

AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS HIPPONENSIS

Team: Algerian Old Boys

Position: Leg gully

Status: Retired to Florida

Better known as Saint Augustine (354–430), Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis was a key contributor to the philosophical and theological foundations of early Christianity. He spent most of his life in small cities in North Africa. He also made a notable move to southern Europe, where he was so profoundly disappointed by his students that he gave up trying to teach and moved back to the North African boondocks. Apparently, some problems are timeless in academia.

Philosophers get all twittery over his discussions of the soul, evil, free will, and predestination, but for the study of politics, his distinction between the world of God and the world of men has to be considered a crucial text in the development of Western political thought. *De Civitate Dei (On the City of God)* (circa 413–427) provides some key arguments that helped reconcile the divine mandate of kings with the less than divine nature of many, if not most, who inherited high royal office. The book itself might best be interpreted as a reaction to the sacking of Rome. It can be read as an argument for why God didn't protect Rome from the Visigoths and why Christianity was not to blame. Fundamental to this argument and much of Augustine's thought was the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly, which he defined largely as a dichotomy between the material and spiritual. Essentially, Augustine blamed the material, hedonistic excesses of the Romans for its downfall and prescribed a heavy dose of ascetic Christian spirituality, decongestants, and plenty of clear liquids.

It is not possible to catalogue all of the different ways that the tremendous volume of Augustine's writings, much of which survives to this day, influenced the development of Western thought, particularly in philosophical and theological studies. However, the argument for the separation of the spiritual and material realms became one of the key elements of the theory of the **divine right of kings**.



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