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Frederick S. Paxton  
Connecticut College, fspax@conncoll.edu

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# Curing Bodies—Curing Souls: Hrabanus Maurus, Medical Education, and the Clergy in Ninth-Century Francia

## **Keywords**

religion, medicine, clergy, France, christianity, medical history

## **Comments**

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## Curing Bodies—Curing Souls: Hrabanus Maurus, Medical Education, and the Clergy in Ninth-Century Francia

FREDERICK S. PAXTON



RABANUS MAURUS was born in or near Mainz around the year 780 to a family of the Rhine-Frankish nobility. When he was about nine or ten years old, his parents presented him as an oblate to the monastery of Fulda. He may have been at Charlemagne's court in the last years of the century, but it is certain that his abbot sent him to Tours to study under Alcuin a year or two before the latter's death in 804. The closeness of the relationship that developed between teacher and student is apparent from the nickname "Maurus," which Alcuin gave the young man in memory of St. Benedict's favorite pupil, and which Hrabanus used throughout his long life. After returning to Fulda, Hrabanus taught in and later led the monastery school for almost two decades. After being elected abbot in 822, he continued to teach while handling the administrative affairs of the community, then at the peak of its early development. He ruled Fulda for twenty years until forced to step down on account of his support for the emperor Lothar against his brother Louis the German. Yet Louis recognized Hrabanus' abilities and, in 847, called him out of retirement to become archbishop of Mainz. As archbishop, Hrabanus held a series of councils promoting the ideals of the Carolingian reform in the East Frankish realm. He died at Mainz 4 February 856.<sup>1</sup>

1. For discussions of the life and work of Hrabanus, see *Rabani Mauri martyrologium*, ed. J. McCulloh, Corpus Christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis (Turnholt: Brepols, 1979), pp. xi-xxiv; R. Kottje, "Hrabanus Maurus," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Munich/Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1977-), V, 144-47;

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Hrabanus left an enormous body of literary work. After teaching for a number of years at Fulda, he wrote a sequence of poems and a disquisition on the cross, *De laudibus sanctae crucis* (ca. 810). Later, at the request of his students, he wrote a guide to the education of the clergy, *De institutione clericorum* (before 819). Starting with the abbacy of his friend Eigil (818–22) and throughout the rest of his life, he produced, one after another, commentaries on most of the books of the Old Testament, the Gospel of Matthew, and the Letters of St. Paul. Between 842 and 847, while in comfortable retirement on the Petersberg near Fulda, Hrabanus composed a monumental encyclopedia, *De rerum naturis*, known in printed editions as *De universo*. He left as well a number of occasional poems, epitaphs, letters, hymns, and sermons; two penitentials; and works on computation and on some of the highly debated issues of the day. On the basis of these writings and the quality of his students, who included Lupus of Ferrières, Walahfrid Strabo, Rudolf of Fulda, and Otfrid von Weissenburg, some writers since the nineteenth century have granted him the title *Praeceptor Germaniae*, the teacher of Germany. Others have dismissed him as a literary hack—a mere compiler or plagiarist.<sup>2</sup>

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idem, “Raban Maur,” *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire* (Paris: G. Beauchesne et ses fils, 1932–), XIII, 1–10; idem, *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1978–), IV, 166–96; J. Szövérfy, “Hrabanus Maurus,” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 13 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1982–89), VI, 306–08; M. Sandmann, “Hraban als Mönch, Abt und Erzbischof,” in *Hrabanus Maurus und seine Schule, Festschrift der Rabanus-Maurus-Schule Fulda*, ed. W. Böhne (Fulda: Die Schule, 1980), pp. 13–47; and F. Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich: Fink, 1975–), I, 325–40. A comprehensive guide to scholarship on Hrabanus is available in H. Spelsberg, *Hrabanus Maurus Bibliographie* (Fulda: Hessische Landesbibliothek, 1984).

2. On his reputation, see D. Türnau, *Hrabanus Maurus, der Praeceptor Germaniae* (Munich, 1900); R. Kottje, “Hrabanus Maurus, ‘Praeceptor Germaniae’?,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 1975, 31, 534–45; J. Fleckenstein, “Hrabanus Maurus, Diener seiner Zeit und Vermittler zwischen den Zeiten,” in *Hrabanus Maurus, Lehrer, Abt und Bischof*, eds., R. Kottje and H. Zimmermann, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Einzelveröffentlichung 4 (Mainz: Akademie Verlag; Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1982), pp. 192–208; and “Über Hrabanus Maurus,” in *Tradition als historische Kraft: interdisziplinäre Forschungen zur Geschichte des früheren Mittelalters*, eds. N. Kamp and J. Wollasch (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1982), pp. 203–13; see also P. Hägele, “Hrabanus Maurus als Lehrer und Seelsorger,” in *Hrabanus Maurus und seine Schule* (n. 1), pp. 77–93; F. Brunhölzl, “Zur geistigen Bedeutung des Hrabanus Maurus,” in *Hrabanus Maurus*, eds. Kottje and Zimmermann, (n. 2), pp. 1–17; and J. McCulloh, “Hrabanus Maurus’ Martyrology: the method of composition,” *Sacris Erudiri* 1978–79, 23, 417–61, p. 458. The seventeenth-century edition of Hrabanus’ *Opera* by A. de Henin and G. Colvener, 6 vols. (Cologne, 1626–27) is reprinted in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus complectus . . . series Latina* (hereafter cited as PL), 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–55), vols. 107–12. Modern critical editions of Hrabanus’ biblical commentaries and encyclopedia are still lacking, but see *Rabani Mauri martyrologium* (n. 1); *Rabani Mogontiacensis episcopi de computo*, ed. W. M. Stevens, *Corpus Christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis* 44 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1979); the editions of his letters and poems in *Monumenta Germaniae historica* (hereafter cited as MGH), *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, vol. 5, ed. E. Dümmler (Berlin, 1899), pp. 379–573; and MGH, *Poetae latini aevi Carolini*, vol. 2, ed. E. Dümmler (Berlin, 1884), pp. 154–258; and *De institutione clericorum libri tres*, ed. A. Knöpfler, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Kirchenhistorischen Seminar München 5 (Munich: Lentner, 1901).

Recent scholarship has begun to illuminate more clearly the contributions of Hrabanus to the history of education and culture in the ninth century, above all through careful analysis of his methods of literary composition.<sup>3</sup> For the most part, Hrabanus' writings are not original. They are compilations made from a fairly limited number of patristic and early medieval authors—Jerome, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Cassiodorus, Isidore, Bede, Alcuin, Pseudo-Melitus—with only occasional rewordings and additions by Hrabanus himself. Yet, he was neither a hack nor a mere compiler. Some of his writing is original, and he seldom simply copied and transmitted his sources, but carefully edited his material for coherence and comprehension, and to conform to his personal vision of Christian education and Christian wisdom, a vision that was defined by and helped to define Carolingian educational reform.<sup>4</sup> With few exceptions, he produced commentaries only on biblical books for which there were no recent or complete works. Thus, together with the *Moralia on Job* of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) and the commentaries of Bede and Alcuin, Hrabanus' exegetical labors provided ninth-century readers with a complete set of commentaries on the Bible, and in so doing made available large portions of patristic commentary in an accessible form to over six generations of monks, clerics, and cultivated laymen.<sup>5</sup> Those who have most praised or blamed him have not been attentive to exactly what and how Hrabanus wrote. In order to understand him correctly, we must keep one eye constantly on his sources and the other on his uses of them, for, however much he ceded to authoritative texts, few escaped the stamp of his strong personality and ideals.<sup>6</sup>

It is with this in mind that I would like to raise the issue of Hrabanus' attitude toward medicine and medical learning. Although no mention

3. P. Le Maître, "Les méthodes exégétiques de Raban Maur," in *Haut Moyen-Age: culture, éducation et société, Études offertes à Pierre Riché*, ed. M. Sot (Paris, 1990), pp. 343–52; A. Bisanti, "Struttura compositiva e tecnica compilatoria nel libro III del *De institutione clericorum* di Rabano Mauro," *Schede medievali*, 1985, 8, 5–17; McCulloh, (n. 2), esp. pp. 455–61; H. Reinelt, "Hraban als Exeget," in *Hrabanus Maurus und seine Schule* (n. 1), pp. 64–76; M. Rissel, *Rezeption antiker und patristischer Wissenschaft bei Hrabanus Maurus: Studien zur karolingischen Geistesgeschichte*, Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 7 (Bern: H. Lang; Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1976); E. Heyse, *Hrabanus Maurus' Enzyklopädie 'De rerum naturis': Untersuchungen zu den Quellen und zur Methode der Kompilation*, Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissance-Forschung 4 (Munich: Arbo Gesellschaft, 1969); and B. Blumenkranz, "Raban Maur et Saint Augustin: compilation ou adaptation," *Revue du moyen âge latin*, 1951, 7, 97–110.

