerum eti et morbum, sed et sinocum febrimentem cum aqua potui datus et omnes accessiones eruditum qui per periodos fiunt mirabiliter curat datus potui in modum aulliane. Trocischus Ideocro<u>u mamagtos: amomu Z LXXII, murra staeptis Z XLVII, cassia Z XXXVI, nardos stacio Z XXXII, folio Z XII, croco Z XII, aspalatru Z XII, costo XII, s quinuantu Z X, calamo aromatico Z XII, balsamo Z XI, marum Z VIII, amaracu Z VIII, xilobalsamo Z VIII, asaru Z X II, fu Z XII, mastice Z ocio binum sufficienter.\[51\]

Besides remedying all kinds of womb and stomach pains (omnem matricis causam, oppositiones omnem matricis facit), the two, long, multi-purpose purgatives given below also induce the menses (prouocat et mulieribus purgationem; menstrua mulierium deposint).

Reichenauer Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)

Bamberger Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)

Recipe nr. 3 in the Antidotarium Bruxellense I involves an extensive procedure to restore the menses and cure pain in the womb. Treatment consists of fumigations, infusions, and potions. The recipe describes a time-consuming cleansing and purging procedure that is reminiscent of Hippocratic gynecology. It is one of the few early medieval recipes that prescribes fumigation.

Antidotarium Bruxellense I (MS 12th century; recipes 6th century)
3. Confectio medicamenti ad matrem curandum vel menstrua provocanda. primo suffumigator mulier sedens de storage, ante quinque dies quam menstrua ei solent venire, et encolpidiator pigments quae inferius scripta sunt. dia- chylon uncia una, basilicon semuncia una, cereae ponticeae = 1, adipsis anserinii = 1, oleum liliacium quantum necessarium fuerit. species autem solves cum oleo liacio ita ut zema cum aqua super focum bulliat, et alterum zema cum supradictis medicamentis ex olei vapore facias calescere ut sic solvantur. et cum coeperis velle encolpidiare, antequam encolpidies fuerit. species autem solves cum oleo liliacio ita ut zema cum aqua super focum bulliat, et alterum zema cum supradictis medicamentis ex olei vapore facias calescere ut sic solvantur. et cum coeperis velle encolpidiare, antequam encolpidies fuerit. et qui reuma tizetur cum in uino calidum facit autem artitisc, podacrics, sciaticis siue uenenosis animalibus perucus potui datum. Curat et similiter unctis in loco in quo percussus fuerit, pusaent enim febris uerum eti et morbum, sed et sinocum febrimentem cum aqua potui datus et omnes accessiones eruditum qui per periodos fiunt mirabiliter curat datus potui in modum aulliane. Trocischus Ideocro<u>u mamagtos: amomu Z LXXII, murra staeptis Z XLVII, cassia Z XXXVI, nardos stacio Z XXXII, folio Z XII, croco Z XII, aspalatru Z XII, costo XII, s quinuantu Z X, calamo aromatico Z XII, balsamo Z XI, marum Z VIII, amaracu Z VIII, xilobalsamo Z VIII, asaru Z X II, fu Z XII, mastice Z ocio binum sufficienter.\[51\]

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52 Sigerist 1923, p. 44.
53 Sigerist 1923, p. 32.
54 Rose 1894, p. 364. Although the manuscript date is from the twelfth century, the recipes were dated to the sixth century by Beccaria (Beccaria 1956, p. 110).

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Potions and plasters with purgative ingredients can cure pain in the womb due to menstrual retention or caused by the birthing process.\textsuperscript{55} We will see below that pain in the matrix is also a symptom of suffocation of the womb, and that a number of recipes in the section on ‘difficult birth and miscarriage’ also cure womb pain.

### FATIGATIO, IMBECILLITAS AND DEPRESSION

Some of the long recipes quoted above (antidotum hiera, antidotum theodoritum) claim to offer relief for female complaints associated with PMS and menstrual retention, such as headaches and stomach pains. Physical and emotional symptoms that are also associated with - but not necessarily due to - menstrual retention are mentioned in the following two variant versions of the antidotum dianacardium. This general purgative cures fatigatio, ‘tiredness’, and imbecillitas totius corporis, ‘total bodily weakness’, in women. Imbecillitas can refer to almost any of the symptoms associated with PMS and blocked menses. The phrase \textit{ita ut (de) se disperent}, ‘in such a way that they themselves despair’, may be a reference to the mood swings, the feelings of anxiety, despair and depression many women experience before their periods.

\begin{itemize}
\item **Lorscher Arzneibuch** (MS c. 795)
\item 5.1.27. Antidotus dianacardium quae facit ad stomachicos, qui fatigacionem et horrorem patiuntur siue suum siue alienum et omnes partes fatigatas ex stomacho et reumate omnium articulorum, ad cordis pulsam et omnem eius causam certe circa uelamn ipsi, ad epar non tumentem dumtaxat, ad splen, ad colun, ad capitis uertiginem atque obliuionis, es ad caligine, ad causas renicolorum atque uisciae, ad totius corporis uenas immundas et ad mulieres partes, quae fatigacionem et imbicillatatem totius corporis patiuntur \textit{ita ut de se disperent siue nimietate siue constrictionem sanquinis patiuntur, sic prodest, ut mirum sit}. Accepit haec: Spicenardi, folio, croci, meua ana uncias ternas, aloes epaticae lib I, carpobalsami \textsuperscript{+ III}, zinciberis \textsuperscript{+ III}, m<\textsuperscript{+ II}>ticis \textsuperscript{+ I}, iris \textsuperscript{+ VI}, cassiae epistulae \textsuperscript{+ III}, etimpi Attici leuioris quod quasi capilli sint \textsuperscript{+ III}, scioanantu \textsuperscript{+ III}, cariolfi \textsuperscript{+ III}, rapontici \textsuperscript{+ III}, mirobalani purgati \textsuperscript{+ III}, anacardiu \textsuperscript{+ I}, feneculi radicem corticis uirdis purgato et loate et modicum subiscicatae lib VIII, aceti \textsuperscript{+ VIIII}, melis optimi \textsuperscript{+ I} III. Cortices concides minusam et infundis in aceto per dies VII. Postea coques modicum, donec radices coquantur, quas tollis et in mortario teris noter, donec in gluten redigantur et rursus mittis in aceto et coques lento igne, donec acetum ad tertiam decoquatur, quo deposito atque tepfacto exprimit radicis ita, ut nullus in eos succus remaneat, deinde acutem diligentissime colas, addes mel et coques lentier ad carbones, donec in melis aquaquisius spissitudinem redigatur; post quae commisceas omnes specieis et teris in mortario fortiter et mittis in dolosum argenteum siue uitrem et dabis cum aqua calida magnam potionem usque ad \textsuperscript{+ III} minorem \textsuperscript{+ VIII}, inferiori \textsuperscript{+ III}, in fine mensurae \textsuperscript{+ I} et dabis - si potest - cotide aut alternis diebus aut certe septimo die exceptis canicularibus diebus omne tempore. Conficiuntur mense Maio uel Junio, ne radices fenuculi aut ante tempus emecte sint aut post tempus siccae.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{55} There are many more recipes for matrix pain. The St. Galler Antidotarium has two recipes for ‘oils’ that claim to have soothing, relaxing and sedative qualities. \textit{St. Galler Antidotarium [131]} is a recipe for \textit{oleo roseo} or ‘rose oil’, and \textit{St. Galler Antidotarium [138]} is a recipe for \textit{oleo lentiscum}, ‘oil of the mastic tree’ (cf. Sigerist 1923, pp. 96-97). The recipe for ‘rose oil’ was apparently very popular, because we also find the recipe in many post-Salernian recipe books and gynecological handbooks (see, for instance: Green 2001, pp. 196-197 and the Dutch translation of the \textit{Antidotarium Nicholai} (Van den Berg 1917, pp. 104-105).

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St. Galler Antidotarium (MS 9th century)

[3]. Antidotum dianacarcon. ad stomachum et qui fatigationem et orrre patiuntur siue suum siue alienum et omnem parrem fatigatus in stomacho et reuma et omnum articulorum, ad pulsum cordis et ad omnes eius causas, certe circa uelam illius et epar non tamen dumtaxat ad splene, ad oculum dolor, ad capitis uteiginem atque obliuionis, ad caliginem, ad causas re[r]<n>um atque uisice et totius corporis uenas inmundas, ad muliebres partes que fatigacionem et imbecillitatum patiuntur, ita ut se disperet siue nimietatem siue confrictionem sanguinis qui patiuntur, sic prodest ut mire sint. Recipit huc: spica nardi, folium, meu, crocum ana - III, aloen pattie lib. I, carepholans, gingiber ana - III, cassis, ireus ana - VI, mastice - I, epitimi atici quod quasi capilli - III miroballani purgati - III, squinuam, gariofilu, reopontico ana lib. III, anecardiu - I, fenuculi radices cortices uirides purgante et lote lib. VIII, aceto sextar. VIII, corticem diminutum infunditas in aceto per dis pois VII [et miroballani purgati - III, squinuam, gariofilu, reopontico ana lib. III, anecardiu Z - I, fenuculi radices cortices uirides purgante et lote lib. VIII, aceto VIIIII, corticem dis- minutum infundis in aceto per dis pois VII] postea coquis, donex cortices discoquantur, qua tollis et in mortorio fortiter teris, donec in aluta redigantur et rursus mittas in aceto, donec ad aceto tertiaras decoquantur, donec tepefactum exprimis radices, donec suces exire exinde potest, deinde aceto diligentissime collis, addis mel et coquis interdum ad carbones donec ad mellis crassitudinem redigatur, post hec mittis omnes species iste et ceteris in mortorio fortiter et repones in us utirem et dabis cum aqua calida ad magnitudinem potionis usque ad seminiuncia minore scripulum VIII, inferiores scripulum I et semis, et si potueris cotidie autem alterinis diebus omni tempore. Conficitur autem mense mai oel iulio de radices fenuculi ante tempus humecte sint aut post tempus sicce.57

Both versions of the antidotum dianachardium explain why women suffer from fatigatio, imbecillitas and despair: it is because ‘they suffer from surplus and constricted blood’ (siue nimietate siue confrictionem sanguinis patiuntur). This is a reference to classical medicine on menstruation and menstrual retention, which believes that the excess blood - nimietas, ‘superfluity’ - of a woman suffering from menstrual retention accumulates in her body, and clogs up in her womb, causing congestion or constriction (constrictio sanguinis).55 If surplus blood is not expelled on a regular basis, that is, if menstruation stagnates or is interrupted, a woman will become ill. The antidotum dianachardium contains purgative ingredients, and provides relief by eliminating a woman’s surplus blood. The recipe itself says that it works like a charm: sic prodest, ut mire sit, ‘it is so beneficial that it is miraculous’.

The following purgative - again a version of the antidotum hiera - not only cures depression (animi subductio, ‘a withdrawal of the mind’), but it also induces the menses (menstrua movet), expels a fetus during a miscarriage (pecus in auorsum expellit), and soothes matrix pain (matricis dolorem lenit).

Lorscher Arzneibuch (MS c. 795)

1.30. Antidotum egia ad omnes stomachi dolores, unde duritia fieri solet, quae dato coel I ex aqua calida statim dolorem mitigat, assiduae data duritia dissolut, uteiginem emendat, grauidinem releuat, faecium dolorem mitigat, uam suspendit, suspirium conpescit, assensionem reformat, ad loquendum stremem pectoris limit, tussim sanat, duritiam icnoris exspargit, splenis tumorem desiccat, tortiones intestinorum sedet, renium dolores et luteum et pleuriticos, ad stranguria uesicae similiter data prodest. Dissentericis solo in uino datur, admixta aqua calida omnibus typisics data emendat. Mullieribus quaque non purgantur menstrua mouet, pecus in auorsum expellit, nefriticum impetu et dolorem, mitigat, matricis dolorem lenit; caulcosis, arenosis frequenter data omnia dissolut, uentositatem uentris emendat; stomachi et animi subductionem, quod frequenter mulieribus accidere solet, statim ostendit spem salutis; punctvm etiam totius corporis data sanant, cybnum non continentes, acide et fumose ructantes suauitatem facit, sed et morbvm regium subductio, quod frequenter mulieribus accidere solet, statim ostendit spem salutis; punctvm etiam totius corporis data sanant, cybnum non continentes, acide et fumose ructantes suauitatem facit, sed et morbvm regium sanat. Quae conficitur autem mense mai oel iulio de radices fenuculi ante tempus humecte sint aut post tempus sicce.59

Mai oder Juni erfolgen, damit die Fenichelwurzeln nicht vor der Zeit zu feucht sind bzw. nach der Zeit zu trocken’ (Stoll 1992, pp. 339, 341).

57 Sigerist 1923, p. 79. We should read confrictionem for confrictionem due to a scribal confusion of <st> and <st>.

58 In his translation of recipe 5.1.27 Stoll interprets confrictionem sanguinis as ‘Gefäßverengung’. The translation should probably read: ‘obstruction or constipation due to an accumulation of blood’, because ‘congested blood’ due to obstructed menses is probably meant. Nimietas and confrictio sanguinis both describe menstrual retention and have a cause (nimietias) and effect (constrictio) relationship.

