In Chapter Three I have outlined the symptoms and diseases which the Sakikkû handbook ascribed to the ‘hand’ of Gula. Among these ailments are the skin affictions sāmānu, ašû, šītu, šarrišu and šadānu; severe digestive troubles such as šinnaḫ tīri, diarrhoea and pains in the belly; an unusual discharge of blood from nose, eyes and ears; and pains in the pelvis. Further afflictions taken from the chapter on infants’ diseases include buʾšānu, yellow discolouration of the skin (jaundice); digestive disorders (constipation and cramps); cramps in the belly accompanied by fever; and unusual behaviour of the baby. In Chapter Four I have discussed healing spells that refer to Gula. We could detect in the healing spells and their medical setting a correspondence between the healing goddess and disorders of the digestive tract, renal diseases, problems of the musculo-skeletal system, skin sores, and dog bites. Analysing some of the salient metaphors used to describe afflictions that are attributed to the healing goddess I have suggested that Gula was associated with the regulation of excess body liquid.

In this chapter we enter the ancient world of plants, which is as fascinating as it is difficult to grasp. More than one thousand medicinal plant terms are known from Mesopotamian texts. Similarly to other traditional societies and cultures, the terminology for plants was not standardized with the effect that a plant had more than one name: common alternative designations, names in foreign languages, or special names known only to practitioners. This seemingly infinite number of names constitutes one of the most salient problems to understand Ancient Babylonian medicine and was one of which Ancient Babylonian practitioners were well aware of too. In order to cope with the evergrowing corpus of plant names they collected all the names in a specialized compendium which was called after its incipit URU.AN.NA : maštalakal, ‘Plant whose place is in heaven (corresponds to the plant) maštalakal’. So far nearly fifty manuscripts of different editions of the plant lexicon are known. The handbook is organized in two columns, which are divided in paragraphs of different length, each
referring to one and the same medicinal plant under its various names.\textsuperscript{1} Further important information for the use of healing plants comes from medical recommendations and the \textit{Lists of Simple Drugs}. These \textit{Lists} were in all likelihood used as a guidebook how to employ medicinal plants. There is no ancient title preserved for this genre nor do we know the extent of the handbook. In outward appearance the tablets are organized in lists divided in up to three columns. The first column gives the Akkadian name of the medicinal plant used as simple drug and the second, the indication for which disease the plant is employed. The third column gives information about the preparation and administration of the plant remedy.

As will be observed from my discussion, the information provided by the \textit{uru.an.na} handbook, the \textit{Lists of Simple Drugs} and medical recommendations is much the same complementing each other; the only difference consists in a different formulation.\textsuperscript{2}

Ancient Mesopotamian culture has not produced mythological narratives that would associate plants with deities comparable to and so characteristic for Ancient Greece.\textsuperscript{3} Rather, the connection of plants with the divine realm was considered an esoteric knowledge.\textsuperscript{4} It might, thus, come as no surprise that the information about the attribution of medicinal plants to the healing goddess comes from the specialized literature Ancient Babylonian practitioners had at their disposal, namely the \textit{uru.an.na} handbook and the \textit{Lists of Simple Drugs}. Entries from both works are the key to relate three plant names with the healing goddess: \textit{buʾšānu}, \textit{lišān kalbi} and \textit{ṣaṣuntu}. The \textit{uru.an.na} handbook permits us to establish that the names \textit{buʾšānu} and \textit{lišān kalbi} refer to the same medicinal plant.

In this chapter I study the therapeutic indications of the two plants associated with Gula. My aim is to show that there is a correspondence between Gula’s avatar plants and the afflictions associated with her. The chapter is structured in two parts in which I discuss the uses of the two healing plants when used as single ingredient or simple drug. All texts and text

\textsuperscript{1} See for a description my contribution “Shaping Texts and Texts Genres: On the Drug Lore of Babylonian Practitioners of Medicine,” (in press).
\textsuperscript{2} See for a discussion that these text genres share the same pool of information \textit{ibidem}.
\textsuperscript{3} I refer e.g. to the myth about the nymph Daphne and her metamorphosis into a laurel tree in order to escape from Apollon or the story of Narkissos, the self-absorbed young man who converted into a narcissus flower.
\textsuperscript{4} I am referring to some explanatory texts which give correspondences between ritual plants and gods; see for this genre A. Livingstone, \textit{Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars}, Oxford 1986, pp. 175–187, especially p. 181.