4. Rissel, (n. 3) *Rezeption*, pp. 293–348. On Hrabanus' originality, see McCulloh, (n. 2), p. 459; and below n. 37.

5. Le Maître, (n. 3), pp. 343–44.

6. See especially Blumenkranz, (n. 3), where the author shows how even minor editorial changes and additions to a source text could transform its meaning and update it for a ninth-century audience.

of this subject appears in the specialist literature on Hrabanus, discussions of the history of medicine in the early Middle Ages regularly cite him for his support for, even insistence upon, medical education for the clergy.<sup>7</sup> The ultimate source for this belief is a line in the first chapter of book three of *De institutione clericorum*, where Hrabanus discusses the things that a man should know if he wants to receive holy orders.<sup>8</sup> The whole passage is significant, because it is one of the instances when Hrabanus freely improvised on his source material—in this case the preface to Pope Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis*, one of the most important and popular guides to pastoral care in medieval Europe—and is therefore especially revealing of his personal style and attitudes.<sup>9</sup>

The Church, then, makes known in many ways through writing just how one ought to be prepared for the divine office of the most holy order of clerics, because it is fitting that those who, placed at a certain height and holding the responsibility of governance in the Church, possess fullness of wisdom, rectitude of life, and especially perfection of learning. They ought not to be ignorant to some extent of these, with which they must instruct either themselves or those under them, that is: a knowledge of holy scripture, the pure truth of histories, the modes of tropological speaking, the meaning of things mystical, the usefulness of all disciplines, respectability of life in uprightness of character, elegance in preaching, discretion in the explanation of dogma, different medicines against a variety of illnesses. Anyone who does not know these is unable to be of much use to himself, not to mention others, and for that reason it is necessary that a future tutor of the people, as long as there is time, should prepare himself arms, with which he can later resolutely defeat the enemy and rightly defend the flock commissioned to him. It is no good to wish to learn only at that time when, having been made a pastor, one has to teach; and it is dangerous for one to take up the burden of teaching, who not standing firm under the protection of knowledge is unable to bear its weight.<sup>10</sup>

7. Most recently, M. McVaugh, "Medicine, History of," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (n. 1), VIII, 247: "Hrabanus Maurus . . . insisted that clerics must not be ignorant of how to use medicines to treat disease." And see below, n. 11.

8. Hrabanus, (n. 2) *De institutione clericorum*, 3.1, p. 187: "Quid eos scire et habere conveniat, qui ad sacrum ordinem accedere volunt." Also in PL 107:377.

9. Bisanti, (n. 3), p. 10, discusses the three different ways in which Hrabanus, as he himself wrote, treated his sources in this work—either transcribing them word for word, elaborating or abbreviating them, or, as in this case, treating their arguments in an original manner while always following their example ("secundum exemplar eorum quaedam sensu meo postuli"). Hrabanus composed according to the third criterion only seven times in book three (a frequency of about 15 percent); *ibid.*, p. 12. Bisanti prints the relevant passages from *De institutione clericorum* and *Regula pastoralis* in parallel columns for comparison; *ibid.*, pp. 12–14.

10. Hrabanus, (n. 2) *De institutione clericorum*, 3.1, pp. 187–88 (PL 107:377BC, with minor variants): "Institutio ergo ecclesiastica qualiter ad divinum officium instrui oporteat sanctissimum ordinem cleri-

Loren C. MacKinney, whose book on early medieval medicine published forty-eight years ago is still the only comprehensive work in English on the topic, made this passage the basis for the assertion that, in the ninth century, "Medical education, such as it was, seems to have been far more common than in early modern times. It was part of the general course of study for all clergymen" for whom "some sort of medical instruction was practically universal."<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Heinrich Schipperges, writing on monastic medicine in the early 1960s, claimed that the sociological importance of Hrabanus' work is to be found in the support for medical education among the clergy expressed in this passage.<sup>12</sup> MacKinney also interpreted a laconic pronouncement in a capitulary of Charlemagne from 805 titled *De arte medicinalia* as demanding that "all young men are to be sent to learn the medicinal art" and thus implying "the same sort of rudimentary medical training that was mentioned by Rabanus Maurus."<sup>13</sup>

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corum, multimodo narratione declarat, quia et scientiae plenitudinem et vitae rectitudinem et eruditionis perfectionem maxime eos habere decet, qui in quodam culmine constituti gubernaculum regiminis in ecclesia tenent. Nec enim eis aliqua eorum ignorare licet, cum quibus vel se vel subiectos instruere debent, id est scientiam sanctorum scripturarum, puram veritatem historiarum, modos tropicarum locutionum, significationem rerum mysticarum, utilitatem omnium disciplinarum, honestatem vitae in probitate morum, elegantiam in prolatione sermonum, discretionem in exhibitione dogmatum, differentiam medicaminum contra varietatem aegritudinum. Haec ergo qui nescit, non dico aliorum, sed nec suam bene potest disponere utilitatem, ac ideo necesse est, ut futurus populi rector, dum vacat, paret sibi ante arma, in quibus postmodum hostes fortiter superet et gregem sibi commissum oportune defendat. Turpe est enim, tunc primum quemlibet velle discere, dum debet pastor constitutus docere, et periculosum est, eum magisterii pondus subire, qui non scientiae praesidio suffultus potens est illud sufferre."

11. L. C. MacKinney, *Early Medieval Medicine with Special Reference to France and Chartres*, Publications of the Institute of the History of Medicine, The Johns Hopkins University, third series, vol. 3 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1937; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1979), pp. 94–95. MacKinney repeated this judgment almost twenty years later in "Medical Education in the Middle Ages," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale*, 1955, 2, 835–61, p. 846: "Hrabanus Maurus wrote that clergymen, 'must not be ignorant . . . of the medicines for various ailments.'" This assertion has been repeated recently not only by McVaugh (n. 7), but also by R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 58: "Hrabanus Maurus proposed that all such clerics should have medical knowledge"; and P. Riché, *Les écoles et l'enseignement dans l'occident chrétien de la fin du Ve siècle au milieu du XIe siècle* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1979), p. 277: "Raban Maur estime qu'un clerc doit connaître les différents médicaments." J. J. Contreni, "Masters and Medicine in Northern France During the Reign of Charles the Bald," in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, eds. M. Gibson and J. Nelson, BAR International Series 101 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1981), p. 334 and note 12, cites MacKinney's remarks on Hrabanus and medical education approvingly.

12. H. Schipperges, *Die Benediktiner in der Medizin des frühen Mittelalters*, Erfurter theologische Schriften 7 (Leipzig: St. Benno Verlag, 1964), p. 34: "Welcher soziologische Bedeutung Hrabanus Maurus . . . beimisst, geht aus einer zentralen Stelle seiner 'Unterweisung der Geistlichen' hervor, wo er schreibt: 'Neben der heiligen Schrift soll der Kleriker auch den Unterschied der Arzneimittel und die Verschiedenartigkeit der Krankheiten beherrschen.'"

13. MacKinney, (n. 11) *Early Medieval Medicine*, p. 95, where he confined his remarks to clerics; in "Medical Education" (n. 11), pp. 845–46, he cited this same text as evidence that "Practically every ed-

Did these scholars understand Hrabanus correctly? Did he mean that clerics should have training in medicine when he wrote that they needed to know “different medicines against a variety of illnesses”?<sup>14</sup> Consider for a moment the preface to the *Regula pastoralis*, which Hrabanus used as a model for these introductory remarks to book three of his own work. After some opening lines to Bishop John of Ravenna, to whom he addressed his treatise, Gregory wrote:

Now since the necessity of things demands it, it ought to be carefully considered in what manner someone should reach the height of governance in the Church; and obtaining it in due form, in what manner he should live; and living well, in what manner he should teach; and teaching correctly, through how much contemplation he should daily become familiar with his infirmity. Let not humility flee the entrance, life contradict the arrival, doctrine desert the life, nor presumption rise above doctrine. First let fear temper appetite. Then let the life recommend a position of governance which is received not through seeking. For it is necessary that the goodness expressed in the pastor's life also be propagated through teaching. Finally, it remains to be said that the consideration of his own infirmity ought to minimize the importance of his actions, so that the tumor of pride does not diminish them before the eyes of the hidden judge. But because there are many who seem ignorant to me, who, since they themselves do not know how to measure, having never learned themselves that which they desire eagerly to teach, estimate the weight of governance that much more foolishly the more they are ignorant of the force of its magnitude, they are to be rebuked from the very beginning of this book, so that, because they seek to hold untaught and unreflecting the summit of doctrine, they will be driven away at the very start of our discourse by the audacity of their unreflectiveness.<sup>15</sup>

