

A SENSORY READING OF RABANUS MAURUS' *DE UNIVERSO*¹

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Abstract

Rabanus Maurus was an outstanding character, in many ways representative of the Carolingian times. He was even deemed the greatest scholar of its times. His knowledge about the Scriptures, patristics, canon law, and liturgy was unparalleled. Rabanus Maurus' work dealt with all areas of knowledge, both sacred and profane. *De Universo*—originally known as *De natura rerum*—is a clear example of the scholarly interest in the organization of encyclopedic knowledge and manuals characteristic of the High Middle Ages, and presents a hierarchical organization of the senses that is key to the understanding of the sensory world during the 8th and 9th centuries.

Keywords: Rabanus Maurus / De Universo / History of the senses / Carolingian / Sensory

Resumen

Rábano Mauro fue un personaje señero y representativo de los tiempos carolingios. Incluso se decía que era el erudito más grande de su época. Sus conocimientos sobre las Escrituras, la patrística, el derecho canónico y la liturgia no tenían parangón. El alcance de sus escritos se extendió a todos los campos de conocimientos sagrados y profanos, según se consideraba en aquel entonces. *De Universo*—originalmente conocido como *De natura rerum*—expresa cabalmente el enciclopedismo de la Alta Edad Media y sostiene una jerarquía de los sentidos que resulta un elemento clave para comprender el mundo sensorial de los siglos VIII y IX.

¹ English translation by Gabriela A. Arnuz.



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Palabras clave: Rábano Mauro / De Universo / Historia de los sentidos / Carolingios / Sensorialidad

Introduction to Rabanus Maurus

Rabanus Maurus (780-856) was a renown character of the society of its times². He was first a Benedictine monk, then he became the abbot of Fulda and, finally, the archbishop of Mainz. His name, which is spelled differently depending on the written record consulted—Hrabanus, Rabanus, Rhabanus, Reabanus, Raban, Rabano—, is connected to the words *hraban* (raven in Old High German) and *Magnentius*, the last of which sometimes is included preceding his last name. *Maurus*, his last name, is probably a reference to his residence in Mainz. In 802, Rabanus Maurus studied theology and liberal arts with Alcuin, from whom he received his last name, in Tours. After spending a year studying, he was asked to return to Fulda, where he worked as a teacher in the monastic school, and finally became a “great teacher”. In 814, Rabanus Maurus was ordained priest and, in 822, he became the abbot of Fulda. Under his influence, the monastery became one of the most renown learning centers of the Frankish Kingdom. Between 840 and 847, Rabanus Maurus stepped down of his position and left Fulda after he saw himself being dragged into political power struggles. In 847, after he reconciled with the king, Rabanus Maurus was elected Archbishop of Mainz.

Hrabanus was said to be the greatest scholar of its times. His knowledge about the Scriptures, patristics, canon law, and liturgy was unparalleled. Rabanus Maurus’ work dealt with all areas of knowledge, both sacred and profane. He commented on almost all the books of the Old Testament, and also on the Gospel of Mathew and the Pauline epistles. Rabanus Maurus also wrote several other secular works like, for instance, *De computo*, a treatise about numbers and the calendar, *Excerptio de arte grammatica Prisciani*, a treatise about grammar, and his famous encyclopedia *De rerum naturis*, also known as *De Universo*.

Marco Formisano considers Rabanus Maurus a clear example of the scholarly interest in the organization of encyclopedic knowledge and characteristic manuals of the

² The most reliable source about the diffusion and importance of Rabanus Maurus’ work is still: DEPREUX, Philippe, LEBECQ, Stéphane, PERRIN, Michel and SZERWINIACK, Olivier (eds.), *Raban Maur et son temps*, Turnhout, Brepols Publishers, 2010.

High Middle Ages, and a rightful heir and faithful follower of such tradition³. His writings are not just a description of the moral standards, but rather a work that determined the content of the political and ideological agenda of the times⁴. Rabanus was a man focused not only on the *ecclesia*, but also on political action⁵. Owen Phelan claims that, in the context of the Carolingian cultural renovation, his writings helped consolidate the Christianization of Europe, from a doctrinal and a territorial perspective⁶.

The Carolingian cultural revival⁷ mixed both emulation and innovation⁸ with the aim of strengthening Carolingian power⁹, and Rabanus Maurus became a renown and highly relevant part of it.