This recipe shows us that the female complaints listed here were all considered to be connected, because they all require the same remedy: a purgative potion.\(^{60}\)

A congested matrix can cause fatigatio, imbecillitas and depression. The word imbecillitas may also refer to more serious problems such as suffocatio and hysteria, disorders that will be discussed below.

**SUFFOCATIO, HYSTERIA, WANDERING WOMB**

Uterine suffocation, called suffocatio, pr(a)efocatio or hysteria in medieval recipes, is a serious illness that is due to menstrual retention. Its symptoms include fainting spells, palpitations and difficulty in breathing. If untreated, it can cause madness and a condition known as ‘wandering womb’.\(^{61}\) Suffocatio is caused by the accumulation and congestion of surplus blood in the womb, and it is a debilitating condition of the matrix that was well-known in classical gynecology. Treatment is usually some sort of purgative that should help expel the excess blood, as in the following two variant versions of a recipe for a purgative potion with only one ingredient (agaricus).\(^{62}\) The remedy is said to have been recommended by the fourth-century Greek medical writer Oribasius of Pergamon.\(^{63}\)

### Liber de muliebria causa
(8th-9th century)

16. *Ad matrices suffocationem* uribasius adfirmat, dabis agarico drach I cum uino bibere.\(^{64}\)

### Liber de muliebria
(8th-9th century)

23. *Ad matrice suffucacionem* uribasi[a]e adfirmat: dabis agaraica drach. I, cum uino bibat.\(^{65}\)

The antidotum stephanen also prescribes a purgative for suffocation of the womb: *ad mulieres que prefocantur de matrice*, ‘for women who are suffering from prefocatio of the womb’.

**Reichenauer Antidotarium**
(MS 9th-10th century)

[20]. Antidotum stephanen, mirificum ualdem cui melior alius non est. Facit ad colum, ad pleureticos, ad ptysicos et qui cibum non continent, *ad mulieres qui profucantur de matricem*, ad emoptiicos. Recipit hec: storace X, castoreu < I, mirra < I, oppio < II, graco, aneti semen < III, appii semen < III, daucu < III, trita omnia et cribellata cum mel sufficit. Dabis in modum fabe egypcie cum aqua calida.\(^{66}\)

**Glasgower Antidotarium**
(MS 9th-10th century)

[427]. Antidotum de stefanen qui facit mirificum ualdem cui melior alius non est, facit ad collum, ad pleureticos, ad tissicos et qui cibum non continent, *ad mulieres qui profucantur de matricem*, ad emtoicos. Recipit hec: storace, I, castoreu < I, mirra < I, oppio < II, graco, aneti semen < III, appii semen < III, daucu < III, trita omnia et cribellata cum mel sufficit. Dabis in modum fabe egypcie cum aqua calida.\(^{67}\)


\(^{60}\) Recipe 4.67 in the *Lorscher Arzneibuch* is a recipe for postpartum depression (cf. the section on ‘difficult birth and miscarriage’ below).

\(^{61}\) In Egert’s recipe books there are a number of recipes for suffocatio and ‘wandering womb’, many of which have parallels in the *Vademecum*. The *Vademecum* has two recipes for ‘wandering womb’, it does not have any recipes for suffocatio.

\(^{62}\) The official name for *agaricus* or *agaricum* is *polyporus officinalis* L, ‘Löckerschwamm (Daems 1993, pp. 111-112). Keller 1988, pp. 247-248 says it is a well-known toxic purgative and abortifacient.

\(^{63}\) Oribasius’s work was translated into Latin in sixth-century, Ostrogothic Ravenna. Henning Morland has shown that two different translations of Oribasius were made in Ravenna during the Ostrogothic period (493-555), cf. Morland 1932 and Morland 1940.”

\(^{64}\) Egert 1935, p. 26. (Egert II)

\(^{65}\) Egert 1935, p. 37. (Egert III)

\(^{66}\) Sigerist 1923, p. 43.

\(^{67}\) Sigerist 1923, p. 155.
The following purgative also cures suffocatio.

Liber de muliebria causa (8th-9th century)

81. Ad officiatio et, qui sanguinem per os uomitet, et, qui puncta facit subitus spatula et in mamilla: safest a semen medio calice, aneto semen medio calice, caballopedia, quaee in influmina aut in cisterna crescit, radices eius manipulo maiore simul teris cum uino calices VI et colabis et addis piper et gigihiber, postea cum unatus fuerit, de ipsa pocione calida cum buter calice plenum bibat et sic fortiter cooperis cum in lectum, ut sudet, et super ipsa inuria [Egert: inguina (?)] iacet; mirificum est. 68

Recipe nr. 41 in the Liber de muliebria explains that one of the symptoms of suffocatio is a ‘choking feeling’ (quod a collo strangulat). The remedy, a plaster plus potion, will make the womb turn back in the direction of the pectus, ‘chest’ (ut reuertatur ad pectus). The recipe shows us that the womb was thought to move around, as in classical gynecology.

Liber de muliebria (8th-9th century)

41. Ad sufficienciom matricis, id, quod a collo strangulat, ut reuertatur ad pectus: am(m)oniaco cum sucs absenti distemperas et lenis cum pinna uentrem, inponis stomacho suso, quod commouet in iosso [Egert: iusum], postea facis potum casie manip. I, ruta manip. I, artemisia manip. I; quoquis in uino, ut sint staupos III et reuertatur ad uno, et da bibere. 69

42. Item facis cataplasmata, quod mittas iossum: ruta et afromiro commiscis et uteris.

43. Item furoras mollissimas tritici excaldatas mittis ad stomacho et uentri et umbilico.

Three of the four emmenagogic purgatives called antidotum theodoritum that are quoted in the section on ‘scant menses’ are also beneficial for suffocation of the womb, thus illustrating the causal relationship that there was thought to be between obstruction of the menses and suffocatio. 70 The following two practically identical variant versions of the antidotum theodoritum are interesting because they explicitly state that there is a causal relationship (ex quibus) between retention and suffocation: ex quibus autem matricis suffocations uocatae, ‘from suffocations of the womb are induced’. They also describe another complication caused by difficulties of purgations and suffocation: incorruptiones circa sexum loci generatur, ‘corruptions around the sexual organs are generated’.

Apparently, menstrual obstruction can also cause damage to the sexual organs.

Lorscher Arzneibuch (MS c. 795)


70 Bamberger Antidotarium, nr. 44 (et mulieribus causa quibus stillant et matricem suffocantur), Lorscher Arzneibuch 3.41 (ad mulierum causas quibus purgatio stillatim fit et quae matrice suffocantur), and Berliner Antidotarium nr. 32 (et mulierum causas et qui a matrice suffocantur).

71 Stoll 1992, p. 266; ‘Lorscher Arzneibuch’ 3.42. Ein ‘Gottesgeschenk’, welches dem ganzen Menschen hilft. Es wird folgendermaßen hergestellt: 60 Drachmen Aloes, 24 Drachmen Leuchtschwamm, 6 Drachmen Safran, 3 Drachmen Rhabarber, 4 Drachmen Haselwurz, 8 Drachmen Kostwurz, 6 Drachmen Mastix, 6 Drachmen Wasser-Schwertlilie, eine einzeln Elefantenlau, 6 Drachmen Röhrkenkase, 6 Drachmen Zint, 4 Drachmen Balsamscholz, 3 Drachmen Indische Narde, 3 Drachmen Bärwurz, 2 Drachmen Gamander, 4 Drachmen weißen Pfeffer, Honig soviel wie nötig. Es hilft denen, die im Kopf geplagt werden, bei Schwindelanfällen, bei Kopfweh, Fallsucht und bei den Leiden, welche die Brust und den ganzen Brustkorb...
The version of the antidotum theodoritum in book four of the Lorscher Arzneibuch is not only beneficial for suffocatio (prefratio), but this purgative remedy also helps women suffering from ill health and depression after a miscarriage: post aduersum attenuate fuerint id est disturbuerint, ‘[women who] are weak after a miscarriage, that is, they are ‘disturbed’ (or distressed’).

Lorscher Arzneibuch (MS c. 795)
4.67. Antidotum theodoritum ad omnem corpus hominis quod primum esa capitis dolorem, toracis passiones, lateris dolorem, suspirium et epar, splenis, stomachum acescentem cibus, uentris dolorem, egritudinem longam trahentis uires et corpus integrum recipiendum, colo re malum habentes, morbo regium, hidropicos, tissin de pulmone nascentem, renum dolorem, cornem frequentior grauatus, omnem corpus enim erigit et consuetudine m reuocat, febrium egritudinem longam inpatientia trahent et sudorem nocturnum; frequenter dandum ex antidotum infra scriptum tempore oportuno, podagricis in declinationis aut in ipso initio dolores dandum, perfecte enim eos accipit, muliebrum cause, que betreffen, es wirkt bei Seitenstechen, Schweratmigkeit (das heißt Atemnot), bei Leber- und Milzleiden, übersäumtem Magen, bei Schmerzen im Darm und im Magen, bei zögernder Genesung nach langer Krankheit, bei sehr schlechter Farbe und wenn die Farbe ins Gelbliche spielt, beim Auftreten von Aufschwemmungen, das ist Wassersucht, bei Schwindsucht infolge einer Lungenerkrankung, bei Lungendarre, Nierenentzündung (das ist ein Nierenleiden), bei Blähungen und Darmkrämpfen; es nimmt die Beschwerden bei allgemeiner Mattigkeit; es wirkt aber auch bei bestehender langwieriger Erkrankungen und es hilft bei Fieberschweiß, bei regelmäßigen Fieberanfällen reicht man es zweckmäßig wie, wenn das Fieber nachläßt, Gichtkranken gibt man es indessen vor dem Anfall. Es hilft aber auch wunderbar bei Frauenleiden, beim zögernden Monatsfluß, was die Ursache für übles Aufstoßen der Gebärmutter mit Ohnmachtsanfällen darstellt und woraus Schäden an den Geschlechtsorganen entstehen. Es ist aber auch gut für den Darm, es heißt die Eingeweide, indem es ohne Schwierigkeit die Krankheitsmaterie abführt. Es muß schlankweg ‘Theodoron’, das heißt Gottesgeschenk, genannt werden; jeder, der es gebraucht, wird einen Heilerfolg bei allen Krankheiten erzielen. Wer es anwenden will, soll dies ein- oder zweimal vor dem Frühjahr oder im Herbst tun, und er wird gesund bleiben. Denn es heißt nicht nur bestehende Krankheiten, sondern schützt auch vor künftigen Erkrankungen. Man läßt die Menge einer Haselnuss um die erste Stunde kauen’ (Stoll 1992, p. 267).

Part 1: Article XI

18

Retention of the menses and the resulting suffocation of the womb can also cause mental illness. The following two versions of the *antidotum theodoritum* (dianachardium) show us that suffocatio or prefocatio that is caused by menstrual obstruction can develop into *hysteria* or madness: *et ad mulierem cui tardat purgatio que uocantur esteret et que prefocationem patiuntur*, ‘for women whose menses are slow or obstructed, who are called hysterical, and who suffer from prefocatio’.

**Reichenauber Antidotarium** (MS 9th-10th century)


**Glasgower Antidotarium** (MS 9th-10th century)


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73 Stoll 1992, pp. 296; *‘Lorscher Arzneibuch* 4.67. Das Gottesgeschenk-Mittel für den ganzen menschlichen Körper. Vor allem hilft es bei Kopfschmerzen, Brustleiden, Schmerzen in der Seite, Atemnot, Leber- und Milzleiden, Übersäuerung des Magens und Bauchscherzen; er hilft bei langer entkräftender Krankheit, den Körper insgesamt wiederherzustellen; er wirkt bei schlechter Farbe, bei Ausfalls (bzw. Gelbsucht), Wassersucht, Schwindsucht der Lunge, Nierenschmerzen und häufigen Magens und Bauchschmerzen; er hilft bei langer entkräftender Krankheit, den Körper insgesamt wiederherzustellen; er wirkt

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74 Sigerist 1923, pp. 45-46.
The following recipe is a powder that will cure any complaint that has to do with the womb (ad omnem matricis causam) and hysteria.

**Reichenauer Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)**

[26]. Antidotum pigra magna. Ad multa precipue ad purgationem feminarum hac unicumque. Recipit hoc: Aloe dragm. XX, xilobalsamum scripula XVIII, cinnamonum scripula XIII, spica nardi scripula XVIII, mastice scripula XVIII, crocu scripula XVIII, aer-arica scripula XVIII, dibas cum malsa cyatis III, pulueri scrip. VI, hanc si consuescet feminam igitur accipere in paucos dies grande adiutorium sentiet. Singularis enim potio feminis ad omnia, ad stomachum et epar et splen et uteris difficultyem ad matricis mania id est qui maniam capitis patiuntur uicio matricis. Post hac uero ne subito a potione discedat, accipiat aquam absinthi vel quod est melius alane purum et omnes reliquias sordium penitus auferantur.77

The word *mania*, ‘madness’, in the recipes below may be a synonym of *hysteria*, but it is also possible that *mania* is a more serious mental illness that develops, if menstrual retention remains untreated. Recipe 26 in the *Reichenauer Antidotarium* is a *potio feminis ad omnia*, ‘a woman’s potion for everything, especially ad matricis mania id est qui maniam capitis patiuntur uicio matricis, for insanity of the matrix, that is, for those who suffer from madness of the head due to an illness of the womb’. Note that part of the indication has been inserted after the recipe.