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ucated person, whether lay or clerical, was exposed to at least a smattering of medical knowledge.” Unfortunately, of the 16 mss cited in the MGH edition of this capitulary, not one has anything more than the title of the chapter, *De arte medicinalia* (or *medicinali*). As the editor, A. Boretius, noted, the capitulary as we have it is essentially an aide memoire for Charlemagne's *missi*. The explanatory phrase “ut infantes hanc discere mittantur” (which might preserve the original intent of the pronouncement, but does not refer to “all young men”) appears only in the seventeenth-century edition of Baluze from, so he said, a manuscript from the abbey of St. Vincent of Metz. W. A. Eckhardt, “Die von Baluze benutzten Handschriften der Kapitularien-Sammlungen,” *Mélanges offerts à Charles Braibant* (Brussels, 1959), pp. 9–11, has identified that manuscript with Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 9654, which is Boretius' MS 5. But Boretius did not give any such reading from that manuscript. Cf. A. Boretius, ed., *Capitularia regum Francorum*, MGH, Legum, sec. 2, vol. 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), pp. 121–22, c. 7; and E. Baluze, *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1687) I, 421.

14. This seems the only sensible translation for Hrabanus' awkward “differentiam medicaminum contra varietatem aegritudinum,” which he seems to have chosen not for its grammatical correctness but for rhetorical effect, i.e., to maintain the rhythm of the series of preceding phrases (although he used the plural correctly when speaking of “modos tropicarum locutionum”).

15. Gregory, *Regula pastoralis*, Preface, PL 77:13AB: “Nam cum rerum necessitas exposcit, pensandum valde est ad culmen quisque regiminis qualiter veniat; atque ad hoc rite perveniens, qualiter vivat;



Gregory's subject was the nature of pastoral care and the proper behavior of the clergy after they had ascended to their positions as pastors. Hrabanus' focus, at least in book three of *De institutione clericorum*, lay more on the training needed to prepare men to carry out the duties of pastors, above all else the responsibility of interpreting scripture for the people in their care. And that is why he diverged so far from his source. He was, as was Gregory, deeply concerned with the moral condition of candidates for clerical office, but he wanted to focus book three of *De institutione clericorum* on their practical training, for which he had specific goals and requirements.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, whereas St. Augustine, whose *De doctrina christiana* is the major source for the body of book three of *De institutione clericorum*,<sup>17</sup> explored the bases of the spiritual growth of individual Christians, Hrabanus sought to lay out a model of clerical education for a society still in the process of christianization, still missionizing both within and without its borders.<sup>18</sup> In such a society, knowledge of scripture itself, especially knowledge of its levels of meaning, was the culmination of clerical education, and the basis for the all-important work of preaching the word of God.

And so it was for Hrabanus. His sense of what his contemporaries needed directed his handling of his sources and the structure and content of his own work. Thus, at the top of his list of requirements for holy orders comes knowledge of scripture. The three items that follow give precise expression to the forms that knowledge should take. Clerics were to learn and practice three types of biblical hermeneutics: the his-

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et bene vivens, qualiter doceat; et recte docens, infirmitatem suam quotidie quanta consideratione cognoscat, ne aut humilitas accessum fugiat, aut perventioni vita contradicat; aut vitam doctrina destituat; aut doctrinam praesumptio extollat. Prius ergo appetitum timor temperet: post autem magisterium quod a non quaerente suscipitur, vita commendet; ac deinde necesse est ut pastoris bonum quod vivendo ostenditur, etiam loquendo propagetur. Ad extremum vero superest ut perfecta quaeque opera consideratio propriae infirmitatis deprimat, ne haec ante occulti arbitrii oculos tumor elationis extinguat. Sed quia sunt plerique mihi imperitia similes, qui dum metiri se nesciunt, quae non didicerint docere concupiscunt; qui pondus magisterii tanto levius aestimant, quanto vim magnitudinis illius ignorant; ab ipso libri hujus reprehendantur; ut quia indocti ac praecipites doctrinae arcem tenere appetunt, a praecipitationis suae ausibus in ipsa locutionis nostrae janua repellantur." All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Cf. the translation by H. Davis in St. Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Care*, Ancient Christian Writers 11 (Westminster, MD, 1955), pp. 20–21.

16. In the dedicatory letter to Archbishop Haistulf of Mainz that accompanied one copy of *De institutione clericorum*, Hrabanus wrote: "Tertius vero libro edocet, quomodo omnia quae in diversis libris scripta sunt, investiganda atque discenda sunt, necnon et ea quae in gentiliis studiis et artibus aecclesiastico viro scrutari utilia sunt." *Epistolae* (n. 2), p. 386.

17. Bisanti, (n. 3), pp. 10–12.

18. Rissel, (n. 3) Rezeption, presents a particularly fine analysis of the contrasts between Hrabanus' general literary aims and those of his authorities, above all Augustine and Cassiodorus; see especially pp. 163–76, 289–93.

torical (or literal), through which they would grasp the meanings of the words themselves and the events they describe; the tropological (or moral), which would tell them what they ought to do; and the allegorical (or mystical), which would reveal the mysteries of the faith.<sup>19</sup> After this synopsis of the science of scriptural exegesis, Hrabanus listed what he felt were the other requirements for candidates for clerical orders. They should have learned the usefulness of all disciplines; live respectable lives; and display elegance of speech when preaching and discretion when explaining dogma. They should know different medicines for a variety of illnesses.

Did Hrabanus write this in order to promote medical learning among the clergy? Did the overriding goal of turning out clerics possessed of moral rectitude, knowledge of scripture, and the ability to preach presume grounding in practical medical studies? Or was he speaking metaphorically? That is, were the previous qualities themselves the medicines to which he meant to refer? And were the illnesses of which he wrote maladies of the spirit rather than of the body? I am certain that they were. Whenever medical language appears in *De institutione clericorum*, it does so in the service of metaphor. References to the cure of the body always support Hrabanus' conception of the demands and goals of pastoral care. As Owsei Temkin has recently shown, the metaphorical dependence of the notion of spiritual healing on the language and practice of earthly medicine had played an important role in the accommodation of Greek medicine to Christianity in late antiquity.<sup>20</sup> Discussions of Christian spiritual healing henceforth always rested to a certain degree on the prior assumption that healing itself was good and physicians were involved in morally respectable pursuits. This created a cultural context for the study and practice of earthly medicine that was very much alive in the ninth century. But it also worked the other way around. While notions of physical cure provided a language and a model for spiritual healing, the vicissitudes of the body were just as often subsumed within metaphors that gave spiritual meaning to physical illness, pain, and

19. Hrabanus did not himself practice the fourth of the classical interpretive modes of scriptural exegesis—the anagogical, which sought signs of the life to come—nor did he recommend its study; Reinelt, (n. 3), p. 64. Le Maître, (n. 3), p. 348, argues that for Hrabanus there were only two forms of interpretation: the literal/historical and the mystical, which included the allegorical, tropological, and anagogical modes.

20. O. Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 126–45. On the continued vitality of this tradition in early modern England, see D. N. Harley, “Medical metaphors in English moral theology, 1560–1660,” *J. Hist. Med. Allied Sci.*, 1993, 48, 396–435.

suffering. When interpreting the works of early medieval clerical writers like Hrabanus, all these metaphorical possibilities must be kept in mind.<sup>21</sup>

Gregory the Great had made metaphorical use of medical language in the preface to *Regula pastoralis*, twice referring to the *infirmitas* of the candidate for clerical orders and once to the *tumor* of pride. In the penultimate chapter of *De institutione clericorum* (which ends with a series of chapters on preaching), Hrabanus used similar metaphors extensively to discuss the virtues and vices.<sup>22</sup> He began by noting that a successful preacher must be able to discern the different species of virtues and vices, oppose the one to the other, “and be able to discover the right medicine for each particular wound.”<sup>23</sup> As John T. McNeill pointed out many years ago, this particular metaphorical use of medical language was especially popular in early medieval penitential literature, a field in which Hrabanus was well-schooled.<sup>24</sup> Hrabanus ranked the virtues and vices, first by metaphorically comparing them to roots, trunks, branches, and seeds, and then to the members of a military command: “But because the virtues and the vices are in a war of long duration, and there are those who are dukes in each army and those who are counts, we ought to explain the matter, as much according to species as we can, in order to reveal which virtue should engage exclusively in battle with which vice.”<sup>25</sup> After listing the opposing forces of the virtues and the vices, Hrabanus then returned to the medical metaphor via Gregory’s *Regula pastoralis*: “Behold, ‘these are the things that the guardian of souls’ must know and which he ought ‘to keep in mind in the diversity of his sermons, so that he weighs carefully the weaknesses of each and applies the suitable med-

21. See K. F. Morrison, “Unum ex multis: Hincmar of Rheims’ medical and aesthetic rationales for unification,” *Nascita dell’Europa ed Europa carolingia: Un’equazione da verificare*, Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’alto medioevo 27 (Spoleto, 1981), II, 583–712, for another look at how a ninth-century Carolingian bishop used medical metaphors for complex rhetorical purposes (in this case to justify political actions as necessary correctives and remedies for the state of the church and the realm).

