245 Ship (*Navis*)

Ship is found triply. First was of innocence in which Adam was placed so that he might navigate to heaven, but she brought forth the shipwreck when Adam sinned. Then God made a ship of the synagogue although he loaded it with earthly works, but she made the shipwreck when she killed Christ. Therefore, he made a third, that is, the Church which like a ship in its beginning it was narrow on account of the scarcity of believers and in its ending narrow, that is, in the time of the antichrist on account of the scarcity of good people, but in the middle it is broad because in the middle it is broadened through teaching. According to Chrysostom, *Super Mattheum*,[[1]](#endnote-1) this ship, that is, the Church, has God as the sailor, the angels as oarsmen. It carries the choirs of saints to heaven. It is furnished with a mast of the cross which directs the sail of the evangelical faith. And put in motion by the breath of the Holy Spirit it delivers them to the port of paradise.

For again it is compared to the just man because it has in it the substance integrity. For if it has an opening it will sink, so the holy man has the sense integrity lest anything harmful would enter.

¶ But, alas, because many have a perforated heart where evil thoughts enter, they have an open mouth where offensive speech exits.

Note, more about the factor of the senses, above chapter [225] Physician [*Medicus*].

¶ Again, a ship is deep and concave, so the just man through humility, Eccli. 3[:20]: “The greater you are, the more humble yourself in all things.” For the higher part in the ship is more exposed to the winds, because of this the holy man enters the ship for a reason.

¶ Again, a ship is closed and joined on the bottom and broad on the top, so the good man is closed to temptations, he ought to be open to celestial inspirations.

¶ The example of Christ who worked less among his own.

Again, in a bird all are held to obey the pilot bird.

¶ Again, an empty ship vacillates, loaded too much it sinks, loaded in the middle it is stable. So, if the flesh is not castigated it becomes proud, if it is vexed too much it grows infirm, if duly regulated it is useful to the soul. Where Hugh of Saint Victor,[[2]](#endnote-2) whoever afflicts his flesh without measure, he kills the inhabitant, and if he more than restores it with food, he nourishes the enemy. Therefore, it is to be nourished so that it may serve what is demanded, not that it becomes proud.

Again,[[3]](#endnote-3) one boards a ship because of escaping many things, Gen. 7[:7], the example of Noah, but now the flood cleanses the fault, Ose. 4[:2]: “Cursing, and lying have overflowed, and blood has touched blood.” Therefore, whoever does not board the ship in these parts with Christ, it is versified concerning that one in that of Exod. [15:10]: “They sunk as lead in the mighty waters.”

Second,[[4]](#endnote-4) the ship is boarded for going across the waters, in the example of Christ, Matt. 15[:39]: “He went up into a boat,” etc. So, we must if we wish to arrive to our fatherland Jerusalem, otherwise we will die short of the promised land. Not so they who “trust their lives even to a little wood, and are saved,” Wis. 14[:5]. Certainly, he is ignorant who tries to pass through the sea.

Third,[[5]](#endnote-5) a ship is boarded for merchandising, Prov. the last chapter [31:14]: “She is like the merchant's ship.” Our merchandise are tears and groans which if they have the wind through the spirit they lead to the hoped-for port.

¶ Fourth,[[6]](#endnote-6) a ship is boarded for fishing by the example of the disciples of Christ, John the last chapter [21:3]. They do this who intend the profits of the souls.

¶ But here note that many while they intend too much temporal profits sink, and many from the fishermen are in effect pirates so that they take off their clothes not that they may live knowledgeable, as it happens concerning many rectors of the Church.

Again,[[7]](#endnote-7) it is said concerning the holy soul, Prov. last chapter [31:14]: “She is like the merchant's ship.” For three things a ship is made: to catch fish, to come to profit, to press the enemy. So, the holy one is whoever catches fish, bears profit, or conquers enemies.

¶ Concerning the first, he catches fish, that is, men from the sea of the worldly life, Psal. [106:23]: “They that go down to the sea in ships, doing business,” that is, fishers of souls.

¶ And in some respects the world is compared to the sea because of its instability, because of its insatiability, and because of its bitterness.

Concerning which, see above chapter [240] World [*Mundus*] and chapter [222] Sea [*Mare*].

Second, it carried profit, that is, it bears virtues, which is figured in 3 Kings 10[:22]: “Solomon’s navy, went to Tharsis, and brought from thence gold, and silver, and elephants' tusks, and apes, and peacocks.” It is explained there, whence Gregory says, *Super Ezechielem*,[[8]](#endnote-8) God does this in the hearts of men, what should happen in the regions of the nations. For what one region does not have, another region should bear it there by ships, and the contrary.

Third, the ship conquers the enemies, for God by this one, namely, conquers the devil with his army, 2 Macc. 12[:10]: He boarded the ship so that he might fight the king of Egypt, that is, the prince of darkness.

1. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* (PG 56:755-756): habens Deum gubernatorem, angelos remiges, portans choros omnium sanctorum, erecta in medio ipsa salutari arbore crucis, in qua evangelicae fidei vels suspendens, flante Spiritu sancto, ad portum paradise et securitatem quietis aeternae deducitur. Et haec quidem navis, quamuis per hoc tempus vitae, per has tentationes saeculi naviget. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Hugh of St. Victor, *Expositio in Regulam Beati Augustini* 3 (PL 176:893): Qui carnem suam supra modum affligit, civem suum occidit. Si plus quam oportet alimentis reficit, hostem nutrit. Sic ergo nutrienda est ut serviat; sic domanda ut non superbiat. In omni abstinentia hoc semper attendendum est ut vitia exstinguantur, non caro. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 3.21 (p. 284): Primo ergo dico ascendunt homines navem ad diluvium evitandum; Genesis 8: “Inundaverunt aque super terram,” idest peccata. Peccatum autem solebat habere duas ripas, scilicet timorem Domini et pudorem seculi; sed modo aque peccatorum per tales rivulos dirivantur, quia iuxta dicta Osee 4: “Maledictum, furthom, homicidium inundaverunt.” Et ideo ab isto diluvio peciit liberari Psalmista dicens: “Non me demergat tempestas aque.” [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 3.21 (p. 284): Secundo ascenditur navis ad transfretandum; Matthei 9: “Ascendit naviculam et transfretavit et venit in civitatem suam.” Sic et nos si volumus ad civitatem nostram pervenire supernam oportet hand navem, scilicet fidem Ecclesie, ascendere, cuius malus Christus est.... [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 3.21 (p. 286): Tercio ascenditur navis ad mercandum. Unde de anima devota dicitur Proverbiorum ultimo: “Facta est quasi navis institoris de longe portans panem suum.” ... [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 3.21 (p. 286): Quarto ascenditur navis ad piscandum, sicut patet de beato Petro, Iohannis ultimo. Sic nos debemus navem, idest doctrinam Ecclesie, ascendere ad piscandum peccatores de quis peccatorum attrahendo verbo pariter et exemplo. ... [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 3.21 (p. 286): Unde de anima devota dicitur Proverbiorum ultimo: “Facta est quasi navis institoris de longe portans panem suum.” ... [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Gregory, *Homiliae in Ezechielem* 10.34 (PL 76:900): Hoc itaque omnipotens Deus agit in cordibus hominum, quod facit in regionibus terrarum. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)