**Lorscher Arzneibuch (MS c. 795)**

3.20. Antidotum acardion ebortodonecis et qui uertiginem patiuntur et tremulosis, stomaticis, epaticis, nefreticis, minomis et alumnis alienationis, praeterea mulierum, qui ex matrice uexantur cum metromaniae, ydropicis, paraliticis, cardiacis, ypocondriacis vel ad omnia quae theodoritus operatur, quorum datio est in caldo dicitum, ad modum auelane datum masticandum aut glutiendum, si exire causam cotidie dandum aut per triduum aut queaque aut septimus dies. Conpositio eius: Spicae Indicae ~ III, squinoanti ~ III, folii ~ III, cariofili ~ III, meu ~ III, croci ~ III, anacardiu ~ III, aloepatite lib, reupontici ~ III, carpobalsami ~ III, balsami ~ III, mirobalani ~ III, gingiberis ~ III, masticis ~ II, hirin Illirycae ~ VI, mellis lib, piperos ~ VIII.78

The recipe below is found in a short gynecological treatise called *De diversis causis mulierum*. This text is probably based on an early translation of the Hippocratic *Diseases of Women*. The recipe links diseases of the *matrix*, mental depression (vpocondria) and suffocatio (offacatio).

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75 Sigerist 1923, p. 109. For *dierit* read *digerit*, *dificilem* = *difficilem*, *tocius* = *totius*, *paciuntur* = *patiuntur*, *prefucionem* = *prefocationem*, *causas* = *causas*, *agaricum* = *agaricum*, etc. (cf. the version in the *Reichenauer Antidotarium* [29]).

76 Sigerist 1923, p. 54.


Part 1: Article XI

De diversis causis mulierum (MS 8th-9th century)

30. Ad matrice, quae *vpocondria* subcadit et *offocationem* facit. Quae si secremen bibat, suspirium et dolor stomaci sequitur, flagma accida uomant, os corum aquabitur et pedes frigidi sunt. Si celerius matricem de *ipocondriam* nun separatur, caput et lingua stupent, et sine uoce sunt, et dentis strident et post modicum tempus caput et ceruix dolet. Curabius ex calificacionis, et nasibus impone non bene olida, ut dolor sedat, da eis in pocione farmacum, et sucum tisane accipiant, et uornitum prouocabis et ex clisterie curabius, quals quidue inserta sunt. Ad collo matrice lana impon olae mirtino intincta et in nasibus mitte olae amaranthium et farmacum inunguis; sic sternutum prouocas. Haec omnia facis, donec matrix ad locum suum uertatur; hae faciendum est in die bis uel ter.79

Like *suffocatio*, ‘wandering womb’ is a concept that was borrowed from classical medicine. It is the worst case scenario for menstrual retention. Serious menstrual congestion causes the womb to move around in a woman’s body, and this can ultimately lead to death. We find many recipes for wandering womb in *De diversis causis mulierum*. As in the Hippocractic *Diseases of Women*, separate recipes are given for each location the womb could have wandered to.80 In the example below the womb has moved up to the liver:

**De diversis causis mulierum** (MS 8th-9th century)

31. *Si matrix ad epar ascendit*, sic intelliges: sine uoce fiere solent, dentes [*i*]strident, color uiridis est. Haecl omnia dum sana est. subito contingunt maxime urginis, que maioris sunt etate, et uiduis. Haec sterelis frequentius et aliquando post partum fit, aliquando non. Si hoc contingit, oporit matricem manibus tenere pare gorzando in loco suo reuocare et ex uino hos earum bene lauare et sucum cantabri tenere cum oleo dulce infundere. Postea species male odore nasibus infunde et inferius fomicare species bene olentis et purgare, si colera est, ex farmaco celerico, si flegmata est, flegmaticis species purgetur. Lac aseninum aut caupra potui da. Oporit fouere matrice species bene olentibus, supponere farmacum, qui dicitur bupiitus (?), alia die, qui dicitur metopon; post dies II clisterie bene olentis curabius, postea glicano, postoe (sic!) fomicabis de aramathibus. Haec omnia fieri oporit iiduis et sterelis. Utilis non illis est, ut concipiant; urginis hoc utilissimum est. Si ad uirum suum conuertatur, tunc dabis in uino castorio et nuclium usque dies XX; caput uero non oporit unguere, neque per naris bene odoris aliquid detur. Item lilisfago, lini semen, alfeta da eis ieiunis in aqua et calida fomentablis. Item ordigo quoquis in aqua et fomentablis, similiiter oui uetula et oleo roseo a foris perungues.81

However, most early medieval recipe books simply give a general remedy to make the womb move back to its original place in the woman’s body - no matter where the womb is considered to have wandered off to.82

**Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes** (MS 9th century)

[7.] Item. *Ad matrice qui loco suo non habet ut reuertatur ad locum, duriciam nullam habeat.* Medulla ceruuna ÷ II, adipe anserino ÷ II, cera pomica ÷ II, butirum ÷ II, sucum fene greci quartario I oleum cum sucum commisesces et tando coques usque ad mensura olei remaneat et solutis illis supra memoratas, oleum cum ipsis commisce. Hic pirum utilisime in omnes causas.83

**Liber de muliebria causa** (MS 8th-9th century)

24. **Pisarium, qui facit ad matricem, qui in loco suo non est,** ut reuertatur ad locum et duriciam nullam habeat: Medulla ceruuna unc. II, adipe anserino unc. II, cera pumica unc. II, butero unc. II, fenogreco sucum quartario I, lini semen succum quartario I, oleum cum sucis cunnmiscis et coques, quamdui olei mensura remaneat, et solutis illis supermemoratis oleum cunnmiscis cum ipsis; est hic pisarium in omni rei utilissimus.84

22. **Pisarium ad matrice, quae in loco suo non est,** ut rediat ad locum, et duriciam tollit: medulla ceruuna, adipe anserino, cera pumica, butero, fenogreco ius, lini semenis ius, oleo ana emina se mis; oleo et ius miscis, quoquis, usque ad mensura olei rediat, suprarescriptas species resoluis, cunnmiscis omnia et ueteris, quia ad hoc utilissimus pisarius est. Pisarium ad matrice, si foris uersa est: rosa sicca, mala granate corticis ana unc. VI, agazia unc. I, gallas dragm. III; hec omnis teris cum uino austeretro et sic lana intinges, matrice adponis; ipsis pisarius fluxum sanguinis stringitis.85

79 Brütsch 1922, pp. 27-28.
81 Brütsch 1922, pp. 28-29.
82 On the wandering womb, cf. the literature in note 2.
83 Köpp 1980, p. 29. *Vademecum* [7]. Item. Ebenfalls wenn die Gebärmutter nicht am rechten Ort ist, damit sie wieder zu-rechtgerückt wird und Beschwerdefreiheit eintritt. Vermische 2 Unzen Hirschmark, 2 Unzen Gänsefett und je 2 Unzen mit Bimsstein geglättetes Wachs und Butter mit Saft von Bockshornklee und einem Quar tarium Oel, um es solange einzu-
84 Egert 1936, p. 27. (Egert II)
All three variant recipes *ad matrice qui loco suo non habet*, ‘for the womb that is not in its place’, are pessaries. The original recipe is probably also ultimately Hippocratic in origin. Besides helping the *matrix* return to its place, the remedy also cures hardness of the womb (*duritia*). It is one of the few recipes containing an animal ingredient: *medulla cervi*, ‘*hart’s marrow*’.

The recipes for purgative potions below furnish us with a list of symptoms of wandering womb (*de signa matricis, quando loco suo non est*, ‘On the signs of the womb that is not in its place’), such as a pain in the left side, inflammation of the stomach, shivering, etc.

*Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes* (MS 9th century)

[17.] *Designa matricis quando in loco non est*. Dolor sinistri lateris et ipso latere ascendit, uoluendo ad stomachum cum inflamatiune, et inglutire aliquid non permittitt et frigus patitur cum tussione membrorum et sonitum cum ructatione, cum iussum redit qui bibit potentem talem factam: semen api et fenum grecum teris et cum uino dabis bibere.86

*Liber de muliebria* (MS 8th-9th century)

46. *De signa matricis, quando loco suo non est*: dolor senestri lateris et ex[i]psa latere ascendit uoluendo ad stomachum cum inflacione et inglutire aliquid non permittitt et frigus pat(iur) cum tussione membrorum et finitum cum rupta-cione, cum iussum redit. Quibus pocionem talem facis: semen api et fenogrego teris et cum uino das bibere.87

The majority of the recipes for disorders of the *matrix* discussed in this section explicitly suggest causality between menstrual retention and the womb on the one hand, and *suffocatio*, hysteria, *mania* and wandering womb on the other: *suffocatio matricis, prefocare de matrice, matricis mania, ex matrice uexantur*. They give us a view of the Greco-Roman theoretical framework that lies behind the gynecological recipes in the early medieval recipe books. The disorders described are caused by menstrual retention, that is, an unhealthy accumulation of excess blood in the womb. The recipes are all purgatives, and most of them also alleviate other symptoms of menstrual retention, such as headaches, stomach-aches, and mood swings.

**DEAD BLOOD**

Excess blood that has accumulated in a woman’s body and become clotted or congested is called ‘dead blood’ in the following three variant versions of the *antidotum maurentius*. Dead blood is the substance that obstructs the *matrix* and causes the health problems described above. The recipes called *antidotum maurentius* purge or cleanse a woman, and get rid of the waste material that is causing obstructions in her body and making her sick: *sed et mulieribus quae non purgantur commouet emortuum sanguinem*, ‘and also for women who do not purge, it (re)moves dead blood’. Judging from its ingredients this recipe is a powerful emmenagogue and purgative that will cure retained menses, and thus help the woman regain her health.

*Lorscher Arzneibuch* (MS c. 795)

5.1.6 *Antidotus quae dicitur maurentium*. Faciens ad stomachi dolorem ex quo et duritia nascitur. Cocleare unum datum cum calida compescit dolorem. Saepius autem accepta soluit et duritia nascitur. Scotos capitis et grauidinem releuat, facultutionem sanat et su[0x-6]tus et eparis duritia nascitur et splenis indignationem digerit. Similiter autem et conpunctiones et tortiones intestinorum et quod pleuriti dicitur statim accepta sanat. Data ergo cum calida, ut diximus, uniuersa sanat, sed et eos, qui escam non


87 Egert 1936, p. 40. (Egert III)
retinent und accidum uel fumigosum ructuant, per digestionem sanat nec non et eam infirmitatem curat, quae icta dicitur. Accepit autem haec: Piperis albi ~ I, zinziberis ~ I, petroselini ~ II, ameos Ê VI, caroi Ê XVIII, liuestici Ê VIII. Haec omnia turndis et cernis et miscis cum melle Attico pensis III. Teris diligenter in mortario per dies V adolem et collegis uase stagnoe siue uitreo.88

**Bamberger Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)**

5. Antidotum qui dicitur Mauritius faciens ad stomachi dolore ex quo et duritiae nascentur, cocliare una dausis cum calida, compesicit dolorem autem sepies accepta soluit etiam duritiae excentos in capitis et gravidinem relebat faucium indignationem similiter et compesicit et chionidos reuma et suspirio conpescit et uocem denuo restituit et conpunctionem sanat et tussem et epaticis duritiam soluit et splenias indignatio digerit. Simul etiam et compensionem et tortionem in testinorum et quod pleuriticis digerit statim accepta sanat, disinterts autem in solio caldario mixta uino accepta conuent. Si his facibiscuitauert cum aqua calida his qui longo tempore egrotat et qui cotidia nascentur autem alque periculos producit. Sed et mulieribus qui non purgantur et commouet mortuum sanguinem abortivum uiro peruersum sine aliquo periculo producit. Sed et post aborsum datum purgat et statim compesicit dolorem simil sim et inflacione et dolorem stomachi et uentositatem uel suffocationem quod et mulieribus et uiris fiero solet. Statim date omnia his de stomachi infirmitate nascentur. Data ergo cum calida ut diximus uniusera sanat. Sed eos qui escam non retinent et acidum uel fumigosum ructuant per digestiones sanat. Necon etiam infirmitate curat quod gera dicitur. Accipit autem hoc: piper album ~ I, zinziber ~ II, petroselino ~ II, ameus Ê VI, careo Ê dece et octo, liuistici semen Ê dece et octo. Hec omnia turndis et cernis et miscis po<cula> quotuar mittes teris diligenter in mortario per dies quinquag ad so<lem> et collegis in uas stagnoe siue uitreo.89

**Berliner Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)**


The antidotum maurentius can also be prescribed when a woman is having a miscarriage: abortivum (abortivum) uero peruersum sine aliquo periculo producit, ‘it expels a still-born child (miscarriage), even in breech position, without any danger [to the woman]’.91 The potion also helps a woman recover from the miscarriage (or abort-
tion?), and works as a painkiller: *sed et post auersum data purgat, et statim conpescit dolorem*, ‘and if given after the miscarriage, it purges [the woman] and immediately relieves the pain’.