22. Hrabanus, (n. 2) *De institutione clericorum*, 3.38, pp. 272–77: “Quae virtutum species contrariae sint singulis speciebus vitiorum.” Also PL 107:415–18.

23. Hrabanus, (n. 2) *De institutione clericorum*, 3.38, p. 272: “Haec igitur tanto congruentius unusquisque praedicator valet exprimere, quanto veracius species virtutum et econtra vitiorum novit discernere; ut cum singula singulis novit opponere, cuique vulnere aptum possit medicamentum invenire.” Also PL 107:415.

24. J. T. McNeill, “Medicine for sin as prescribed in the penitentials,” *Church History*, 1932, 1, 14–26; and J. T. McNeill and H. M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938; repr. New York: Octagon Books, 1965), pp. 44–46; on this passage by Hrabanus, see *ibid.*, p. 404. On Hrabanus’ penitentials, see R. Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und der Hrabanus Maurus*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 8 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1980).

25. Hrabanus, (n. 2) *De institutione clericorum* 3.38, p. 273: “Sed quia cum virtutibus vitiorum diuturna sunt bella, utriusque militiae qui sunt duces, quique eorum sint comites, specialiter quantum possumus

icines to their wounds’.”<sup>26</sup> This mixture of medical and military metaphors is mirrored in the introduction to book three of *De institutione clericorum*. There Hrabanus called on the clergy to take up arms to protect their flocks by knowing different medicines for a variety of sicknesses; here the lessons on virtue preached to the people figure as cures for the wounds of vice.

Of course it is possible that Hrabanus supported practical medical training for clerics even if the *De institutione clericorum* cannot legitimately be cited as evidence thereof. He was after all a student of Alcuin, whose praise of medicine is well known and unambiguous.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Walahfrid Strabo, the author of a famous poem on the medicinal properties of herbs in the monastic garden, was a student of Hrabanus.<sup>28</sup> And did not Hrabanus himself include a section on medicine in his encyclopedia based on Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies*, thus demonstrating a “continuity of classical medical influences from Roman to Carolingian times”?<sup>29</sup> Surely this is enough evidence to uphold the contention that he supported and furthered the study of medicine among the Carolingian clergy.

Joseph Fleckenstein has argued vigorously that Hrabanus was the successor to Alcuin, his greatest student and his most loyal follower.<sup>30</sup> There is some truth to that, but there is nothing among Hrabanus’ works to match Alcuin’s poetic praise of medical studies and the profession of healing, which he called *iste laudabilis ordo*.<sup>31</sup> The two men are most alike in their common pursuit of scriptural understanding, but even then

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exponamus, ita tamen, ut quae virtus cum quo vitio proprie pugnam gerat pariter ostendamus.” Also PL 107:416. In 855–56, Hrabanus sent a selection from Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris*, to the emperor Lothar; see *Epistolae* (n. 2), pp. 514–15.

26. Hrabanus, (n. 2) *De institutione clericorum* 3.38, p. 276: “Ecce ‘haec sunt, quae praesulem animarum’ oportet scire et quae debet ‘in praedicationis diversitate custodire, ut sollicitus’ infirmitates singulorum perpendat, et ‘congrua eorum vulneribus medicamina opponat.’” Also PL 107:417. The quoted portions are from Gregory, *Regula pastoralis* (n. 15) 3.36.

27. MacKinney, (n. 11) *Early Medieval Medicine*, pp. 85–87. In a famous poem to Charlemagne, Alcuin described the study of Hippocrates and other medical pursuits at the royal court in glowing terms; Alcuin, *Carmina*, no. 26, MGH *Poetae latini aevi Carolini*, vol. 1, ed. E. Dümmler (Berlin, 1881), p. 245; also PL 101:780–81, “De studiis in aula regis.”

28. “De cultura hortorum,” *Poetae* (n. 2), pp. 335–50.

29. MacKinney, (n. 11) *Early Medieval Medicine*, p. 82. On Isidore’s treatment of medicine in the *Etymologies*, see W. D. Sharpe, “Isidore of Seville: the medical writings,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, new series 51, pt. 2, 1964.

30. Fleckenstein, (n. 2). I disagree with Fleckenstein that the study and teaching of the liberal arts and biblical exegesis were equally “Gebieten . . . auf denen Hrabanus Maurus am intensivsten gewirkt hat.” (“Über Hrabanus Maurus,” p. 206). For Hrabanus the liberal arts were never more than an initial step on the way to scriptural studies; see below.

31. *Poetae* (n. 27), p. 245. The treatises attributed to Hrabanus “on anatomy, and a German-Latin glossary of anatomical terms,” (MacKinney, (n. 11) *Early Medieval Medicine*, p. 83) are in fact one and the same: a Latin-Old High German glossary that appears nowhere in the manuscript tradition of the

there are differences. In his *Commentary on John*, at 5.14, for example, Alcuin noted that when Jesus commanded a man whom he had just cured to sin no more, he implied that the man's infirmity had been the result of sin.<sup>32</sup> Yet, Alcuin pointed out, we should not assume that all who are sick suffer because of their sins. God makes some, like Paul, sick so that they will not become too proud of the gifts he has granted them; others, like Job, he tests; others he castigates; some he makes ill so that his miraculous power will shine forth in a cure.<sup>33</sup> Hrabanus did not write a commentary on John's gospel, but, commenting on a passage in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (15.19), he wrote that bodily sickness is in itself neither good nor bad, but can become good when accepted with patience. His examples are Lazarus, who, "because he most patiently tolerated his poverty and bodily sickness, earned the most blessed destiny, the bosom of Abraham," and Paul himself, who rejoiced in his infirmities.<sup>34</sup> In his commentary on the cure of Peter's mother-in-law in the Gospel of Matthew, Hrabanus interpreted the text as an allegory in which Peter's mother-in-law signifies the synagogue and her fever the burning jealousy of the Jews toward the Church.<sup>35</sup> In these instances, both authors treated sickness in scripture in a spiritual context, but whereas Alcuin took his text as an opportunity to warn against simplification and hasty generalization, and to point to the multiplicity of

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works of Hrabanus and, according to Kottje, has no place among his authentic works; Kottje, (n. 1) "Hrabanus Maurus," p. 146, and *Deutsche Literatur*, p. 172. In *De universo* 15.1 (PL 111:413) Hrabanus repeated a seven-part division of natural science (*physica*) that includes medicine and sometimes appears under Alcuin's name in an appendix to his *Dialogus de rhetorica et virtutibus* (PL 101:947-48), but without comment. On this division, see B. Bischoff, "Eine verschollene Einteilung der Wissenschaften," in idem, *Mittelalterliche Studien*, 3 vols., (Stuttgart, 1966-81), I, 273-88.

32. Alcuin, *Commentaria in S. Joannis Evangelium*, PL 100:807A: "Quibus verbis aperte monstratur quia propter peccata languebat, nec nisi dimissis eisdem peccatis poterat sanari."

33. Ibid. 807B: "Saepe infirmatur homo ne extollatur in donis Dei, sicut de Paulo apostolo legitur; saepe ut probetur, tribulatur, sicut beati Job patientia tribulata et probata est; saepe infirmitas pro castigatione datur . . . quibusdam vero infirmitas pro gloria Dei datur, ut de caeco nato, vel de Lazaro legitur." On the sometimes metaphorical relationship between spiritual and bodily medicine, see S. W. Jackson, "Acedia the sin and its relationship to sorrow and melancholia in medieval times," *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1981, 55, 172-185. On the complex relationship between sin and disease in the early Middle Ages, see J. Kroll and B. Bachrach, "Sin and the etiology of disease in pre-crusade Europe," *J. Hist. Med. Allied Sci.*, 1986, 41, 395-414; and D. W. Amundsen, "Medieval Catholicism," in *Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions*, eds. R. L. Numbers and D. W. Amundsen (New York: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 76-79.