De Universo

Rabanus Maurus wrote the twenty books that make up *De Universo*—originally called *De natura rerum*—roughly between 842 and 847. It can be considered a wide recompilation of all the knowledge available at the time, and, as such, it includes knowledge coming from a variety of fields: biblical tradition, history of the church, classic cultural tradition, the plant and animal kingdoms, the nature of the body and the soul, the seasons of human life, monsters and wonders, celestial phenomena, time measures, weights and measures, minerals and metals, organization of a kingdom, music, medicine, agriculture, war science, manual labor, nutrition, and daily life objects, among others. The work is basically a reflection of the culture of the times, and, in the 15th century,

³ FORMISANO, Marco, “Late Antiquity, New Departures”, *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature*, HEXTHER, Ralph and TOWNSEND, David (ed.), New York, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 509-534 (this expression is repeated in pages 515 and 525).

⁴ STONE, Rachel, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 198.

⁵ SEARS, Elizabeth, “Louis the Pious as Miles Christi. The Dedicatory Image in Hrabanus Maurus’s *De laudibus*”, *Charlemagne’s Heir. New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, GODMAN, Peter and COLLINS, Roger (ed.), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 605-628.

⁶ PHELAN, Owen, *The Formation of Christian Europe: The Carolingians, Baptism, and the Imperium Christianum*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 262-277.

⁷ Cf. DEPREUX, Philippe, “Ambitions et limites des réformes culturelles à l’époque carolingienne”, *Revue Historique*, N°623, 2002/3, pp. 721-753 and SOT, Michel, “Renovatio, renaissance et réforme à l’époque carolingienne: recherches sur les motse”, *Au Moyen Age, entre tradition antique et innovation (Actes du 131e Congrès des Sociétés historiques et scientifiques, Grenoble, 2006)*, BALARD, Michel and SOT, Michel (dir.), Paris, CTHS, 2009, pp. 117-140.

⁸ MCKITTERICK, Rosamond (ed.), *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

⁹ DE JONG, Mayke, “The Empire that was always decaying: The Carolingians (800-888)”, *Medieval Worlds*, N°2, 2015, pp. 6-25.

it was wrongly titled *De Universo libri XXII*, the name that it is still used today to refer to it¹⁰. The author's intention, as far as it is stated, was to write an encyclopedic manual for preachers based on older sources, mostly on the *Etymologiae* by Isidore of Seville, even though the organization of the material included was decided by him.

Guglielmo Cavallo has analyzed this work using the manuscript kept in the archive of the Montecassino Abbey, produced during the times of abbot Teobaldo (1022-1035). The codex, which is actually rather large (35×49 cm.), is made up of 530 pages of beneventan script and it is beautifully illustrated with 360 miniatures and figures in vivid colors¹¹. In addition, William Schipper has published a catalog of all the preserved available manuscripts of *De Universo*, that allows us to track the influence of the benedictine scholar¹².

In Mar del Plata, the Medieval Research and Study Group (Grupo de Investigación y Estudios Medievales) is preparing a Spanish edition of this great medieval encyclopedia, based on the version published as a part of Jacques Paul Migne's *Patrología Latina* (MPL111, 0009-0614B) and using the works of G. Cavallo and W. Schipper as added counter references¹³

¹⁰ CHIESA, Paolo, "Medieval Latin Texts in the Age of Printing", HEXTOR and TOWNSEND, 2012, pp. 573-613 (reference p. 575). *De Universo* is the title of the German edition of 1425 that is kept in the Vatican Apostolic Library of Rome (Pal. Lat., 291, f. 75 v). This work is also known as *De rerum naturis* (that is the title of the copy available in the Bibliotheca Augustana: http://www.h-s-augsburg.de/~harsch/hra_rm00.html, and <http://www.intratext.com/X/LAT0385.htm> and the name used in the recent edition of *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis* by Brepols) and *Liber de origibus rerum*.

¹¹ CAVALLO, Guglielmo (ed.), *Rabano Mauro 'De rerum naturis', Codex Casinensis 132 / Archivio dell'Abbazia di Montecassino*, Pavone Canavese, Priuli e Verlucca, 1994; CAVALLO, Guglielmo (ed.), *L'Universo medievale: il manoscritto cassinese del De rerum naturis di Rabano Mauro*, Ivrea, Priuli e Verlucca, 1996.