The version in the *Berliner Antidotarium* contains two interesting variants. In the first place, it has *mulieribus qui non pregnante, commouet emortuum sanguinem* ‘for women who [are] not pregnant [anymore? - yet?], it (re)moves dead blood ’, instead of *mulieribus quae (qui) non purgantur (…)*, ‘for women who do not purge (…)’, and in the second place, it omits the word *perversus*, ‘malpresented, malpositioned, in breech position’. For a comparison of the variant versions, cf. below Table 2, under C. The first variant links ‘dead blood’ and pregnancy. The phrase can refer to menstrual retention, but *non pregnante* may also indicate that the woman has just had a miscarriage, that the fetus or the afterbirth has not yet been (completely) expelled or that the lochia is stagnating. It is also possible that *non pregnante* means ‘not pregnant yet’, suggesting that ‘dead blood’ is causing obstructions in the woman’s body that prevent the woman from becoming pregnant. In this case the purgative might indirectly promote fertility, because removing ‘dead blood’ should restore the menses, so that she will be able to become pregnant. The omission of the word *perversus* in the phrase *abortiuum uero sine aliquo periculo producit*, ‘it really expels a still-born child (a dead fetus) without any danger’, makes a broader interpretation of the word *abortiuum* possible. Without the word *perversus*, ‘malpresented’, the phrase *abortiuum … producit* can not only refer to a ‘miscarried fetus’ or a ‘miscarriage’, but it can also take on the meaning ‘to induce an abortion’.

The main meaning of *aborsus* and *abortiuum* in these recipes is ‘miscarriage’. When reading these early medieval recipes with twenty-first-century eyes we are inclined to translate *aborsus* with ‘abortion’ and *aborsum facere* with ‘to have an abortion’ or ‘to abort’. True, the word also means ‘abortion’, and many of the recipes may be ambiguous, but we must not forget that its primary meaning in early medieval recipes is ‘miscarriage’. In the sections below we will again come across the word *aborsus* with the meaning ‘miscarriage’, and we will see that *aborsum facere* also means ‘to have a miscarriage’.

‘Dead blood’ can be explained as congested or congealed blood due to blocked menses and/or an incomplete miscarriage (or abortion). In other words, ‘dead blood’ can refer to both menstrual retention and to retention associated with the birthing process, including postpartum retention of the afterbirth or the lochia. The context of the *antidotum maurentius* suggests that *emortuum sanguinem* refers to a dead fetus. However both explanations are possible. Dead blood is polluted matter that should be removed in order to restore a sick woman’s health.

**DIFFICULT BIRTH AND MISCARRIAGE**

The recipes in this section deal with ‘retention’ that is connected with difficult birth and miscarriage. This type of ‘retention’ can lead to serious complications, even death, if excess fluids and waste matter that are congested in the *matrix* are not expelled. The purgative recipes discussed in this section accelerate the birthing process, help remove the afterbirth and stimulate the lochial discharge, so that the womb is cleansed after a miscarriage. Basically, there seems to be no difference between a purgative that stimulates the menses and one that is used in connection with birth or miscarriage (*aborsus*).
The *diaspoliten antidotus* is a remedy with purgative ingredients that is recommended to help expel a ‘(living) fetus’ (*partum expellit*) and/or the afterbirth (*secundas mulierum educit*).\(^\text{94}\) It probably induces contractions and labor, and speeds up the birthing process.

**Reichenauer Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)**

[42.] Diaspoliten antidotus, qui facit ad hæc: stomachum excitat, digestionem accommodat, aluum mollit, biles extenuat, utia pectoris, lateris, iocineris ac renum mitigat, *partum expellit*, *secundas mulierum educit*. Recipit hæc: ruta, piper, petroselinu, cymminu, zinziber ana - VI, nitru - III. Sed cymminu præ aceto maceratur, deinde torretur et uniuersa coneusa et cribrata mella attico colliguntur et uteris.\(^\text{95}\)

The *St. Galler Antidotarium* has a short recipe for difficult birth. The potion should be used *ut mulier se a partu mundetur*, ‘so that the woman may purge herself of the partus’.

**St. Galler Antidotarium (MS 9th century)**

A69. *Ut mulier se a partu mundetur.* Berbena trita cum aqua recenti da ei bibere, mundat et sanat.\(^\text{96}\)

Use of the word *mundetur* and the phrase *mundat et sanat*, ‘cleanses and cures’ indicates that the recipe probably also helps remove the afterbirth and induce the lochial discharge.

There are also recipes that are prescribed especially to remove the afterbirth; the first recipe is a soup or broth.

**Liber de muliebria (MS 8th-9th century)**

81. *Ad secundas mulieris: liquamen bonum cocl. III das bibere et sanat.*\(^\text{97}\)

**Liber de causas feminarum (MS 8th-9th century)**

62. Mulier si peperit et secunde iuxtâ consuetudinem non exierit, coclearios III puledii distringito in uino bono et contritum dabis bibere.\(^\text{98}\)

89. *Post partum mulieris (ut) secunda sequantur, plantagine tribulata ex aqua calida bibat.*\(^\text{99}\)

The two general purgatives given below can also be used to help eject the afterbirth (*secundas mulierum educit; secundis mulierum producendis*). Both multi-purpose potions are ascribed to famous authorities (Marcellus Empiricus, Hadrianus).

**Reichenauer Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)**

[11]. Antidotus polichristus a marcello acceptus. Melius operatur quam illa que ex multis migmadibus conficitur uel illa mitritatia, qui facit colicis cum aqua cyatis tribus, epaticis cum uino mulso, febricitanti cum aqua, lateris dolori cum aqua mulsa, opistotonicis cum aqua calida, stomaticis cum pusca, indigestis similiter, dysintericis, renibus laborantibus, spleneticis, cauculosis et stranguria patientibus gluttire dabis ut supra, qui a perfrictionibus laborant, si febrigant paralyticis, prodest, *secundas mulierum educit*, si cum mulsa bibatur, ptysicis prodest, curat et uulnera que intra thoracem nasci possunt. Recipit hec: crocu scripulum I, opiu scripulum II, euforbiu scripulum I, piper un<cia> I, piretru scripulum I, spicanardi scripulum I, daucu scripulum I, petroselinu scripulum II, yosquiamu scripulum II, opobalsamu scripulum II, cassie fistule scripulum II, mel dispumatum quod sufficit, dabis et hoc magnitudinem fabe singulis passionibus.\(^\text{100}\)

**Glasgower Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)**


\(^{94}\) In the early medieval recipes word *secunda* is often used for ‘afterbirth’ instead of *secundina*.

\(^{95}\) Sigerist 1923, p. 49: *coneusa* should probably be read *contusa*.


\(^{97}\) Egert 1936, p. 43. (Egert III)

\(^{98}\) Egert 1936, p. 20. (Egert I)

\(^{99}\) Egert 1936, p. 22. (Egert I)

\(^{100}\) Sigerist 1923, pp. 41-42. *Qualida > calida.* There does not seem to be a related recipe in Marcellus Empiricus’s *De Medicamentis*.
The *antidotum diestorium* - also a purgative potion - claims to induce the lochial discharge:

**Glasgow Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)**

37. Antidotum diestorium adest opticus facit ad epaticos et qui tusse longa habent et ad infirmos, quos aqua coegit et ad mulieris qui pos<pt> partum non purgant: sthorace - VIII, resina tereuentina - VI, murra - IIII, yrin illirica - III, iusquiamu - III, estrumum - III, piperis albi - I, dauis in uino bibere.102

The recipes for difficult birth quoted above do not tell us whether the fetus is alive or dead, that is, whether we are dealing with difficult birth, miscarriage, or perhaps abortion. However, the recipes in Table 1 (p. 39) all clearly indicate that the fetus is dead and that the woman is having a miscarriage (or an abortion).

Table 1 contains variant versions of recipes for miscarriage (*aborsus*) and the expulsion of a dead fetus found in two short recipe books: the *Liber de muliebria causa* and the *Liber de muliebria*, and in the section on gynecology in the *Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes*.103 As in the Greek *Diseases of Women*, a list of recipes that cure the same complaint is given, so that healer and patient were given a choice. When comparing these three recipe books to their probable Greek sources, the Hippocratic gynecological texts, we see that the author-compilers chose only a limited number of recipes for one complaint, and that certain types of recipes - especially fumigations - were almost consistently left out.104 It is also evident that all three texts must have a common Latin ancestor, because even the order of the recipes is the same. The *Vademecum* contains fewer recipes per complaint than the other two texts, so that the *Liber de muliebria causa* and the *Liber de muliebria* must be older. Because the *Vademecum* seems to be an abridged version, the manuscript (a folded manuscript) may therefore indeed, as Köpp suggested, have belonged to an itinerant doctor. The *Arsneiform* of most of the recipes discussed here is the potion; occasionally other *Arsneiformen* are used. The recipes in row one of Table 1 are pessaries, recipe nr. 70 in the *Liber de Muliebria* is a plaster (column two, row four), and the two remedies for women having birthing difficulties in row six must be taken in a bath (*lavatio*). There are hardly any differences between the variant versions of the purgative remedies for miscarriage in Table 1, which is remarkable, because the variant versions of many of the so-called long recipes often differ greatly (see, for instance, Table 2, below, p. 40).

It is possible to interpret the word *aborsus* as ‘abortion’ in the recipes in row one of Table 1: *ad mulierem qui aborsum facit et non purgat*, ‘for a woman who is having a miscarriage (or an abortion) and does not purge’.

However, this is probably not the ‘intended’ meaning of the word in this context.105 The word *aborsus* in the phrase *ad mulieris auorsum* in the following version of the *antidotum theodoritum* probably also means ‘miscarriage’, but, here too, *aborsus* can be interpreted as ‘abortion’.

**Berliner Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)**

12. Antidotum theudoritum, ad omnia utilissimo purg<ato<r> i>o qui facit ad dolorem capitis, sthomaticis, epilenticis, melancoliciis, maniacis, ad pectoris, ad lateris dolorem, ad malas humores coniectos, quibus esca acidiscit in sthomaco, ad tisicos et ad eos qui reumaticas passiones patiuntur, et ad eos qui in magroconosia ueniunt, hoc est in longa egritudine, ad hictericos, ad ydropicos, ad nefreticos et qui grau e corpus habent, ad colum, per hunc antidotum repleti et sani fiunt, ad pedes plurimum dolentes, ad incipientem dolorem podagri et *ad mulieris auorsum* et ad eos qui corruptelam uentris patiuntur et sthomaci, ad epaticos, ad spleneticos, soluit autem uentre sine molestia. Accipiendum est uernum et

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101 Sigerist 1923, p. 100. (tisicis > fisicis?, ptisicis?)
102 Sigerist 1923, p. 106. For *diestorium* read *digestorium*.
103 Köpp 1980, and Egert 1936 II-III. All three texts seem to be Hippocratic in origin and are perhaps abbreviated adaptations of the Hippocratic *Diseases of Women*. Perhaps they were derived from early Latin translations of the Greek Hippocratic *Diseases of Women* that were made in sixth-century Ravenna. See also: note 80.
104 Cf. Sigerist 1923 on fumigations, p. 174. The sample of early medieval recipes discussed in this paper has only one recipe that prescribes fumigation (*Antidotarium Bruxcellense I 3*), cf. p. 13.
105 On the word *aborsus*, see also: the sections on ‘dead blood’ and ‘abortion and contraception’. 

There are recipes for miscarriage in almost every recipe book. The following purgatives found in the ninth-century \textit{St. Galler Receptarium I} bring on labor and expel a dead fetus. Recipe A136 can also be used for cows with a dead calf or for other farm animals.\textsuperscript{107}

\textbf{St. Galler Receptarium I (MS 9th century)}

A136. \textit{Ad feminam aut quemlibet pecus si in ea mortuus fuerit partus.} Ebuli radices teris et cum aqua bibat, et si non febricitat, in uino bono.\textsuperscript{108}

\textbf{St. Galler Receptarium I (MS 9th century)}

A60. \textit{Si partus in utero mortuus fuerit et discuti non potest. Ad matrici extensionem et partus excutiendus.} Braci binnato in olla ponatur cum aqua fenuculi radices, leustici radices uno corpore, bulliatur bene ut ipsa aqua dulcis sit et postea refrieret, tepefacta bibatur, mater extenditur, partum exclusituir, et si non potest mundare, pomunculo qui nascitur in fonte dabis ei bibere; si aliquid male habet proiciit, purgat et sanat.\textsuperscript{109}

Recipe A60 is especially interesting, because it claims to be able to widen the exit of the womb of a woman who is insufficiently dilated: \textit{Si partus in utero mortuus fuerit et discuti non potest. Ad matrici extensionem et partus excutiendus, ‘If the partus has died in the womb and cannot be expelled. For widening of the womb and in order to expel the partus’}. This recipe also neatly summarizes the beneficial effect of emmenagogues and purgatives: \textit{proiciet, purgat et sanat, ‘it expels, purges, and cures’}.

A recipe in the \textit{Glasgower Antidotarium} - attributed to the medical authority Vindicianus - illustrates the many uses of purgatives, and again shows us that no distinction was made between menstrual retention and other kinds of ‘retention’. The \textit{antidotum uindiciani} can stimulate menstruation (\textit{mulieribus menstrua prouocat}), it can expel a miscarriage (\textit{auorsum proiciet}), and it also claims to be an especially suitable potion, if tears, lesions or wounds have developed in the womb (\textit{maxime si uulnera in matrice fuerit nata}).