34. Hrabanus, *Ennarationum in epistolas beati Pauli liber undecimus*, 15, PL 112:144C: "Infirmitas etiam carnis interdum quam sit commoda, Lazari ipsius pauperis ulcerosi beatitudo demonstrat . . . pro hoc solo quod egestatem et infirmitatem corporis patientissime toleravit, sinum Abrahae possidere beatissima sorte promeruit. . . . beato Apostolo concinente: 'Propter quod placeo mihi in infirmitatibus.'"

35. Hrabanus, *Commentaria in Mattheum* 3.8.3, PL 107:860C-861C; discussed by Reinelt, (n. 3), pp. 73-76.

causes of sickness, Hrabanus' interpretations are, in the one case, tropological—guiding the reader on how properly to respond to illness—and, in the other, allegorical, revealing a hidden spiritual significance behind a scriptural event.

There is an important consideration that needs mentioning here, for it is easy when using biblical commentaries as historical sources to forget that their authors were interpreting scripture and not events in the world. The problem becomes more acute with a text like Hrabanus' *De rerum naturis*, which looks on the surface like a straightforward encyclopedia, but is in fact a reference tool for the practice of biblical interpretation.<sup>36</sup> More than one scholar who has taken Hrabanus' allegorical interpretations there at face value has concluded that they are evidence of the "pious aberration" that sin was the cause of disease.<sup>37</sup> But the fact that for Hrabanus a paralytic in a biblical text signified paralysis of the soul cannot be taken as evidence that he believed real paralysis was a simple expression of a spiritual condition. His comments on reading scriptural texts do not tell us how he felt about the cripples on the porches of the cathedral of Mainz or the monks in the infirmary at Fulda. At the very least, Hrabanus would agree with Alcuin that there are a number of possible spiritual meanings of the person's condition. Either or both of them could also have regarded particular cases as having no spiritual significance or etiology whatsoever. To the degree to which their writings were directed at spiritual purposes, they would have less occasion to address such cases, but their silence cannot be taken as evidence. If we are correctly to understand their attitudes to both earthly and celestial healing, we must not ignore the complexities of their world—a world in which the natural and the supernatural cut across and through one another both in actual fact and in terms of meaning and significance. Above all, we must pay careful attention to the purposes and intended audience of the texts from which our evidence is derived.

Hrabanus wrote most explicitly about medicine and healing in his commentary on the first fifteen verses of the thirty-eighth chapter of the Old Testament book by Jesus the son of Sirach, known to him as *Ecclesiasticus*, a passage that contains the most straightforward praise of earthly medicine anywhere in the Bible.<sup>38</sup> As a number of scholars have

36. Heyse, (n. 3) *Hrabanus*; and see below.

37. MacKinney, (n. 11) *Early Medieval Medicine*, p. 27, commenting on *De universo (De rerum naturis)* 18.5; cf. S. R. Ell, "Leprosy," in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (n. 1), VII, 550. And see above n. 33.

38. Hrabanus, *Commentaria in Ecclesiasticum* 8.13–14, PL 109:1030–33. Hrabanus wrote the commentary between 835 and 840 and dedicated it to Archbishop Otgar of Mainz; see *Epistolae*, (n. 2), p. 426.

pointed out, the attitudes expressed by Ben Sira signaled a new direction in Hebrew religious writing about medicine. Written in the early second century B.C. from a Hellenized-Jewish perspective, and translated into Greek by the author's grandson, the book of Jesus ben Sira fit the work of doctors into the Almighty's plan for mankind: "Honor the doctor in accordance with necessity, for the Most-High created him too" (Sir 38.1).<sup>39</sup> Hrabanus commented on this passage in some detail, and, since he had no prior source to work from, his comments were all his own.<sup>40</sup> Thus, they give an even clearer notion than the *De institutione clericorum* of his attitudes toward medicine, doctors, and physical and spiritual healing.

Hrabanus' response to the first two verses was to agree that everything created by God is good and that therefore we ought not to spurn those things that might be useful in maintaining our health, but convert them to our use.<sup>41</sup> He then wrote:

There are physicians of the body and physicians of the soul; but just as the former cure sicknesses of the body with the medicine of herbs, the latter heal sicknesses of the soul with the remedy of divine precepts. Thus while both ought to be honored, the spiritual physicians are to be given the greater reverence, for their work is the more long-lasting and useful.<sup>42</sup>

The point is central to Hrabanus' conception of the clergy and their role.

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Although Ben Sira's book was not officially part of the Jewish canon, many rabbis quoted it as scripture, and, along with the other so-called deuterocanonical books of the Greek Septuagint, it entered the Latin tradition of the Christian Old Testament early on and was regarded as canonical throughout the Middle Ages. See A. Di Lella, "Sirach," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, eds. B. M. Metzger and M. D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 697-99.

39. My translations are based on the Latin text used by Hrabanus. For other renderings and discussion of the text, see Temkin, (n. 20) *Hippocrates*, pp. 88-90; H. C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracle & Magic in New Testament Times*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986), pp. 19-21; D. W. Amundsen, "Medicine and faith in early Christianity," *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1982, 56, 342-43.

40. As far as I can tell, no Christian author before Hrabanus had produced a commentary on *Ecclesiasticus*. If that is correct, then this work deserves a study in its own right. Le Maître, (n. 3) p. 350, has pointed out that 44 percent of Hrabanus' commentary on *Jeremiah*, finished just before his death, is his own work, and that, while there are 672 citations of the fathers in the commentary on *Matthew*, Hrabanus himself provided 240 comments.

41. Hrabanus, *Commentaria in Ecclesiasticum* 8.13, PL 109:1030B: "omnia opera Dei non solum bona, sed etiam valde sunt bona. Unde non debemus ea spernere, quae noverimus ad utilitatem nostram et sanitatem creatorem nostrum nobis procreasse, sed cum gratiarum actione ea percipere, et ad usum nostros convertere."

42. *Ibid.*, 1030C: "Sunt corporales medici, sunt et spiritales; sed sicut corporales per herbarum medicinam curant corporum aegritudines, ita et spiritales per divinorum praeceptorum medelam sanant animarum infirmitates. Utrique ergo cum honore habendi sunt, sed spiritales eo majoris reverentiae sunt praeferendi, quo eorum opera magis diuturna et magis salubria constat inveniri."

God has granted to men certain plants that promote health, and physicians can do much good by putting them to use,<sup>43</sup> but the health of the soul is a pursuit superior to the health of the body, and spiritual physicians are superior to corporeal ones. Once having made these distinctions, Hrabanus was free to interpret all further references in the passage to physicians and earthly medicine in terms of his concept of spiritual medicine. In so doing, Ben Sira's praise for doctors and medicine is read as praise for clerics and the methods they use to cure sick souls. Consider, for example, his response to verse three, "The skill of the physician will lift up his head and he will be praised in the eyes of the great," to which he commented: "The discipline of the spiritual physician brings forth never-ending glory for his soul, and in the eyes of the holy angels and blessed souls the wage of eternal life is conferred upon him."<sup>44</sup> Similarly, commenting on verse eight, "And likewise the maker of unguents makes a medication of sweetness, and puts together an ointment of health," Hrabanus noted that spiritual physicians treat the sick in the same way as physicians of the body—with food, potions, plasters, and ointments, choosing the proper medicine for each disease. "They apply the poultice of doctrines, the unguent of exhortations, and the plaster of assiduous prayer. They make as well the medicinal food and drink of divine scripture . . . so that in whatever way possible, they lead men from the sickness of vice to the health of virtue."<sup>45</sup>

Ben Sira advised the sick to pray to God for healing, to turn away from sin, and to make sacrifice, but he told them "to make as well a place for the physician, for God created him too; and do not depart from him, because his work is necessary" (38.9–11). To this Hrabanus commented that the bread and wine that priests offer to God can cure the wounds of the soul, citing by way of illustration the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great on the efficacy of the sacrifice of the mass for souls after

43. A point he reiterates in response to verse 4 (The Most-High created medicine out of the earth, and the prudent man will not abhor it.) *ibid.*, 1030D: "De terrenis rebus providit Deus infirmitatibus humanis solatia, unde sane quis sapiens audet contemnere et despiciere illam?"

44. *Ibid.*, 1030C: "Disciplina medici spiritalis pariet animae suae gloriam sempiternam, et in conspectu sanctorum angelorum ac sanctarum animarum merces illi vitae conferetur aeternae."