¹² SCHIPPER, William, "Rabanus Maurus, *De rerum naturis*: A Provisional Checklist of Manuscripts", *Manuscripta* N°33, 1989, pp. 109-118, SCHIPPER, William, "Annotated Copies of Rabanus Maurus' *De rerum naturis*", *English Manuscripts Studies, 1100-1700* N°6, 1995, pp. 1-13, SCHIPPER, William, "The Earliest Manuscripts of Rabanus' *De rerum naturis*", *Pre-Modern Encyclopedic Texts*, BINKLEY, Peter (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 1997, SCHIPPER, William, "Montecassino 132 and the Early Transmission of Hrabanus' *De rerum naturis*", *Archa verbi* Vol.4, 2007, pp. 103-126.

¹³ RÁBANO MAURO, *De Universo Libri XXII*, edited by CALABRESE, Claudio César, DOMÍNGUEZ, Carlos, PALAZZO, Éric and RODRÍGUEZ, Gerardo, translated by Carlos DOMÍNGUEZ, Mar del Plata, Grupo de Investigación y Estudios Medievales – Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, 2018 (in press). All the quotes belong to this edition: PL III, cols. 9-614.

Introduction to the History of the senses

Sensory subjects, and in particular those related to the sense of hearing, have become a very productive research field thanks to the interdisciplinary work of the various areas of study part of the Social Sciences. This collaboration has shown that the senses, other than just simply perceiving physical phenomena, also play an important role in the transmission of cultural values: we experience our bodies and the world through our senses, as David Le Breton¹⁴ says.

Sensory experience has historicity, because the senses are the product of a particular and specific social space. This claim has been proved, through the analysis of different examples, by Mark Smith¹⁵. Moreover, more recently, the collection *Cultural History of the Senses* edited by Constance Classen, has addressed the many, and complex, connections between history, culture, and the senses¹⁶.

As regards the medieval world, there are four remarkable works worth mentioning: *L'invention chrétienne des cinq sens dans la liturgie et l'art au Moyen Âge* (2014) by Éric Palazzo and the collective works *Penser les cinq sens au Moyen Âge. Poétique, esthétique, éthique* (2015), directed by Florence Bouchet and Anne-Hélène Klinger-Dollé, *Les cinq sens au Moyen Âge* (2016), directed by Éric Palazzo, and *Les cinq sens entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance. Enjeux épistémologiques et esthétiques*, directed by Olga Anna Dulh and Jean-Marie Fritz (2016). These works deal with the role taken by the five senses in medieval western culture. They highlight the centrality of the senses in key aspects of the liturgy, theology and Christian art, and take on the task of distinguishing and identifying references to sensory experience in patterns of thought and representations. The presence of the senses usually follows their medieval hierarchical classification—sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch—even though each sense, rather than being in isolation, maintains complex and variable relationships with the rest, something that is commonly known or referred to as *intersensoriality*.

It is in this area of studies, that is, the one interested in analyzing the intricate presence of the senses in medieval culture, that are carried out the research projects ‘Paisajes

¹⁴ LE BRETON, David, *El sabor del mundo. Una antropología de los sentidos*, Buenos Aires, Nueva Visión, 2007.

¹⁵ SMITH, Mark, *Sensing the Past. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching in History*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007.

¹⁶ CLASSEN, Constance (coord.), *A Cultural History of the Senses*, New York and London, Bloomsbury, 2014.

sensoriales, sonidos y silencios de la Edad Media (I) y (II) (Sensory landscapes, sounds, and silences in the Middle Ages)" and "Paisajes sonoros medievales (Medieval soundscapes)", organized by the Medieval Research and Study Group (Grupo de Investigación y Estudios Medievales) belonging to the Center of Historical Studies (Centro de Estudios Históricos) of the Humanities Department (Facultad de Humanidades) of the National University of Mar del Plata (Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata), Argentina. Both projects focus particularly on sonority¹⁷.

Rabanus Maurus analyzed from the perspective of the History of the senses

Rabanus Maurus takes up Matthew XXV's mystical appreciation of the senses: a hierarchical organization and a mystical appraising of the five senses is proposed when referring to sensory matters¹⁸. In this work, nature is seen as a text that must be read and interpreted. *De Universo* offers a symbolic interpretation of the world, based on an analogous and hermeneutical analysis of nature and writing, letters and spirit, and history and allegory¹⁹.

This paper focuses on the analysis of the sixth book, because in it Rabanus Maurus deals with the following topics: (I) The man and its parts, (II) The location and the habits of the human body, and (III) How the limbs can be attributed to the Devil.