\textbf{Glasgower Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)}

7. \textit{Antidotum uindiciani facit ad lateris dolorem et sthomaci et contra uenenas et espasmu laborantis lumborum et espine dolens, serpentium morsos et mulieribus menstrua prouocat maxime si u<\textgreater;nera?\textless;> in matrice fuerit nata et auorsum proiciet et frenesin curat et morbo regio utilisissimun ext et odorem redit, sanguinem umentibus sanit, ydropicis quoque prodrest datus ex aceto. Recipient hec: cianice dr. XXVIII, appii semen dr. XVIII, petrosilino dr. VII, sessilin dr. XII, piperis albi dr. VIII, iuncia dr. IIII, iunci flos dr. VI, amomico dr. VI, panacis radicem dr. IIII, oppopanacem dr. II, irillicem dr. IIII, costum dr. II, iunc flos dr. VI, mira dr. III, croci dr. IIII, cinnami dr. III, spica indica dr. VIII, oppium dr. I § castorei dr. I S, storaci optimi dr. III, calamitis tesmatris dr. VIII, opobalsamo dr. III, spica nardi dr. II, nuces amaras XV, ogomi semen dr. IIII, dauci cretici dr. IIII, liquiricidie dr. XII. Hec omnia tuns diliener et trita ad lenitatem ex mulsa quiatis II, si febricatuerit ex uino optimo quiatis duobus.\textsuperscript{110}

The core text of the following seven versions of the purgative recipe called \textit{antidotum hiera} has been expanded with indications for obstructed menses or purgation, and miscarriage; six versions also claim to relieve (post-

\textsuperscript{106} Sigerist 1923, pp. 69-70

\textsuperscript{107} Note that \textit{pecus} must be translated as ‘cattle’ here; in the other recipes \textit{pecus} is a synonym of ‘fetus’.


\textsuperscript{110} Sigerist 1923, p. 101.
partum) pain.\textsuperscript{111} All seven versions have been tabulated in Table 2 under A and B, along with three recipes called \textit{antidotarium maurentius} (Table 2, under C), because the latter contain similar indications in the same order (cf. the section on ‘dead blood’).

The first three variants cure menstrual retention (\textit{ad purgationes feminine}), help to safely expel a dead fetus when a woman is having a miscarriage (\textit{petus mortuam exclusid et per aborsum sine periculum lapsus faciit}), and work as a painkiller (\textit{fisis dolorem}):

(1) \textit{Reichenauer Antidotarium} (MS 9th-10th century)

[63]. \textit{Antidotum ygia filograftis, ad omnes dolores, ad uertiginem capitis, ad faustum tumorem, dysnopiciis, ad uocem obscuram, ad stridorem pectoris, ad duriciem tussis, ad dolorem intestinorum, lateris et uscisse, \textit{ad purgationes feminine}, petus mortuam exclusid et per aborsum sine periculum lapsus faciit, fisis dolorem, limosis, arenosis, cauculosis, ymipiiciis, ptisiciis, sintecticiis, ystericiis et cibum non continentibus. Recipit haec: piper unc. I, petroselinii drag. III et semis, ameos drag. III et semis, cum modico pulsa, in apoizma myrte aut lentisci aut malii granatii sucus aut lenticule.\textsuperscript{112}

(2) \textit{Glasgower Antidotarium} (MS 9th-10th century)

48. \textit{Antidotum egia.} Est ad omnen dolorem shtomaci et ad uertiginem capitis et ad faustum tumorem et ad uue tumoris et ad suspium et ad uoces escuritatem et ad estriodem pectoris et ad tussem et splenis et punctas et torciones intestinorum et renun dolorem et lateris et ussic et dissintericiis februbs perseverantibius, cotidians, tercianis et quartanis purgacionem faciant, femina si pecus mortuam excludet per aborsum sine periculo lapsus faciunt fisiz dolores sed ad lienios renosius et cauculosis presuras esthomacii eti subdulcione[n]s sed et cibos non continentibius acida et fumosa et ruptitantibus et morbus region curat. Piper album = I, petrosilino macedoniciu \textit{VIII}, ameos \textit{VIII}, fenuciuli semen \textit{VIII}, careos \textit{XXI}, lisiisticu \textit{XXI}, ginguier – I, tunsu crueilatia aiunto delle tinho dispumam et morbium in dolelio plumbou tel uitreo et dabis coelriau I in aqua calida, in uno autem dissintericiis amixita aqua calida et si sene fibrubs fuerit optime expermentatum est.\textsuperscript{113}

(3) \textit{Miscellanea Tironiana} (MS 9th century)

\textit{Antidotvm egias} est ad omnen dolorem stomaci, ad vertiginem capitis, faustum tumoris, uve tumoris, suspium, voci obscuritatem, striudem pectoris, tussem, duriciem icinoris, splenis punctus, tortiones intestinorum et renium, dolors lateris, visicac, dissintericiis februbs perseverantibus, cotidians, tercianis et quartanis purgacionem faciant, femina si pecus mortuam excludet per aborsum sine periculo lapsus faciunt fisiz dolores sedad limosis et arenosis et cal-culosis. Praesura stomachi vel subdutionis, sed et cibis non continentibius et acta stomacho ruptitantibus, sed et morbium region curat, id est: Piper aliquid recipit partim VIII, ginguier partim VIII, petrisilio partim II, api semen partim II, caregio partim VI, livistice semen partim VI, finiculi semen partim II, amomii semen partim II, cimino partim VIII, anas partim VI, micconum id est papaver partim VI, haec omnia tunsu et cribrata et mixto mel optimo dispumam pondo III miscis, reonis in doioliolo vel plumbou. Dabis coeleario I in aqua calida, et dissintericiis in vino admiixa aqua calida.\textsuperscript{114}

Versions (1) - (3) are more or less the same, except the passage on ‘pain relief’, which reads \textit{fistulis dolores sedat}, ‘it soothes pains due to \textit{fistulae}’ in (3), instead of \textit{fisis dolorem} \textit{(fisix dolores)}, ‘the [postpartum] pain is stopped (stabilized)’ (1) - (2).\textsuperscript{115} The word \textit{lapsus}, ‘a falling, slipping, sliding; failing, fault, error’, occurs in all three versions, and seems to be used in the sense ‘expulsion of the \textit{partus}’, ‘birthing process’ or ‘delivery’.\textsuperscript{116}

Version (1) - \textit{et per aborsum sine periculum lapsus [=lapsam] facit} - can be translated as: ‘and [if given] for a miscarriage it induces expulsion without danger [to the woman]’.\textsuperscript{117}

The fourth version of the \textit{antidotum hiera} (called \textit{ygra}) contains the same components (cf. Table 2). The passage on ‘pain relief’ is missing, and the passages on ‘blocked menses’, ‘miscarriage’ and ‘safe delivery’ are different,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{111} \textit{Bamberger Antidotarium} nr. 15 (cf. pp. 11-12) also cases postpartum pain: \textit{et dolore matricis siue post partum conpescit}, and recipe 4.67 in the \textit{Lorscher Arzneibuch} relieves women who are weak or ill after a miscarriage (cf. pp. 17-18).
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Sigerist 1923, p. 32 (\textit{petus = pecus}, ‘fetus’).
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Sigerist 1923, p. 107.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} Schmitz 1896, pp. 48-49.
  \item \textsuperscript{115} \textit{Fistula}, ‘a sort of ulcer, fistula’, could also refer to tears or other wounds caused during the birthing process. However, because none of the other variants mention \textit{fistulae}, nor is the word mentioned in any of the other recipes dealt with in this paper, it seems likely that \textit{fistulis} is a scribal or a transcription error for \textit{fisix} or \textit{fixis}.
  \item \textsuperscript{116} I have, however, not been able to find any other instances of, or references to \textit{lapsus} with this meaning.
  \item \textsuperscript{117} The word \textit{mates} in the passages (2) and (3) can be translated as: (2) \textit{purgacionem faciant femina si pecus mortuam excludet per aborsum sine periculo lapsus faciunt fisix dolores}, ‘they [the herbs, ingredients] cause purgation in a woman, if the fetus is dead, it expels [if given] for a miscarriage without danger [to the woman], after expulsion has been caused (induced), the pains are stopped (stabilized)’; (3) \textit{purgationem feminae pecus excludit per aborsum sine periculo lapsus faciunt fistulis dolores sedat}, ‘[for] a woman’s purgation, it expels a [living?] fetus [if given] for a miscarriage (abortion?) without danger [to the woman], after expulsion has been caused (induced), it soothes the [postpartum] pains of the \textit{fistulae} (wounds, tears).'
\end{itemize}
but their meaning is the same: *datur etiam mulieri qui non purgat, mouet etiam pecus in utero ferentibus. Per aborsum data expellit sine ullo labore*, ‘it is also given to a woman who does not purge, it also removes a (living?) fetus in the womb of pregnant women (ferentibus), [if] given for a miscarriage (or abortion?), it expels without any effort (easily)’.

(4) *Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes* (MS 9th century)

Vgra. Quid facit ad multas passiones. Ante omnia stomachi dolor emundat, duritia que fieri solet datur autem coeleario ex aqua calida, statim dolorem mitigat, asidue datum duricia soluet, uer(t)iginis etiam capitis emundat(at) grauitudinem, releuat fa(ucium) et utre tumore, mitigat suspirium, conquiet exitus, refert ad loquendum, tuus sanat, dur(tia) locineris purges, splenis tumorem siccat, punctos et tumorem intestinorum et tortiones datum statim sedat dolor, sed renun et laterum, dolentibus pleuresis, strangurrie prodest. Desintercisc solis in uno datur, cotidianaris, tercia naris si accipiatur emundat, datur etiam mulieri qui non purgat, mouet etiam pecus in utero ferentibus. Per aborsum data expellit sine ullo labore; corporis limosis, arosinus, caucasus frequentor data omnia resolut, sine ullo dolore presuras resolut shaltomi et animi subductiones quod frequentor tam uiris, quam etiam mulierihibus fieri solet statim ostendit spem salutis, cunctos tuos corporis sanat. Cibus non continentibus acidā et fumus exhibet, digestionem et morboregio sanat. Receptit hec: Piper albo = I, petrosilino scripula G III, fenocoli semen scripula VIII, caseo scripula XXI, ameos scripula VIII, liliistrico scripula XXI GG = I, api semen d III, aneso d III, omnia pulaera facta cum mel dispumato comisce.118

Versions (3) and (4) omit the word *mortuam in pecus mortuam*, so that *pecus* can also refer to a ‘live’ fetus; *aborsus* can then also refer to abortion. Version (4) has *sine ullo labore*, ‘without any effort’, where the other variants read: *sine periculo*, ‘without danger’. The correspondences between the variant versions in Table 2 show us that all four versions are related, but that (1), (2) and (3) are more closely related to each other, and probably nearer to the recipe’s archetype than (4). The variation in these recipes also indicates that there must have been many intermediate versions that are now lost. Versions (1) - (4) of the *antidotarium hiera* are not easy to translate; however, versions (5) - (7) seem to pose even more interpretation problems.

(5) *Berliner Antidotarium* (MS 9th-10th century)

2. Antidotum egyas, quod interpretatur salus hominis facit primum ad sthomaci dolorem ex aqua calida coel. I. Statim dolorem mitigat, suspirium conquiet, tumorem ubi fuerit descat, uosco abcessiones reformat, loquela reddi, strictorem pectoris linet, tussec sanat, duritia icoros asporrgit, splenis tumorem siccat, punctas et turciones stentinarum tollit, renium dolorem sanat, lateris dolorem id est spleneticus curat, uissicse dolorem incidi, stranguriam mitigat, desintercisc cum uno utro est prodest admixta aqua calida, febrimentibus cotidianaris, tertianaris, quarantannis in uno utere datur, menstrua mouet, mortuum pecus expellit, aborsum uel purgatum siccat supra dat concepto confirmat, dolorem matricis sedat, caucasus frequentor data subuent, constrictionem stomaci relevat, subtorquion animae subuient, punctam et tortionis tusos corporis reformat, cibonon continies prodest, acidas et fumosas ruptiones emendat, morbo regium sanat. Recipit haec: Piper album – VIII, gingiber – VIII, petrosilino – II, aneso – II, ameos scripula VIIII, fenocoli semen scripula VIIII, caseo scripula IIII, omnia pulsera facta cum mel dispumato comisce.118

(6) *Reichenaer Antidotarium* (MS 9th-10th century)

[37]. Antidotum ygia quod interpretatur salus omnis. Facit primum ad stomachi dolorem ex aqua calida coelariam I, statim dolorem mitigat et assidui suspirium conquiet. Tumorem uue desiccat, uocis adsentionem reformat, ad loquellam reddut. Utreginimen emundat, stridior pectoris linet, tussec sanat, duritia icoros solut, splenis tumorem siccat, punctas sanat, laterum dolorem, id est pleureticos, curat, uessicse dolorem mitigat et strangurium, febrimentibus cotti-


119 Sigerist 1923, pp. 67-68.
dianis, tertianis, quartanis in uno ueteri datur, menstrua mouit, mortuum pecus expellit, aborsum partum si quis supradat conceptum ne sublatur confirmat, dolorem matricis sedat, cauclusio frequenter data subuenit, constrictionem stomachi tollit, cibum non continentibus prodest, acidas et fumosas ructationes emendat. Recipt haec: piper albu < VIII, zinziber < VIII, petroselino < II, careu < VI, libisticum < VI, feneculi semen < VIII, apii semen < II, ameos < II, ciminiu < VIII, anissu < III, miconu < VI. Haec omnia tundis et tricosenas, addis mel bonum quod sufficiet.120