45. *Ibid.*, 1031BC: "Diverso enim modo medici arte sua contra infirmitates diversas utuntur, hoc est, in cibis, in potibus, in emplastris, atque unguentis: ut juxta qualitatem morborum artis suae accommodent congruum medicamentum, quod scilicet spiritalis medici secundum artis suae peritiam ad salutem salubriter facere solent animarum: exhibent fomenta doctrinarum, unguenta adhortationum, atque malagma assiduae orationis. Medicabiles etiam potus atque cibos divinarum Scripturarum faciunt etiam . . . ut quoquo modo possint, hominem ab aegritudine vitiorum perducant ad sanitatem bonarum virtutum."



death.<sup>46</sup> To Ben Sira's concluding remarks, "There is indeed a time when you will fall into their hands; they will surely pray to the Lord that he arrange their peace and health in accordance with their recovery. He who sins in the eyes of his maker, falls into the hands of the physicians" (38.13–15), Hrabanus wrote "God castigates sinners who in their pride reject his laws. . . . And the sacred teachers and spiritual physicians of souls seek out the best time to apply the proper medicine to the souls, praying urgently to the Lord that he direct their work and grant refreshment to those who suffer from the sicknesses of various vices."<sup>47</sup>

Hrabanus' language is marked here by the same metaphors of spiritual healing that are present in the *De institutione clericorum*. He did not reject the work of the physician or the herbal remedies created by God for the restoration of health, but his concern was not with the health of bodies, but rather the cure of souls. Thus, while he began his commentary on the passage in the literal/historical mode, recognizing the importance of medicine and doctors, he shifted quickly to the allegorical and the moral, using the metaphorical relationship between the work of corporeal and spiritual physicians to exhort his readers to attend to the only health that really matters, the *salus aeterna*, the health of their souls, and the souls of those in their pastoral care. He recognized the work of physicians and the natural powers that God has placed in herbs, but he otherwise ignored Ben Sira's praise for the practice of earthly medicine—praise that is echoed in the works of Alciun and, before him, Cassiodorus—and used his text simply as a starting point for remarks on the work of spiritual physicians.<sup>48</sup>

Walahfrid Strabo studied scriptural interpretation under Hrabanus for a couple of years around 825, but his own later work took him in other directions, and it does not appear as if Hrabanus' exegetical approach had much of an effect on his thinking. It seems in fact that he was rather unhappy at Fulda and that no close relationship developed between him

46. Ibid., 1032B: "Panis ergo et vini sacrificium in memoriam Dominicae passionis oblatum praecipue animarum vulnera curat, cum per sacerdotis ministerium in altare simul cum sacris orationibus Deo offertur. Unde sicut beatus Gregorius in libris Dialogorum ait. . . ."

47. Ibid., 1032D–33A: "Justum est enim ut qui saperbiendo (sic) mandata Dei facere contempsit, castigatus per infirmitatem humilietur. . . . vero sancti doctores et spirituales medici animarum semper opportunum tempus quaerunt, quando infirmis animabus congruam possint virtutum operibus instanter Dominum deprecantur, ut dirigat opera eorum, et refrigerium praestat his qui variis vitiorum aegritudinibus laboraverunt."

48. Cassiodorus, unlike Hrabanus, explicitly recommended the study of specific medical texts to the monk-physicians at his monastery at Vivarium and lauded their work; *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), pp. 78–79. Alciun, *Carmina*, no. 26 (n. 27). See also Temkin, (n. 20) *Hippocrates*, pp. 161–62, 171–77.

and Hrabanus.<sup>49</sup> He was, moreover, a friend of another of Hrabanus' students, the Saxon Gottschalk, with whom he had gone to school in his younger days. It would come as no surprise if that complicated his relations with his teacher, for Hrabanus fought with Gottschalk for decades, first over his desire to be released from monastic vows, which he felt were foisted on him against his wishes, and then later over his ideas about predestination.<sup>50</sup> Walahfrid's poem on the medicinal properties of herbs, *De cultu horticorum*, accords with Hrabanus' acceptance of herbal medicines, but whereas medicine seems to have interested Hrabanus primarily because of its metaphorical relationship to the work of spiritual physicians, Walahfrid was actually involved in the textual transmission of medical learning—and not only through his poem. Bernhard Bischoff has recognized Walahfrid's own hand in the medical portions of a manuscript at St. Gall that contains as well works on grammar, astronomy, computus, and history. Walahfrid recorded there a number of medicinal recipes as well as short treatises on diet, bloodletting, and the days of the month when certain medical procedures should be carried out.<sup>51</sup>

Hrabanus' interest in medicine and medical learning thus was different from that of either his teacher or his student. But what of his support for clerical training in the liberal arts and his inclusion of a section on medicine in his massive encyclopedia for clerics, *De rerum naturis*?<sup>52</sup> By now it should be clear that the overriding concern of Hrabanus' educational program was preparation for the proper understanding and exposition of scripture. Unlike Isidore of Seville, for whom the liberal arts were important in their own right, Hrabanus' discussion of them in *De institutione clericorum* goes no further than to point out in a few sentences the ways in which each might contribute to the understanding of scrip-

49. Brunhölzl, (n. 1) *Geschichte*, p. 345.

50. On Hrabanus and Gottschalk, see Hägele, (n. 2), p. 78; Szövérfy, (n. 1), p. 306; Sandmann, (n. 1), p. 31. Fleckenstein, (n. 2), "Hrabanus Maurus. Diener," p. 206, presents the falling out between Hrabanus and Gottschalk as an aberration in an otherwise unblemished history of teacher/student relations. In October 848, Hrabanus presided over a synod at Mainz called to judge Gottschalk's orthodoxy; see W. Hartmann, "Die Mainzer Synoden des Hrabanus Maurus," in *Hrabanus Maurus*, eds. Kottje and Zimmermann, (n. 2), pp. 130–44.

51. B. Bischoff, "Eine Sammelhandschrift Walahfrid Strabos (Cod. Sangall. 878)," in *Mittelalterliche Studien* (n. 31) II, 34–51; A. Beccaria, *I codici di medicina del periodo presalernitano (secoli ix, x, xi)*, Storia e letteratura 53 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1956), pp. 391–93. Before one of the recipes he made the notation: "Medicorum scientia mortalibus vel utilissima est," but I have not been able to consult the manuscript directly to place it in context.

52. MacKinney, (n. 11) *Early Medieval Medicine*, pp. 26–27: "He was quite as conservative a churchman as either of the Gregories, but in his *de Universo*, a handbook written for the use of clerical students, he devoted an entire section to medicine, describing the various aspects of non-religious healing without any animus." Cf. above, n. 37.

ture.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, having said what he wished to say on the liberal arts in *De institutione clericorum*, Hrabanus omitted them entirely from his encyclopedia.<sup>54</sup> This is all the more striking given that Hrabanus modeled *De rerum naturis* on Isidore's own encyclopedia, the *Etymologies*, which begins with a treatment of the seven liberal arts (books I–III). But that was not the only change that Hrabanus introduced to Isidore's scheme. As ever, Hrabanus reorganized his material with two things uppermost in his mind—the demands of scriptural interpretation and the clergy's need of the tools with which to practice it. Thus, he gave his encyclopedia twenty-two books, instead of Isidore's twenty, to match the number of books in the Old Testament; and he organized it completely within the framework of Christian cosmology, beginning with God (book 1) and biblical history and moving by degrees toward man and then the things of the world.<sup>55</sup>

Hrabanus' encyclopedia was thus never meant to be of the same type as Isidore's. Isidore wanted to sum up the knowledge of antiquity; Hrabanus wanted to lay the basis for a universal Christian science of biblical studies. His intent was not just to describe and explain things, but to begin with the seen and move to the unseen, and thereby to point toward the totality of the whole. It was a peculiarly ninth-century intention.<sup>56</sup> And the result was thoroughly Hrabanus' own—that is, a literary tool designed to aid in the understanding of scripture. In his dedicatory epistle to Haymo of Halberstadt, for example, he described his encyclopedia as being “not only about the nature of things and the peculiarities of words but also about their mystical significance.”<sup>57</sup> He meant it to be an exegetical glossary, a place where a reader could find both the historical and the mystical meanings of scriptural

53. Rissel, (n. 3) *Rezeption*, pp. 267–80; Brunhölzl, (n. 1) *Geschichte*, p. 328; Hägele, (n. 2), pp. 88–90; Le Maître, (n. 3), p. 345. Hägele (pp. 90–91) compares Hrabanus' moderate acceptance of the works of pagan authors in *De institutione clericorum* with their complete rejection by his older contemporary, the reformer and monk Benedict of Aniane, but the comparison with Isidore is more telling. Rissel, p. 177, note 1, quotes Rudolf of Fulda's description of book three: “ordo discendi ac modus docendi verbi Dei declaratur.”