The first section, "The man and its parts", in relation to the questioning about the nature of men, says here it is necessary to speak out loud because the Lord means the Savior, who was not, like the rest of mankind, born out of two humans, but out of the Holy Spirit and then came out of the womb of the blessed, always virgin, Mary, as if it were the husband of a glorious marriage bed.

The idea of speaking out loud is present throughout Rabanus writing, because, for him, words are vehicles capable of triggering deep transformations and expressing the divine will and wisdom. Sometimes, spirit means the soul of the donkeys. That is why

¹⁷ RODRÍGUEZ, Gerardo and CORONADO SCHWINDT, Gisela (dir.), *Paisajes sensoriales, sonidos y silencios de la Edad Media*, Mar del Plata, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata – Grupo de Investigación y Estudios Medievales, 2016; RODRÍGUEZ, Gerardo and CORONADO SCHWINDT, Gisela (dir.), *Abordajes sensoriales del mundo medieval*, Mar del Plata, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata – Grupo de Investigación y Estudios Medievales, 2017.

¹⁸ PALAZZO, Éric, *L'Invention chrétienne des cinq sens dans la liturgie et l'art au Moyen Âge*, Paris, du Cerf, 2014, p. 75.

¹⁹ Cf. GREGORY, Tullio, "Naturaleza", *Diccionario razonado del Occidente Medieval*, LE GOFF, Jacques and SCHMITT Jean-Claude, (ed.), Madrid, Akal, 2003, pp. 589-598 (especially pp. 589-590).

Solomon says: The spirit of the oaths must descend to the lower (*Ecles III*). Sometimes it means the voice of men, that is why the Apostle says: If I beg with my tongue, my spirit prays. My mind is unfruitful. I begged with my spirit and I will pray with my mind (*I Cor XIV*). Sometimes it means a celestial reprimand. That is why the Psalm says: Because of your reprimand, Lord; because of the inspiration of the spirit of your rage (*Psalm XVII*). This shows the preachers of the word, inflamed by the Holy Spirit, that rebuke the delinquent people to abandon the evil ways.

Theory of the senses

The bodily senses are five: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Out of which there are two that turn on and off, and the rest are always active. The senses are called like that because through them the soul, with subtlety, incites the body with the eagerness of feeling the things that are present in front of them, like, for example, the ones that are in front of the eyes. In addition, each sense has its own nature. What must be seen is perceived through the eyes. What must be heard is sensed through the ears. The softness and harshness are measured through touch. Flavors are perceived through the sense of taste, and the smell through the nose.

In many parts of the Holy Scripture the five senses of the body are expressed mystically though the number five, like in the parable of the Savior where the story of a servant who received five gifts from the Lord (*Mat XXV*) and they returned to him augmented is told. Similarly, there are other parts where the number five is mentioned with a mystical connotation like, for instance, the five books of the law or the five senses of the body. It must be noted that the very same senses that are described as part of the exterior surface of men, manifest themselves, in their own way, on the inside of men, because spiritual matters are perceived through the spiritual senses.

Following this reasoning, Rabanus Maurus quotes and references different biblical works in order to justify his interpretation of the divine voice in the chant of the Deuteronomy. To him, it says: Come, come that I am God and there is no other one besides me (*Deut XXXII*). And in the psalm: Listen, my people, to my law and lend an ear to the words that come out of my mouth (*Psalm LXXVII*). And in the Gospel says the same Truth: He who has ears to hear must hear (*Mat IX*). And in the Apocalypse: He who has ears to hear must hear what the Spirit says to the churches (*Apoc. II*). And in the Psalter:

Taste and see how soft the Lord is (*Psalm XXXIII*). The Apostle: We are the good smell of Christ, either in the ones who perish, or in the ones who save themselves (*II Cor II*). And in the Gospel the Lord shows that the bleeding woman touched him more with her faith than with her body, when he says: Somebody touched me, because I felt virtue coming out of me (*Luc VIII*). One must be very careful to distinguish what belongs to the senses of the body and what belongs to the dignity of the soul, so that the order is not disrupted and a wrong assessment that goes against the truth is carried out.