(7) Bamberger Antidotarium (MS 9th-10th century)

25. Antidotum ygia, qui facit ad stomachi dolore, ad eiusdem ruritia, ad uertigine capitis, ad fauces, ad graudinem, ad uuam, ad suspirium, ad raucus, ad pectoris dolore, ad tussem, ad durtiam epatis, ad splene, ad tortura stinentorum, ad renes dolore, ad uissice dolore, ad stranguria et disiria, ad disinterico cum uino mixta et aqua calida datur ad febri cotidianas et tertiana siue quarta in uino vetere datur ad menstrua nouenda ad mortuum pecus et qui non purgant uel ad partum uel aborsum leduntur ad conceptum servandum, ad alentum, ad dolore matricis, ad cauclusio, ad stomaci pressura ad subductiones animi, ad punctos et tortiones totius corporis, ad cibum non continentes, ad acidas uel fumosa ructatione, ad morbum regium species infra scripturas tunas et cribellata in ueno redigis et admiscis mellis attici libra tres et teris in mortario marmoreu diebus quinqueto et ponis in dioloiolo stageuo uiteo et indo uteris cocleare una in apludi potione et aqua calida. Si mel atticum non inueneris timinum mittis libra quinque. Confectio eius hec est: piper album - I, petrosilino scripulum noue, feneculi semen scripulu noue, careu scripulu XXI, ameu scripulu noue, libisticum scripulu uiginti et unu, zinziber - I, appii semen draagma tres, anesu draagma tres.121

The passages on purgation and a dead fetus in versions (5) - (7) of the antidotum hiera use different words than versions (1) - (4). An important difference between these three versions and the four versions discussed above is the fact that in (5), (6) and (7) the phrase sine periculo was replaced by a passage on the conceptus (‘that which was conceived, the fetus’) that seems to contain a contradiction in terms: aborsum uel purgatum sicut supra dat concepto [=conceptum] confirmat, ’[for] a miscarriage or purgation, [if] one gives [it] as above, it confirms a conceptus’ (5).122 Variant (6) has si quis supradat instead of sicut supra dat, and adds the short subclause: ne sublaturus that is not easy to interpret: aborsum partum si quis supradat conceptum ne sublatur confirmat, ’[for] a miscarriage [or] a partus [a miscarrying partus?], if someone gives [it] [as] above, it confirms [it]’ (6).123 Version (7) of this passage is equally puzzling, and has servandum instead of confirmat: et qui non purgant uel ad partum uel aborsum leduntur ad conceptum servandum, ad alentum, ‘and [for] those who do not purge whether they are hurt (suffering) due to birth or miscarriage (abortion?)’, to protect the conceptus, to sustain [it = the partus]’. On the version in the Reichenauer Antidotarium Sigerist remarked: “Ein Antidot dient zur Festigung der Konzeption bei Neigung zu Abort”.124 If Sigerist is right, this purgative can help bring on the menses, expel a dead fetus, and at the same time ‘confirm’ conception: effects that seem to contradict each other. Perhaps this passage means that the woman can be sure she is pregnant, if this purgative is administered, and it does not cause menstruation or the expulsion of the fetus. Another explanation for the contradicito in terminis could be that this remedy was part of a purgative or cleansing treatment for women who wish to conceive, as in version (8) below. The indications and the order in which they are listed are more or less the same in all seven variants of the antidotum hiera. If we compare these variant versions of the antidotum hiera to the three versions of the antidotarium maurentius, we see that all ten recipes discuss purgation or menstruation, the expulsion of a dead fetus, miscarriage, a safe delivery and pain relief in the same order. Some of the recipes seem to be related, but others only seem to be distantly related to each other; however, the number of variant versions shows us that these

120 Sigerist 1923, p. 48.
121 Sigerist 1923, p. 28.
123 Sublatur is a problem; this verb form is non existant, but may perhaps be a new formation based on sublatus with the ending -atur. It is also possible to read: ne sublatur for ne sublatur, that is, ‘it is not destroyed’. Cf. however, usage of the word sublatus in article 5.1 of the early ninth-century Lex Frisionum: infans ab utero sublatus, ‘a child removed (born) from the womb’, cf. Elsakkers, Reading Between the Lines, chapter 1.
recipes were popular, and that there must have been intermediate versions that did not survive the ravages of time.

Version (8) of the *antidotum hiera* reflects ancient gynecological theory; it says that regular menstruation is a prerequisite for conception, and that taking a purgative can help prevent future miscarriages.

(8) *Glasgower Antidotarium* (MS 9th-10th century)


The purgative recipe in the *Glasgower Antidotarium* is apparently recommended as part of a therapeutic procedure for women who keep having miscarriages: *mulieris qui non portatur optime curat,* ‘it cures a woman who cannot carry a child to term’ and it should ultimately help restore menstruation, thus increasing a woman’s chances of becoming pregnant and having a normal pregnancy. 126

The relatively short version of the *antidotum hiera* in the *Berliner Antidotarium* quoted below summarizes the uses of this multi-functional purgative for women in three words: *ad mulierem utia,* ‘for women’s diseases’.

This short phrase tells us that this purgative can be used to cure almost any of the complaints and diseases associated with women and menstrual retention.

(9) *Berliner Antidotarium* (MS 9th-10th century)


The nine variant versions quoted above suggest that the *antidotum hiera* was a very popular, multi-purpose recipe; the textual variation points to usage.

Together the purgative and emmenagogic recipes quoted above show us that they can be used for any kind of menstrual retention, and that ‘menstrual retention’ can refer to menstruation, difficult birth, miscarriage or the expulsion of a dead fetus, the afterbirth, and the lochia. The word *aborsus* denotes a ‘miscarriage’, but it can occasionally also be interpreted as ‘abortion’. The following section deals with recipes for contraception and abortion.

**CONTRACEPTION- ABORTION**

Early medieval recipes are not concerned with theoretical issues such as the moment of conception, or a woman’s ‘safe’ or ‘fertile’ periods. In these recipes menstruation is the fertility indicator. Regular menstruation not only means that a woman can become pregnant, but it also indicates that she is *not* pregnant. Women who want to become pregnant and those who do not want to become pregnant must therefore both have regular periods.

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125 Sigerist 1923, p. 114.
126 See also: recipe 95 in the *Reichenauer Antidotarium*, a recipe for a pill that will prevent an ongoing miscarriage and relieve serious pain: *Facit ad aborsum et graues dolores. Si quis hunc troiscicum acceperit, tenet pecus et numquam aborsum facit* (Sigerist 1923, p. 56).
127 Sigerist 1923, pp. 70-71.
They must not suffer from blocked or ceased menses, or from other menstrual disorders. According to ancient and medieval medicine emmenagogues and purgatives help promote regular menstruation, and, as we saw above, the early medieval recipe books contain a great deal of purgatives for women. This means that we should expect at least some of the early medieval recipes to mention fertility management. However, the actual number of recipes is disappointing - compared to the huge amount of recipes for menstrual retention. Fertility promotion is only mentioned explicitly in a few recipes, and at the same time there are also very few recipes that explicitly claim to be abortifacients or contraceptives.\textsuperscript{128} Besides, as we saw above in the sections on ‘dead blood’ and ‘difficult birth and miscarriage’, recipes that use the ambiguous words \textit{aborsus} or \textit{abortivum} are concerned with miscarriage - even though the word \textit{aborsus} can sometimes be interpreted to include ‘abortion’. The main meaning of \textit{aborsus} in the early medieval recipes is ‘miscarriage’.

The following quote from Soranus’s \textit{Gynaecia} shows us how closely abortion and contraception were considered to be related. Soranus gives a recipe for a purgative (Cyrenaic balm), and says that it works as a contraceptive, because it ensures regular menstruation.

\textit{Soranus, Γυναῖκα…νων - Gynaecia} 
1.19.63. (…) Once during the month to drink Cyrenaic balm to the amount of a chick-pea in two cyaths of water for the purpose of inducing menstruation. (…) However, these things not only prevent conception, but also destroy any already existing.\textsuperscript{129}

At the end of the recipe, however, he warns us that the remedy also acts as an early stage abortifacient. The message is clear: cessation of menstruation indicates pregnancy.

Five recipes for contraceptives were found in the sample of early medieval recipes discussed here. They all have the heading \textit{ut mulier non concipiat}, ‘so that a woman does not conceive’. The third and fourth recipes are variant versions.

\textit{Glasgower Antidotarium} (MS 9th-10th century) 
[299]. \textit{Mulier ut non concipiat uulba leporis assa ieiuna lauerit in uino et manducet.}\textsuperscript{130}

\textit{Glasgower Antidotarium} (MS 9th-10th century) 
[300]. \textit{Item aliam. Sarcus [read: stercus] de mule accipiat et grana qui ibidem sunt X et exinde accipiat et munditer lauet munditer cum uino manducet.}\textsuperscript{131}

\textit{Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes} (MS 9th century) 
[11.] \textit{Ut mulier non concipiat. Musteli masculi testiculis tollis et ipsum uiuam dimittis. Inuoluis eos in pelle asenis et ligabis mulieri et non concipit.}\textsuperscript{132}

\textit{Liber de muliebria} (MS 9th-10th century) 
28. \textit{Ut mulier non concipiat, mustile masculi coliolus tollis et ipsum uiuam demittis, inuoluis eos in pellem asenis et legauiis mulieri et non concipit.}\textsuperscript{133}

Although we might expect these four recipes to be emmenagogues or purgatives like Soranus’s prescription, they in no way resemble the recipes discussed in the sections above. In the first place they contain strange and perhaps also repulsive animal ingredients instead of vegetable ingredients: sexual organs and excrements (\textit{uulba leporis}, ‘a hare’s vulva’, \textit{musteli masculi testiculis}, ‘a male weasel’s testicles’, and \textit{stercus de mule}, ‘a mule’s

\textsuperscript{128} Strangely enough, only a few recipes explicitly claim to promote fertility, cf., for instance, \textit{St. Galler Receptarium I} A57 (Jörnmann 1925, p. 17), \textit{Antidotarium Bruxellense I} 5 (Rose 1894, pp. 365-366), \textit{Antidotarium Bruxellense secundum} 185 (Rose 1894, p. 394), \textit{Reichenauer Antidotarium} 110, 142, 143 (Sigerist 1923, pp. 59, 65, 65) and \textit{Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes} 1-4 and \textit{Liber de muliebria} 4, 4a, 5, 7 (Köpp 1980, pp. 29; Egert 1936, p. 34). Some of the fertility tests are ‘gender tests’: \textit{ut concipiat et masculum pareat} (Vademecum 4; \textit{Liber de muliebria} 7).


\textsuperscript{130} Sigerist 1923, p. 140.

\textsuperscript{131} Sigerist 1923, p. 140.


\textsuperscript{133} Egert 1936, p. 37. (Egert III)
excrements'), and secondly, we cannot be certain that these ingredients work as a purgative. The first two remedies must be eaten, but the last two recipes seem to be amulets rather than medical recipes. In fact, they are examples of exactly the kind of remedies Soranus deplores.134

The fifth contraceptive recipe also seems to be magical. As many grains of barley must be put into the afterbirth as the number of years the woman does not want to conceive (quod annis uoluerit ... tot grana ordei mittat); a great deal of handfuls must be added, if the woman never wishes to give birth again (si numquam uult parire).

Liber de muliebria (MS 9th-10th century)
96. Item ut non concipiat, quod annis uoluerit, in secundas suas tot grana ordei mittat, quod annis uacare uoluerit; si numquam uult parire, plinas manus mittat ....135

None of the above mentioned early medieval contraceptives seem to be very helpful or effective - at least not according to our standards.

There are only three early medieval recipes that explicitly claim to be abortifacients, and this is very little compared to the huge amount of recipes for blocked or ceased menses. The first recipe is in the ninth-century St. Galler Receptarium I. It is called potio denoncupata, ‘unnamed, unmentionable or taboo potion’, and was considered to be a magical recipe for abortion by Jerry Stannard, an American authority on medieval plants and recipes.136 The text is so corrupt that it is hard to understand why Stannard considered it a recipe for abortion, and it is even harder to determine its meaning.