54. Szövérfy, (n. 1), p. 307.

55. Brunhölzl, (n. 2), p. 6; McCulloh, (n. 2), p. 457. The tradition that there were twenty-two books in the Old Testament goes back through Jerome and Origen to Josephus and ultimately to the fact that there are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. See A. Robert and A. Tricot, *Guide to the Bible*, 2nd ed., trans. E. Arbez and M. McGuire, vol. 1 (Paris, 1960), pp. 72–73.

56. Heyse, (n. 3) *Hrabanus*, p. 51; Brunhölzl, (n. 2), pp. 7–8, sees this as at least partly responsible for the fact that *De rerum naturis* never achieved the popularity of Isidore's work.

57. *Epistolae*, (n. 2), p. 471: “non solum de rerum naturis et verborum proprietatibus, sed etiam de mystica earundem rerum significatione.”

passages.<sup>58</sup> To achieve this goal he blended the Isidorian material with allegorical insights, above all those contained in the *Clavis sacrae scripturae*, an anonymous allegorical glossary apparently compiled from the writings of Gregory the Great, Augustine, and others shortly before Hrabanus' lifetime.<sup>59</sup> The result was a treatise that constantly moves from the Isidorian level of words and their meanings to the spiritual truth conveyed by words in the sacred texts.<sup>60</sup> This is, as we have seen, characteristic of Hrabanus' style.

The basic source for the material on medicine in *De rerum naturis* is the fourth book of Isidore's *Etymologies*, which followed directly on his discussion of the liberal arts.<sup>61</sup> Isidore explained the absence of medicine from the traditional list of *artes liberales* on the grounds that it entailed knowledge of them all, that it was in fact a "second philosophy" for which the liberal arts were preparatory.<sup>62</sup> This is, however, the exact relationship that Hrabanus believed existed between the liberal arts and biblical studies. What did he think of this praise for medical studies by Isidore? And what did he think of Isidore's final sentence on the subject: "Just as by philosophy the soul, so also by medicine the body is cured"—which gives to philosophy the role Hrabanus reserved for the pastoral care of priests?<sup>63</sup> He certainly did not transmit them through his own work. Hrabanus copied less than a quarter of Isidore's book on medicine (chapters 1–3, 5, 6.1–3, 9.1, and 12.1–3) and did not transmit those passages. Moreover, he placed the whole subject in the least prominent position possible, at the end of book eighteen, after a series of chapters on weights, measures, numbers, and music and its parts.<sup>64</sup>

Hrabanus' treatment of medicine in *De rerum naturis* is similar to that

58. Ibid.; cf. p. 473, for a letter to King Louis the German, in which Hrabanus wrote: "ut lector prudens . . . inveniret historicam et mysticam singularum rerum explanationem."

59. Heyse, (n. 3) *Hrabanus*, pp. 36, 52; the *Clavis* was published by J. P. Pitra, in *Spicilegium Solesmense*, 4 vols. (Paris: F. Didot, 1852–58), II–III, and, in a shorter form, in idem, *Analecta sacra spicilegio Solesmensi parata*, 8 vols. (Paris: A. Jouby et Roger, 1876–91), II, 6–154, as the work of the second-century Bishop Melito of Sardis. Heyse (p. 51) states that it was first used by Theodulf of Orléans for his edition of the Bible; Brunhölzl, (n. 1) *Geschichte*, p. 556, implies that Hrabanus was the first to use it. On the life and works of Melito, see Melito of Sardis, *On Pascha and Fragments*, ed. and trans. S. G. Hall, Oxford Early Christian Texts 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), pp. xi–xvii.

60. Heyse, (n. 3) *Hrabanus*, p. 52, "Dadurch ergibt sich bei Hraban ein Ordnungsschema das zunächst die *corporalia* (aus Isidor) bringt und diesen dann die *spiritualia* folgen lässt."

61. *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911). Book four and related sections of the *Etymologies* are translated and commented on by Sharpe, (n. 29).

62. Isidore, (n. 61) *Etymologiae* 4.13.

63. Ibid., 4.13.5. "Nam sicut per illam anima, ita per hanc corpus curatur."

64. Hrabanus, *De universo* 18.5, PL 111: 500–504. See Heyse, (n. 3) *Hrabanus*, p. 136.

in his commentary on *Ecclesiasticus*. He begins with the concrete—the historical—and moves quickly to the mystical. In fact, his treatment of the concrete is so impatient, even peremptory, that it is hardly more than an occasion to introduce the material in which he is truly interested. He included Isidore's definition of medicine, his etymological note on the word *medicina*, and the brief history of the origins of medicine among the Greeks.<sup>65</sup> He skipped the next chapter on medical sects to go on to a description of the four humors. Then he stopped abruptly in Isidore's chapter on acute diseases after recording only the definitions of "fever" and *frenesis*. He left out not only the rest of the chapter, but everything on chronic and skin diseases and on medical books, and all but the introduction to the chapter on remedies and medications, replacing Isidore's definitions and explanations with allegorical readings. He returned to the *Etymologies* only to cite Isidore's biblical support for medicinal cures at the beginning of chapter nine and for three definitions for incense in chapter twelve.<sup>66</sup> The new material derives almost exclusively from the anonymous *Clavis sacrae scripturae*.<sup>67</sup> Instead of Isidore's scientific-etymological glosses, Hrabanus presented the mystical-allegorical meanings of the *Clavis*, to which he added appropriate scriptural illustrations. Here, for example, is Isidore on paralysis: "Paralysis, *parale-sis*, is named from a destruction, *inpensatio*, of the body brought about by much cooling of the body, either as a whole or in part."<sup>68</sup> And here is Hrabanus: "A paralytic signifies the soul undone by vice and pressed down into the flesh by the weight of its sins. As it is said in the Gospel (of Mark): Behold the paralytic on his bed carried by four men."<sup>69</sup> By means of the *Clavis*, various types of leprosy are revealed as signs of var-

65. Hrabanus, *De universo* 18.5, PL 111.500BD=Isidore, *Etymologiae* 4.1-3.

66. In *Early Medieval Medicine* (n. 11), MacKinney did not realize that Hrabanus was transmitting Isidore (pp. 82-83 and note 149 and p. 88 and note 165). The work of his student, E. K. Graham, who wrote a thesis on *De rerum naturis* in 1934 (see Sharpe, (n. 29), p. 19, note 14) should have tipped him off, but MacKinney did not correct his error until much later; see his "Medical ethics and etiquette in the early Middle Ages: The persistence of hippocratic ideals," *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1952, 26, p. 10, at note 13. Graham had realized that the passage "Medicinae curatio spernenda non est . . . modicum vinum prodesse dixit" was derived from Isidore, *Etymologiae* 4.9.1 (a fact that Hyese, (n. 3) *Hrabanus*, p. 136, missed), but MacKinney's reassessment went only so far as to suggest that Hrabanus, "realizing that his Isidorian borrowings were conspicuously anti-Christian, decided to shift the emphasis to the religious aspects of healing."

67. Heyse, (n. 3) *Hrabanus*, p. 136; Heyse was unable to place all of the allegorical definitions.

68. Isidore, (n. 61) *Etymologiae* 4.7.25; trans. Sharpe, (n. 29), p. 59.

69. Hrabanus, *De universo* 18.5, PL 111.501D: "Paralyticus significat animam vitiis dissolutam, atque in carnis suae languore peccatorum depressam: ut in Evangelio dicitur: Ecce paralyticus in grabato portabatur a quatuor (Mk. 2)."

ious heresies, disabilities of the flesh mirror disabilities of the mind, and earthly ointments represent the soothing agents of heavenly grace.