Then, Rabanus moves on to explain the name given to each sense:

- 1) It is called sight because it is livelier than the rest of the senses, more important, and faster. It creates more memorable imprints in the mind. It is the neighbor to the brain, where it all springs. That is why it is mentioned even with the things that belong to the other senses, lets say ‘Look at how it sounds; look at the good taste it has, etc.. The eyes (*oculi*) are called like that because they are hidden behind the lashes, so that they do not get hurt by chance, or because they hide light, that is, a secret possessed on the inside. Among all the other senses they are the closest to the soul. The eyes show glimpses of the mind. That is why disturbances in the mood and joy can be seen in them.
- 2) The sense of hearing is the receptor of the voice, that is, the sounds created by the manipulation of the airflow.
- 3) The smell perceives the scents in the air.
- 4) The sense of touch feels the air. The sense of smell is affected by the scents. The sense of touch perceives and interacts with things, and it extends the feelings to all the body. Touching makes us aware of things that we could not have discovered using other senses. The sense of touch can manifest in two ways, because that which interacts with this sense can be either inside or outside the body.
- 5) The sense of taste is called that way in reference to the throat (*guttur*).

Rabanus Maurus begins describing the head, which is considered the first part of the body, it receives that name because all the senses and nerves begin there and it is

where the vigor is created. There is where all the senses appear. From there, in some way, the soul directs the body.

The ears (*aures*) have that name because they receive (*haurire*) voices. See what happened to Vigil: And he received the voice in his ears. The Greeks call the voice *auden* and *aures*, which *means* ears in Latin; it may come from there. The voice reverberates in them and a sound that can be perceived by the sense of hearing is created. Through the ears we can mystically interpret, as we already said, the inner ear of the soul, or the hear the obedience to the precepts of God, or hear the faith or the intellect. That is why it is written: He who has ears to hear must hear (*Mat XI*), that is, receive in the heart.

And also negatively: Charge your ears, unless you want to hear (*Isaiah VIII*). We pray God to listen to our prayers. That is why the psalmist is mentioned: Listen, Lord, my justice; care for my prayer (*Psalm XVI*), that is, he receives our pleas with mercy. To pay attention belongs to the eyes; to accept pleas is done through the ears.

All these terms are associated, that is how we must understand this effect. Because all that is heard through the ears, or seen by the eyes, or touched by the hand, or tasted by the palate, or smelled by the nose, to God is noticed thought only one virtue, that of contemplation. The mouth (*os*) is called like that because through it, as if through a door (*ostium*) we incorporate food and release spit, or because through it food is absorbed and words come out.

Sometimes the mouth represents the very same Verb, that is, Jesus Christ, who announces his will and that of his father, and sometimes that of the Holy Spirit, like when it says: The Lord's mouth has spoken (*Isaiah III*). The one who makes others speak is speaking. Because even if a speech is delivered by an unknown ministry, nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is talking, and his directions will be spread, like the blessed Apostle Peter says: Never has the prophesy been pronounced willingly by humans, the saint men spoke moved by the Holy Spirit (*II Peter I*).

Some other times it represents the inner thought of men, like when it says: The mouth of the righteous will ponder on the wisdom (*Psalm XXXVIII*), because it does not say ponder, but will ponder, in the future. Here we must take the mouth as a thought, because the tongue is the one who says. Will ponder on the wisdom, not through the readings of the Scriptures, but through the purest vision of the heart. There, wisdom is not obtained through letters but it is rather given by celestial generosity.

The mouth can also be seen negatively, when it is said to the sinner: Your mouth was full of meanness and your tongue devised the crime. The mouth represents the malicious thought and the tongue the false praise and the ill advice. The mouth can be the origin of a good or bad locution: Through your words you will be justified and by your words you will be doomed (*Mar XII*).

Sometimes the mouth is taken as the words, like in the Apocalypse: And in their mouth, that is, their words, no lie could be heard (*Apoc XIV*). And in the psalm: That my mouth speak only with wisdom and that the meditation of my heart becomes my judiciousness (*Psalm XLVIII*). Wisdom belongs to the teaching of the divine; Judiciousness to judge what is likely. That is why the whole divine speech is administered through these two virtues. They are called like that because they lick. We already said that the upper is the lip, and some call the lower one *labrum* in Latin, instead of *laabium*, because it is thicker. Some others call the female lip labium, in Latin, and labrum that of the males. The lips sometimes represent a hidden word, and sometimes an expressed one. The hidden, according to Solomon: The lips of the righteous consider nice things, and the mouth of the heathens wicked things (*Psalm X*). That of the psalm is evident: My lips will praise you (*Psalm LXII*). And also in the Song of the Songs the husband tells the wife: your lips are like cochineal thread and your word is sweet (*Cant IV*). The cochineal thread must be understood as the doctrine of truth. The lips of the bride are scarlet red because the Church does not stop preaching about the value of the blood of the Lord, with which he was redeemed and his preaching shines with the passion of charity. And the groom also tells the bride: Her lips are lilies that drip pure myrrh (*Cant V*).