St. Galler Receptarium I (MS 9th century)
A141. Potio denoncupata. Herba maleficia proice et ter guga siossa non habuerint et medulla hominina quamlibet diuturnas expellit.137
‘Unmentionable or taboo potion. Throw the magical (or: poisonous) herb(s?) [in a kettle], and take three gulps [or: gurgle three times] if [the fetus] does not have bones yet, and it will expel human marrow no matter how many days old it is.138

The translation given above is tentative.139 The words medulla, ‘marrow’, and ossa, ‘bones’, refer to different stages of fetal development. According to the embryology in Vindicianus’s Gynaecia (late fourth century AD, North Africa) a fetus’s marrow becomes firm in the seventh month, and its bones develop in the eighth.140 The potio denoncupata uses the words medulla and ossa to distinguish between early term and late term abortion, but we do not know exactly what stage of development or month ‘without bones’ refers to in this text. Perhaps ‘bones’ denotes the stage when ‘movement’ is felt, and the mother is beginning to feel the fetus’s ‘form’ or contours, because its bones are starting to harden, so that an earlier stage than Vindicianus’s seventh month was meant.141 All we know is that the recipe says it cannot terminate a late pregnancy, only an early pregnancy (si

134 Soranus, Gynaecia. ‘1.19.63. (…) Others, however, have even made use of amulets which on grounds of antipathy they believe to have great effect; such are uteri of mules and the dirt in their ears and more things of this kind which according to the outcome reveal themselves as falsehoods’ (Temkin 1956 [1991], p. 66).
135 Egert 1936, p. 44. (Egert III) The dots represent a gap in the text.
136 Stannard 1985, p. 193: ‘(…) an unidentified plant. (…). The plant in question, the only one I have yet found, occurs in a ninth-century recipe collection from St. Gall. It appears, in a badly garbled passage, that this plant was regarded as an abortifacient. From a theological point of view, it was a product of magic, hence demonic or maleficent.’
137 Jörimann 1925, p. 30.
138 Movement is first felt in or before the fifth month of pregnancy; the fetus’s bones begin to harden from the fourth month onwards, cf. Het grote wonder (=A Child is Born), p. 93, p. 103 or http://www.babycenter.com/pregnancy/fetaldevelopment (last accessed February 4, 2010): ‘His skeleton is starting to harden from rubbery cartilage to bone’ (four months).
ossa non habuerint). If this interpretation is correct, and the *potio denoncupata* really distinguishes between early term and late abortion, this is a unique recipe for abortion.\(^{142}\) The potion’s name, *potio denoncupata*, and its unspecified ingredient(s), the *herba maleficia*, ‘magical or poisonous herb(s)’, indicate secrecy. Perhaps only insiders - women? - knew the secret, perhaps recipes for abortion were not supposed to be written down and were usually passed on by word of mouth, and/or perhaps the subject was taboo.

The multi-purpose recipe called *pentadeos antidotus uel tyriaca* is an antidote for all kinds of poison (theriac) that also cures other illnesses.

**Reichenauer Antidotarium** (MS 9th-10th century)

[34]. Pentadeos antidotus uel tyriaca appellatus, qui facit ad omnia uenena serpentium uel ad morsum canis rabiosi, seu simie, ad salamandre et muris, ad araneee morsum, ad rane rubete et scorpios et araneorum uel egneumonis morsus uel qui uenenum biberit seu telo uenenate percussus fuerit, ad pleurecticos et ad tussem ueterem, ad peripleumonicos, ad suspisiosos, ad anhelitum, ad constrictionem thoracis, ad eos qui anhelantur, ad eos qui dum sedent surgere non possunt, ad eos quibus caput assidue dolet, ad ptysicos, ad notem, ad empiicos omnibus cum mulsa tepida, epaticis cum uino et melle, spleneticis cum aceto aut decoctione absinthii, suntinentibus cum aqua ubi fenum grecum decoxeris, sanguinem excreantibus cum pusca frigida, nefreticiis et cauculosis et stranguriosis cum aqua tepida, aurugionis et hydropicotis cum uino et mel. Si febrit cum mulsa tepida, colicis cum mulsa, dysintericis cum uino tepido, sciaticis et paralyticis cum mulsa tepida, qui strophum patiuntur idem ad inflamationem stomachi seu uentris aliqum cum decoctione fenugreci, que potio ad omnis superscriptas uenena cum uino tepido danda est. Recipit hec: aristolochie radices siccas unc. I, gentiane radices siccas unc. I, myrre troclitis unc. I, uacas lauri purgatas unc. I, semen rute siccum unc. I, mel quod sufficit. Facit ad pustulas mala, uel si conceptum excutere uolueris, post balneum potui dabis.\(^{143}\)

At the end of the recipe we find a supplement to the indication that says that the potion will cure pimples (acne?), and that it can also be used as an abortifacient, if it is taken after a bath: *si conceptum excutere uolueris post balneum potui dabis*, ‘if you want to expel a conceptus, you should give the potion after a bath’. This part of the indication was probably added at a later stage, because it was inserted after the list of ingredients, instead of at the beginning of the recipe, where the rest of the indication is. The ingredients were all known for their abortive qualities. The verb form *uolueris* (2nd person singular) of the verb *uelle*, ‘want, wish’, in the phrase *si conceptum excutere uolueris* is interesting, because it denotes volition on the part of the mother.

We also find the verb *uelle* in a fragment of a seventh-century recipe book in Ivrea manuscript 92 of which only the list of title headings survives:

**Ivrea fragment** (MS 7th-8th century)

*ad avorsus qui sibi facere voluerit. cxiii.*\(^{144}\)

This small fragment clearly indicates that the recipe is for voluntary or intentional abortion: *ad avorsus qui sibi facere voluerit*, ‘for an abortion that she wants to do to herself’, even though we have no idea what kind of recipe was in the lost recipe book. This is the only recipe that uses the word *aborsus* in the meaning ‘abortion’, but here, too, its basic meaning is ‘miscarriage’ - to be explained as ‘self-induced miscarriage’ in this context.

The three recipes for abortion are all remarkable in their own way: the indication on abortion in the *Reichenauer Antidotarium* is a later addition, showing us that the recipe did not initially include abortion, the *potio denoncupata* is a strange, secret recipe that distinguishes between early term and late term abortion - the only recipe of its kind that I have come across in early medieval medicine - and the fragment in the Ivrea manuscript contains only the title of the recipe, but is otherwise remarkably informative. It seems as if these recipes have all come down to us by some strange coincidence or stroke of luck. This and the lack of more recipes for abortion - which

\(^{142}\) The Old Germanic laws and the early medieval penitentials that distinguish between early term and late term abortion set the dividing line between the third and the fifth month. Cf. Elsakkers, *Reading Between the Lines*, passim.

\(^{143}\) Sigerist 1923, p. 47.

\(^{144}\) Giacosa 1886, p. 662. The fragment published by Giacosa is the index of a lost recipe book found on a parchment folio dated to the seventh or eight century.
is surprising, compared to Greco-Latin texts on the subject - suggests that abortion was either prohibited, disapproved of, and/or considered a dangerous procedure, as Soranus also acknowledges. In the first book of his Gy-
naecia Soranus explains how to prevent or terminate pregnancy, but at the same time he also warns women that abortifacients and contraceptives are often dangerous medicines:

Soranus, Ψυχήτευσις - Gynaecia
1.19.60. (…) And since it is safer to prevent conception from taking place than to destroy the fetus (…).
1.19.64. Yet if conception has taken place, one must first, for 30 days, do the opposite of what we said earlier. 145 But in order that the embryo be separated, the woman should have <more violent exercise>, (…). She should use diuretic decoctions which also have the power to bring on menstruation, and empty and purge the abdomen with relatively pungent clysters (…).
1.19.65. For a woman who intends to have an abortion (…) Another vaginal suppository which produces abortion with relatively little danger: Of wallflower, cardamom, brimstone, absinthium, myrrh, equal quantities, mould with water. (…) one must, however, beware of things that are too powerful (…). After the abortion one must treat as for inflamma-
tion. 146

Very few recipes for abortives and contraceptives have survived in the early medieval recipe books. However, the recipe in the Reichenauer Antidotarium and the Ivrea Fragment both clearly indicate that voluntary or in-
tentional abortion must have happened - as usage of the word uelle indicates. Even though the evidence is scarce, these recipes prove that there were women who contemplated abortion, and that recipes and techniques for abortion must have been known in the oral tradition, even if they were not written down. Perhaps, as Soranus suggests, women knew that they could ‘do the opposite’, that is, use emmenagogues and purgatives to provoke an abortion.

CONCLUSION
My intention in examining a sample of recipes from early medieval recipe books was to find out what female complaints emmenagogues and purgatives were used for, and why menstruation was so important. A second question I asked myself was whether the recipes for the emmenagogues and purgatives that were prescribed to cure menstrual retention could also have been used as abortifacients. Some of the answers to these questions may seem disappointing, because very little can be deduced from the evidence that has come down to us. But some observations can be made.

In the first place we have very little evidence. Only relatively few early medieval recipe books have survived the ravages of time. 147 Secondly, only a small percentage - between 6 and 10 per cent at the most - of these pre-Salernitan recipes are concerned with women’s diseases. 148 Furthermore, women’s diseases are often ‘hidden’ in multi-purpose recipes with long lists of ingredients and indications, so that we have to read through a long text in order to find out whether the recipe also contains anything concerning women. However, there are also a few small texts with recipes for women’s complaints, and one text where the gyneco logical recipes are in a separate section. 149

Another complication is the fact that, even though there were female scribes and nun’s scriptoria, chances are that most of the recipe books were translated, written down, compiled and copied by male scribes in secular or

145 Soranus is referring to book 1.14.46: “What care should be given to pregnant women?”
147 Moreover the manuscripts of many recipe books have not yet been edited.
148 The recipes in Sigerist 1923, Jörimann 1925 and Stoll 1992 were counted.
ecclesiastical scriptoria. Not everyone - including women - knew enough about women’s bodies and medical theory to understand what female complaints the recipes for women’s diseases were supposed to cure. This means that many different kinds of mistakes could have been made during the process of production and dissemination.

Our lack of knowledge about early medieval health care poses another problem. However, this problem is being remedied. For instance, work in progress on health care in early medieval Italy by Clare Pillsworth reveals that medicine was practised by lay men and women, and by members of the religious and secular clergy. Although we now know that many of these practitioners were probably educated at medical schools, and that a corpus of medical texts was available, we know next to nothing about the intended audience of the recipe books: the doctors, midwives, herbalists, pharmacists and apothecaries, or how medicine was practised. Some of the medical practitioners must have been literate or semi-literate, but there was probably also a large group of illiterate practitioners - some perhaps knowledgeable about written medicine, and some not.

The recipes themselves constitute a further complication. Not only were they written in Latin, but the vulgar Latin of the recipes that have come down to us is often corrupt and hardly intelligible. The ingredients, too, might pose a problem. Besides this, the recipes do not always seem to be easy to prepare. Perhaps prescriptions were filled by dispensing physicians, apothecaries, pharmacists, druggists and herbalists, and perhaps some of the remedies were available as ‘over the counter’ medicine, sold in shops, at markets or by itinerant physicians, herb sellers, pedlars, merchants etc. Perhaps monasteries also functioned as pharmacies and drugstores. The unintelligibility of some of the recipes warrants the question whether these recipes were actually used or not - even the question whether they could have been used. The textual instability of the recipes complicates the answer to this question, and in itself poses an interesting problem. For instance, many different versions of the antidotum hiera and the antidotum theodoritum were quoted in this paper. Both recipes have a core text and a core list of ingredients that is more or less the same in each version, even though there are considerable textual differences between the variant versions, and some versions are (or have become) almost completely unintelligible. The textual instability, but also the flexibility, of early medieval recipes, as illustrated by the many variant versions of the antidotum theodoritum and the antidotum hiera, seems to point to usage, even though usage seems to be inconsistent with the unintelligibility of some of the recipes.

The recipes discussed above are clearly of Greco-Roman origin: their titles, the authorities named, and even some of the ingredients used confirm this. The recipes do not seem to be concerned with ancient medical theory. However, the references to suffocation and wandering womb are reminiscent of Greco-Roman medical theory, and occasionally a word or phrase reminds us of the humoral theory, when, for instance, women are considered to be ‘moist’. This shows us that the early medieval recipes were ultimately based on classical gynecological theory. Ancient gynecology links menstruation, fertility and women’s health. Menstruation not only relieves women of excess fluids - thus restoring their humoral balance - but a regularly menstruating woman will be able

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150 On nun’s scriptoria in early medieval Gaul, cf. McKitterick 1991 [1994] and McKitterick 1989 [1994]; the same kind of scriptoria must also have existed in Italy. There were also secular scriptoria and chanceries where scribes and notaries wrote and copied books, letters, charters, wills, legal documents, etc.; see also: note 14 above and Pilsworth, forthcoming.

151 See, for instance, the recipes in Table 2.

152 Many recipes require a great deal of ingredients, some of which must have been expensive, exotic or hard to obtain. However John Scarborough explained to me that many ingredients that we consider to be exotic, were often readily available in the Mediterranean area in early medieval Europe, so that we must beware of regarding all ‘strange’ ingredients as ‘exotic’ or ‘unobtainable’. Herbs and other ingredients were sold by itinerant pedlars, herb sellers and merchants at markets and elsewhere (personal communication, July 2007). Cf. Schmidt 1924, Lopez & Raymond 1955, Miller 1969 and Scarborough 1969.
to conceive. Retained or blocked menses cause a woman’s menstrual blood to accumulate and congest in her womb; this can result in complaints and diseases ranging from headaches and stomach-aches to uterine suffocation, hysteria or a wandering womb. Although hardly articulated explicitly, menstrual retention and humoral disbalance are in some form or another present in the early medieval recipes, thus indicating that these recipes are just as menstruation- and fertility-centered as classical gynecological theory.