After giving Isidore's definition of *frenesis*, Hrabanus rewrote the introduction to the chapter on remedies and medication in an especially revealing manner. In one of only two religious references in book four, Isidore had written: "The healing of medicine is not to be despised, for we also recall that Isaiah ordered a certain medication for Hezekiah when he was ill, and the Apostle Paul said that Timothy ought to take a little wine."<sup>70</sup> Hrabanus split open Isidore's text to insert Ben Sira's admonition to honor doctors and then a further admonition of his own: "But disregard what pagan authors have written on diseases and on the art of medicine. It is sufficient to remember what we read in the divine books, for they tell us of the various types of diseases: both how the prophet Isaiah relieved the king of Judea with the art of medicine, and how the apostle Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for medicinal purposes."<sup>71</sup> How are we to take this statement? Like everything else in *De rerum naturis*, its intended audience was the clergy who would use Hrabanus' work to help them understand scripture and interpret it for their congregations. It certainly is stronger and less ambiguous than anything that Hrabanus had previously written on the subject. The words of *Ecclesiasticus* could not be rejected outright, for they were holy scripture, but Hrabanus had found a new way of interpreting their meaning that reconciled them with his understanding of proper clerical behavior and further minimized the place of medical learning in clerical education. Hrabanus' final move, in which he grounded the study of medicine in biblical texts, appears elsewhere in *De rerum naturis*, but in a slightly different form. Maria Rissel has pointed out how Hrabanus resolved the tension between Christian learning and the pagan liberal arts by rooting their origins in biblical episodes. For example, Hrabanus wrote that Abraham had taught arithmetic and astronomy to the Egyptians,

70. Isidore, (n. 61) *Etymologiae*, 4.9.1: "Medicinae curatio spernenda non est. Meminimus enim et Esaiam Ezechiae languenti aliquid medicinale mandasse, et Paulus apostolus Timotheo modicum vinum prode esse dixit;" Sharpe, (n. 29), p. 61, mistook the reference to Hezekiah as being to Ezechial. The other religious reference is 4.6.17, where Isidore says concerning plague that "sine arbitrio omnipotentis Dei omnino non fit."

71. Hrabanus, *De universo* 18.5, PL 111.501CD: "Medicinae curatio spernenda non est, quia et sanctos viros ea uti legamus, ei in Ecclesiastico de ea ita scriptum est. . . . Sed omissis his quae saecularium litterarum scriptores de morbis et de medicina arte conscripsere: ea hic commemorare sufficiat, quae in divinis libris legimus: quia et in lege de variis morborum generibus narratur: et propheta Isaias medicina arte subvenit Ezechiae regi Juda. Et Paulus apostolus Timotheo modicum vinum prodesse dixit."

who taught them to the Greeks.<sup>72</sup> But he did not give pagan medical learning the same religious pedigree. While the different treatment accorded medicine and the liberal arts is characteristic of his work as a whole, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that, at least by the mid-840s, when Hrabanus was in his sixties, he did not want clerics to read any classical medical works at all. All they needed to know about medicine was in the Bible itself (and, presumably, in his own writings).

Summing up Hrabanus' contributions to the history of medicine in the early Middle Ages, Loren MacKinney argued that "his writings on medicine are of special importance as examples of the sort of non-religious material which was considered necessary for the education of orthodox Carolingian clerical students."<sup>73</sup> Heinrich Schipperges went even further, understanding Hrabanus to have recommended even the study of medical history to the clergy.<sup>74</sup> I hope to have shown that Hrabanus neither required nor even encouraged the study and practice of medicine among the Carolingian clergy, whatever he may have felt about it in other contexts. More importantly, however, I hope to have shown that what we do know about Hrabanus' attitudes toward medicine cannot be understood outside of the context of his life's work, which was directed above all else toward the promotion of biblical studies among the clergy of the Carolingian realm. There was a place for earthly medicine in Hrabanus' world. He accepted the limited value and use of medicinal herbs, and, faced with the scriptural authority of Jesus ben Sira, the necessity and value of earthly physicians. But his own interest in medicine was spiritual, not practical, and the training he hoped to give his clergy reflects this. When he used the language of medicine and healing, he did so metaphorically. Whenever he turned his attention to the health of the body it was always with an eye to the health of the soul.

72. Rissel, (n. 3) *Rezeption*, pp. 338–40. The source of this is Josephus; cf. above, n. 55.

73. MacKinney, (n. 11) *Early Medieval Medicine*, p. 83.

74. Schipperges, (n. 12) *Die Benediktiner*, pp. 34–35: "Hrabanus geht sogar noch weiter und fordert neben den rein praktischen Kenntnissen auch eine theoretische Besinnung, die unschwer als ein frühes Lob der Geschichte der Medizin wiederzuerkennen ist: 'Bei allen Künsten—darunter auch der Arzneikunde—berechtigt die Erfahrung, wie sie die Betrachtung der Vergangenheit bietet, zu Schlüssen auf die Gestaltung der Zukunft. Denn keiner, welcher einer solchen Beschäftigung obliegt, greift sein Werk an, bevor er nicht mit dem Rückblick auf das Vergangene den Hinblick auf das Zukünftige verbindet.'" This is translated from *De institutione clericorum* (n. 2), 3.17, p. 221, although Schipperges did not note it, and is, for the most part, a direct quotation from Augustine: "'Harum ergo cunctarum artium de praeteritis faciunt experimenta etiam futura conici. Nam nullus earum artifex membra movet in operando, nisi praeteritorum memoriam cum futurorum expectatione contextat.' Sed haec non ob aliud commemoravimus, nisi 'ut non omnino nesciamus, quid scriptura velit insinuare, cum de his artibus aliquas figuratas locutiones inserit.'" The quoted portions are from *De doctrina christiana* 2.30; cf. Bisanti, (n. 3), p. 11.

Hrabanus' is not the only voice to which we should listen, of course, if we wish to gain a textured sense of attitudes toward medicine in Carolingian Francia. While the practice of earthly medicine appears in his writings mainly as a metaphor of spiritual healing, others, from Alcuin to Walahfrid Strabo (and other students of Hrabanus), to the circle of scholars at Laon in the later ninth century that John J. Contreni has uncovered, pursued medical studies and wrote about medicine in its own right.<sup>75</sup> But no picture of early medieval medicine would be complete without an understanding of the ways in which Hrabanus regarded physical and spiritual healing. In the Christian society of early medieval Europe, especially within the ranks of the clerical elite—the custodians of all learning—spiritual health was more often than not the primary and ultimate concern.

While a young teacher at Fulda, Hrabanus watched helplessly as a virulent disease killed many of his students.<sup>76</sup> Unlike most of his contemporaries, he experienced both the high political hopes of the reign of Charlemagne in the late eighth and early ninth century as well as their collapse in the civil wars of the 830s and 840s among Charles' son and grandsons. These things marked him. They may even account in part for the more dismissive treatment of medicine in *De rerum naturis* compared with that of his earlier works. In the last decades of his life he was often ill, but he bore his afflictions patiently, like Lazarus, the poor man of the gospels.<sup>77</sup> There is no evidence that he ever sought medical help. In 840–42 he wrote to the emperor Lothar that illness had made work difficult for him, but he would finish “if by chance the Lord should grant me through the immense grace of his piety health and the strength to read and write.”<sup>78</sup> This remark echoes the language of liturgical prayer for the sick, not the hope of an earthly cure.<sup>79</sup> When writing for the benefit of young men who would watch over the spiritual health of their

75. Contreni, (n. 11). See also the new edition and German translation of the defense of medicine written in the late eighth century at the monastery of Lorsch, first published by K. Sudhoff, “Eine Verteidigung der Heilkunde aus den Zeiten der ‘Mönchsmedizin,’” *Arch. Gesch. Med.*, 1913, 7, 223–37; U. Stoll, *Das ‘Lorscher Arzneibuch’: Ein medizinisches Kompendium des 8. Jahrhunderts (Codex Bambergensis medicinalis 1): Text, Übersetzung und Fachglossar*, Sudhoffs Archiv, Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Beiheft 28 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1992).

76. Sandmann, (n. 1), p. 19.

77. Kottje, (n. 2) “Hrabanus Maurus, Praeceptor?” p. 537; and see above, n. 34.

78. *Epistolae* (n. 2), p. 444: “si forte Dominus per immensam pietatis suae gratiam voluerit sanitatem mihi tribuere facultatemque legendi atque scribendi conferre.” Cf. *ibid.*, p. 476.

79. See almost any of the prayers for the sick in contemporary sacramentaries; e.g., “Omnipotens et misericors deus quaesumus immensam pietatem tuam ut . . . hunc famulum tuum . . . salutifere uisitare digneris. . . .” J. Deshusses, *Le sacramentaire grégorien* 3 (Fribourg, 1982), p. 133.



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congregations, Hrabanus used the metaphorical resonances between the work of physicians and priests to outline the duties and methods of the *medici spiritales*. He provided them with what they needed to understand the literal references to sickness, disease, physicians, and medicine in the Bible. But, most importantly, he tried to guide them to the mystical significations that lay behind those literal meanings. From them they would learn to diagnose the illnesses of the soul and to apply the remedies of preaching and penance, the example of a righteous life, and the hope of salvation. That was the ultimate goal of Hrabanus' "medical" writings. Trained in this way, Carolingian clerics would be ready to attend not to the care of sick bodies, but to the cure of afflicted souls.