Her lips are words of doctrine; they are lilies, because they promise the clarity of the Kingdom of God and drip the scent of myrrh because they despise the present pleasures in order to be able to preach the way towards it.

Just like the palate is above the tongue and underneath it the words are formed, that is how our locutions must subdue to the celestial wisdom and the spiritual doctrine in order to be uttered with use and profit to the listeners.

The trachea is the way to mouth and the noses and through it the voice is transmitted to the tongue so that the latter can articulate the words.

What is understood as the lips other than the speech? What do the teeth describe if not the apostles? Why immediately after the passion they knew how to talk about the Lord, but were afraid of preaching or criticizing the vices of the heathens.

The limbs are part of the body. The articulations are the ones who join the bones. Their name, *arctus*, comes from *arctare*, squeeze. There are main articulations, like the ones on the arms, and minor ones, like the ones on the fingers.

In a positive sense, the limbs mean the holy and the chosen ones by God, part of the body of Christ, who is the head, and the Church is his body, and the limbs his limbs. After a long argument the Apostle shows that there are some more glorious and strong limbs, and some dishonorable and weak ones, as a result of the difference in virtue and the ability to learn and teach.

It can be said that the eyes are in the body of Christ when they meditate about the law of the Lord day and night. The ears are the ones who diligently listen to the word of God; the mouth and the tongue are the holy preachers. The hands are those who do good deeds and give alms. The feet are the ones that follow God's commandments and do other similar things it would take too long to enumerate.

However, the limbs have another meaning when they refer to the parts of the devil because, in the same way that all saints belong to the body of Christ, all the iniquitous belong to the body of the Antichrist. This topic was further developed on Rabanus' following works. The devil's bones are compared to tubes of air because like a hard metal they make the sound of a good speech but do not have the interest of living well.

In the third part, "How the limbs can be attributed to the devil", everything is repeated but with the opposite meaning.

It must be known that when the limbs or the acts of men are attributed to the devil this is not done according to the reality but following an allegory, because in many parts of the Holy Scriptures these images can be found.

The devil is the head of all evil. That is why one can read about the Habakkuk: You knocked the head of the house of the impious (*Habac III*). The body of the devil are the wicked men that is why one can read about Behemoth in the book of the blessed Job: His back is a row of shields (*Job XLI*). His eyes and teeth are the heretics and all the bad doctors, as it is written in the aforementioned book: His eyes are like the eyelids in the morning; around his teeth lies the horror (*Job XLI*).

The noses of the devil are his bad inspirations: and from his noses smoke comes out The mouth of the devil are his words. With which he speaks to the hearts of all the men through dark thoughts, like it is written in Job: From his mouth a flame comes out (*Job XLI*). The tongue of the devil is the wisdom of this century or the dogma of the heretics, like it is mentioned in Job: And you will tie his tongue with a rope (*Job X*).

The bones of the devil are powerful and strong for the evil or the heretics, like it is mentioned in Job: his bones are like windpipes; his cartilage is less strong than his bones (*Job X*).

The breath of the devil is his hidden inspiration with which he makes desires of carnal love burn in the hearts of the sinners, like it is said in Job: his breath makes coal burn (*Job XLI*).

The face of the devil means the arrival of the Antichrist or his open malice, like it was stated in Job: shortage precedes his face. The meat of the devil is his weakest part and the less capable of sinning, like it is said in Job: his meats are glued to him (*Job XLI*).

The testicles of the devil are the heretics and the bad thoughts that very subtly oppress the sinners, like it says in Job: the serves of his testicles are intertwined. The tail of the devil represents the Antichrist or the habit of sinning, following: he straightens his tail like a cedar. To say that the devil sleeps it is to say that it is in the hearts of the wicked, like in Job: under his shadow sleeps a hidden reedbed. The devil grazes enjoying the sins of the wicked, like it is written in Job: The hills produce grass (*Job XL*).

Final comments

Rabanus Maurus' work summarizes and exemplifies theoretically the sensory hierarchy during the Carolingian times. It is worth mentioning the striking similarities between his theory of the senses and the, then actual, political and social context: an analysis of the treatment and portrayal of the senses of sight and hearing in *De Universo*, for instance, could even provide a theoretical justification to the importance of the *missi dominici* as the eyes and ears of the king.