As explained above, ‘menstrual retention’ refers to any kind of uterine bleeding, whether obstructed or ceased menses, or problems concerned with birth, miscarriage or abortion. The remedies prescribed to ‘provoke the menses’ are almost always some sort of emmenagogic purgative. Often recipes that restore the menses only mention the cure; the recipe simply states that it ‘purges women’ (mulieribus menstruis ducit) or ‘provokes the menses’ (ad menstrua prouocanda). Apparently, the reason for using an emmenagogue was obvious, and did not need to be mentioned. Other recipes tell us why emmenagogues or purgatives should be prescribed. Some cure ceased menses (purgans mulieribus, quibus purgatio non uenit) and scant menses (quibus purgatio stillatim fit), and others can be used for any kind of female disorder: [ad] mulierum causas; in passionibus mulieribus; ad mulierem uitta. Purgatives can relieve pain in the womb or duritia, ‘hardness’ (ad matricem doloris; ad duritiam matrix), and they also cure complaints associated with premenstrual syndrome and blocked menses, such as fatigue and depression. The antidotum dianachardium describes depression as inbecillitatem totius corporis (…) ita ut de se disperent, ‘weakness that affects the whole body (…) in such a way that they themselves despair’. A version of the antidotum hiera puts it as follows: animi subductionem, quod frequenter mulieribus accidere solet, ‘a withdrawalness of the mind, that, as we know, often happens to women’. The antidotum dianachardium explicitly attributes fatigue, weakness and depression to nimietas, ‘superfluity’, and constrictio, ‘constriction’ or ‘congestion’. Here we have one of the clear references to ancient gynecological theory on the congestion (constrictio) of surplus blood (nimietas) in a woman’s body.

Besides curing physical problems, purgatives were also considered beneficial for mental disorders, such as suffocation (qui a matrice suffocantur), hysteria (que vocantur esterice), and wandering womb (ad matrice qui loco suo non habet) - all familiar concepts from ancient gynecology, and all due to menstrual retention and the accumulation of congested blood in the matrix. Two versions of the antidotum theodoritum quoted above explicitly explain the causal relationship between blocked menses and suffocatio: in passionibus mulieribus, quibus difficulas purificationis obsistit, ex quibus autem matrix suffocationes uocatae, ‘for diseases of women for whom difficulties in purgation cause obstruction from which then suffocations of the womb are induced’. The early medieval recipes apparently wholeheartedly subscribe to the classical idea that the womb can wander about a woman’s body, causing all kinds of discomforts and diseases, including suffocation, madness and insanity. Clogged-up blood in the body of a woman with ‘retained menses’ - whether ‘menstrual’ blood, a dead fetus, or waste matter from a miscarriage - is called ‘dead blood’ in the antidotum maurentius. These purgative recipes for dead blood purge and cleanse the body, expelling excess fluids and other congested matter - and show us that ‘menstrual retention’ also includes uterine bleeding that is related to birth and miscarriage.

Emmenagogues and purgatives can also be given when there are complications in childbirth, or when a woman is having a miscarriage. They can help bring on labor and contractions (ut mulier se a partu mundetur), expel a dead fetus (ut partum mortuum excuciatur) or the afterbirth (secundas mulierum educit), induce the lochial discharge (et ad mulieris qui post partum non purgant), and relieve pain after giving birth (et dolore matricis siue post partum conpescit et omnem dolore matricis). Many of the recipes associated with the birthing process
are multi-functional. They often cure the whole range of female disorders associated with ‘menstrual retention’. There seems to be no difference between emmenagogic purgatives for menstrual retention, matrix pain, physical and mental problems associated with menstrual retention, and those prescribed for complaints that have to do with birth and miscarriage, because they all involve the same kinds of ingredients. The link with fertility is implicit, but it is there.

Because abortifacients are usually also purgatives, the question arises whether these remedies were also used as abortifacients. This question is difficult to answer. In the first place, the main meaning of the word aborsus in the early medieval recipes is ‘miscarriage’. In a number of recipes it is possible to interpret this ambiguous word as ‘miscarriage’ and/or ‘abortion’, but in almost every case the interpretation ‘abortion’ or ‘self-induced miscarriage’ can be disputed. In the second place, there are very few early medieval recipes for abortifacients and contraceptives: five contraceptives were found and three abortifacients. In most cases we cannot be certain whether these recipes are emmenagogic purgatives or not, because the recipes are made up of strange or secret ingredients. Four of the contraceptives contain animal ingredients, such as hare’s vulva, and the fifth is magical. The ingredients of the abortifacient called potio denoncupata are not named, because they are a secret (herba maleficia, ‘magical/poisonous herb[s]’). There is only one real recipe for abortion that can actually be prepared, and even this recipe, the pentadeos antidotus uel tyriaca, was not originally devised as an abortifacient, because the indication for abortion is a later addition. But, as to be expected, the recipe is a purgative with ingredients known for their abortive qualities. This recipe and the recipe fragment in the Ivrea manuscript both employ the verb uelle, and thus prove that we are dealing with intentional abortion by the mother.

An explanation for the lack of abortifacient recipes could be that there was no need or interest in abortive drugs. This does not seem to be very likely in view of the secular and church laws that prohibit abortion. The question remains whether purgatives for ‘menstrual retention’ in the widest sense of the word could have been used as abortives, that is, whether ‘to provoke the menses’ could be a euphemism for ‘to bring on an abortion’, and whether ‘to expel a dead fetus’ could also be read as ‘to expel a living fetus’. The question is: were these emmenagogues and purgatives also ‘verschleierte Abortivmittel’?153

The answer could be ‘yes’, but the fact remains that there is only one recipe for intentional abortion that actually says that it can be used for abortion: si conceptum excutere volueris, ‘if you want to expel the conceptus’, plus a fragmentary recipe title: ad avorsus qui sibi facere voluerit, ‘for an abortion that she wants to do to herself’.

None of the other recipes so much as hint that they could also be used as abortives. A reason for the lack of straightforward recipes for abortion could also be that certain recipes or parts of recipes were consciously edited out by the lay, clerical or monastic scribes and scholars who translated and copied the recipes. This is a realistic possibility, because, when comparing early medieval gynecological recipes to their probable classical sources, we know for sure that certain recipes were ‘tampered with’, because some Arzneiformen are hardly ever used.154

This means that recipes considered unacceptable, or legally or morally reprehensible, such as antifertility drugs, could also have been changed or left out of the early medieval recipe books.

This brings us back to the ‘verschleierte Abortivmittel’ as an important option for women who were desperate enough to seek an abortion. And by ‘desperate’ I do not only mean that they were desperate in the sense that

153 Sigerist says they were: “Natürlich sind ein großer Teil der Emenagoga nichts anderes als verschleierte Abortivmittel. Man verwendet dazu Weinraute, Wacholder u.a.” (Sigerist 1923, p. 180).

154 For instance, there are hardly any early medieval recipes for fumigations and relatively few recipes for pessaries, Arzneiformen that were very popular in Hippocratic gynecology - the ultimate source of many of the recipes discussed here.
they were coping with an unwanted pregnancy, I also mean desperate in the sense that women who took abortives were risking their lives.\textsuperscript{155} Using an emmenagogue or purgative as an abortifacient was dangerous, because many of the ingredients involved were known to be toxic and potentially lethal, and because the dosage might have to be increased in order to bring about an abortion. In short, these recipes could be dangerous, even lethal. Classical medical texts and herbals warn against the abortive effects of certain plants during pregnancy, but the recipe books issue no such warnings. This lack of cautionary advice again seems to point to conscious editing. On the other hand, it seems rather cruel not to warn women that the emmenagogues and purgatives they may naïvely be taking for their health might also cause them to unintentionally abort. There are, however, warnings in other early medieval medical texts, and both Roman and Germanic abortion laws were issued primarily to protect the life of the mother-to-be, that is, to warn against the potentially lethal poisons that were used as abortifacients. In conclusion, the evidence of the recipe books, although scarce, indicates that abortion happened, and it seems realistic to assume that some of the emmenagogues and purgatives found in these recipes were also read as and used as ‘\textit{verschleierte Abortivmittel’}.

The recipes for emmenagogues and purgatives give us a glimpse – albeit vague – of early medieval female pathology. They were prescribed for women in order to maintain or regain their health. Regular menstruation meant that a woman was healthy and fertile. Purgatives cure (menstrual) retention and cleanse a woman’s body, so that she will start menstruating again, and it will be easier for her to conceive. Perhaps the lack of explicit contraceptive and abortifacient recipes also underscores the importance of fertility. The gynecological recipes in the early medieval recipe books are menstruation-centered - perhaps we should even say womb-centered or fertility-centered. Emmenagogues and purgatives were considered beneficial to a woman’s health (\textit{mulieribus sanat, mulieribus salubris}), because a menstruating woman was considered to be a healthy woman. A whole range of disorders caused by menstrual retention can be remedied by taking an emmenagogue or purgative, including complications in childbirth and miscarriage, and it is likely that these medicines were also used as abortifacients. The slogan \textit{proicit, purgat et sanat}, ‘it expels, purges and cures’ neatly summarizes early medieval gynecology and what was left of ancient medical theory.\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{155} See, for instance, Elsakkers, \textit{Reading Between the Lines}, chapter 4 and passim.
### Table 1: Recipes for miscarriage and a dead fetus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liber de muliebria causa (Egert II)</th>
<th>Liber de muliebria (Egert III)</th>
<th>Vademecum eines frühmittelalterlichen Arztes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. 39. Item absencium, artemisia, piper simul trita ex aqua aut ex uino bibat.</td>
<td>72. Item fenugregum (artemisia) absencium, puleium, (ruta), ale(i) ebiscum, maluam agrestam pari(ter u)ehementissime doquo(quitur, ea)que aquam missa in cupo, que aut (pur)gare aut abortu liberare uoluerit, lauationem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 40. Item fenogreco, artemisia, absentio, puleio, ruta, olei euisci, malfa pariter uehementissime (?i) decoquitur, eaque aqua missa in cupa, quae aut purgare aut abortu liberare uoluerit, lauationem facis.</td>
<td>72. Item fenugregum (artemisia) absencium, puleium, (ruta), ale(i) ebiscum, maluam agrestam pari(ter u)ehementissime doquo(quitur, ea)que aquam missa in cupo, que aut (pur)gare aut abortu liberare uoluerit, lauationem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 41. Ut partum mortuum excuciatur; erba satureia in cibo sumta uel cum uino potata mortuum expellit; erba ueruino sucum cum aqua frigida dabis, statim liberatur.</td>
<td>72. Item fenugregum (artemisia) absencium, puleium, (ruta), ale(i) ebiscum, maluam agrestam pari(ter u)ehementissime doquo(quitur, ea)que aquam missa in cupo, que aut (pur)gare aut abortu liberare uoluerit, lauationem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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157 ‘Vademecum [18]. Wenn eine Frau eine Fehlgeburt hat und nicht rein wird. Mache ihr aus Birnenwein, Eisenkrautsaft, Rautensaft, Eberrautensaft und wenig Öl eine Pille und es wird geboren’ (Köpp 1980, pp. 107-108). On the word *pirarium* Köpp says that it ‘ist eine fehlerhafte Abschrift von *piratium*, -i = ‘Birnenwein’. However, the variant versions in Egert II and Egert III shed a different light on Köpp’s translation, and prove that *pirarium* should be read as *pessarium*.


160 ‘Vademecum [25]. Ebenso zerreibe Wermut, Beifuss und Pfeffer und ...... oder sie soll es in Wasser trinken’ (Köpp 1980, p. 108). The repetition of *cum* may be a hiatus in the manuscript.
Table 2: Recipes for dead blood and miscarriage

A. Four versions of the *antidotum hiera* on menstrual purgation, miscarriage and (postpartum) pain, cf. the section on ‘difficult birth and miscarriage’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURGATION</th>
<th>EXPELS A (DEAD) FETUS</th>
<th>MISCELLANEOUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) ad purgationes femine</td>
<td>petus mortuum excludis</td>
<td>per aborsum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) purgacionem facient femina</td>
<td>si pecus mortuum excludit</td>
<td>per aborsum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) purgationem feminae</td>
<td>Pecus excludit</td>
<td>per aborsum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) datur etiam mulieri qui non purgat</td>
<td>mouet etiam pecus in utero</td>
<td>ferentibus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURGATION</th>
<th>MISCELLANEOUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PURGATION EXPELS A (DEAD) FETUS</td>
<td>MISCELLANEOUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) ad purgationes femine</td>
<td>petus mortuum excludis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) purgacionem facient femina</td>
<td>si pecus mortuum excludit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) purgationem feminae</td>
<td>Pecus excludit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOOTHES PAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) sine periculum lapsus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) sine periculo lapso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) sine periculo lapsum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) sine ullo labore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Three more versions of the *antidotum hiera* on menstrual purgation, miscarriage, the prevention of miscarriage (?), and womb pain, cf. the section on ‘difficult birth and miscarriage’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURGATION</th>
<th>MISCELLANEOUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5) menstrua mouet</td>
<td>mortuum pecus expellit,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) menstrua mouit</td>
<td>mortuum pecus expellit,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) ad menstrua mouenda</td>
<td>ad mortuum pecus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFIRMS CONCEPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5) sicut supra dat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) si quis supradat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) ad conceptum servandum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Three versions of the *antidotarium maurentius* on menstrual purgation, ‘dead blood’, miscarriage and (postpartum) pain, cf. the section on ‘dead blood’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURGATION</th>
<th>MISCELLANEOUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sed et mulieribus, quae non purgantur</td>
<td>commouet emortuum sanguinem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sed et mulieribus qui non purgantur et mulieribus qui non pregnante</td>
<td>et commouit et mortuum sanguinem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOOTHES PAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sine aliquo periculo productit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sine aliquo periculo productit Sed et post auorsum datum purgat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sine aliquo periculo productit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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