

Augustine

### **Biography / Overview**

Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus, 354–430 CE) was a North African theologian, philosopher, and bishop whose writings shaped Western Christianity and Latin thought. Born in Thagaste (present-day Souk Ahras, Algeria), Augustine received a classical education in rhetoric at Carthage, taught in Rome and Milan, and converted to Christianity in 386 under Ambrose's influence. After returning to Africa, he became bishop of Hippo Regius (Annaba, Algeria) in 395, leading a monastic community while combating Manichaeism, Donatism, and Pelagianism. His vast corpus—sermons, letters, treatises, and autobiographical *Confessions*—blended Neoplatonic metaphysics with biblical exegesis. Augustine's followers formed no formal school, but his authority dominated medieval theology and scholasticism.

Augustine's thought has been interpreted by modern scholars as a synthesis of faith and reason, interiority and grace, with proto-existential and psychological depth. His emphasis on original sin, predestination, and the City of God contrasted with Pelagian optimism and classical civic virtue. Augustine's work eclipsed earlier Latin fathers (Tertullian, Cyprian) and endured through Carolingian, medieval, and Reformation revivals.

Sources:

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Augustine – <https://iep.utm.edu/augustine/>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Augustine – <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/augustine/>

World History Encyclopedia: Saint Augustine – [https://www.worldhistory.org/Saint\\_Augustine/](https://www.worldhistory.org/Saint_Augustine/)

### **Bibliography / Primary Sources**

Major Published Works:

*Confessions* (Confessiones)

Composed c. 397–400 CE.

Survives in 13 books, an autobiographical prayer tracing sin, conversion, and divine grace.

Original language: Latin.

*City of God* (De civitate Dei)

Composed c. 413–426 CE.

Survives in 22 books, a Christian philosophy of history against pagan critics after Rome's 410 sack.

*On Christian Doctrine* (De doctrina Christiana)

Composed c. 396–427 CE.

Survives in 4 books, a hermeneutical manual for scriptural interpretation and preaching.

*On the Trinity* (De Trinitate)

Composed c. 399–419 CE.

Survives in 15 books, exploring psychological analogies for the Triune God.

Key Manuscripts and Editions:

Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (CSEL): Critical editions of Augustine's works – <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/ksbm/forschung/csel>

Loeb Classical Library: *Confessions* (trans. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond) – <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674996936>

New City Press: *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* (50+ vols., ongoing) – <https://www.newcitypress.com>

Patrologia Latina (Migne): Full Latin texts – <https://patristica.net/latina>

### **Birth Date / Death Date**

Born: November 13, 354 CE, Thagaste, Numidia (Roman Africa)

Died: August 28, 430 CE, Hippo Regius, during Vandal siege

Source: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Augustine – <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/augustine/>

### **Notable / Best-Known For**

Author of *Confessions*: First spiritual autobiography in Western literature; model of introspective writing.

Doctrine of Original Sin: Humans inherit guilt and concupiscence from Adam; grace alone enables virtue.

Two Cities Theology: Earthly city (self-love) vs. City of God (love of God); framework for Christian political theory.

Just War Theory: Early criteria for legitimate warfare (authority, cause, intention).

Sources:

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Augustine – <https://iep.utm.edu/augustine/>

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (new ed., California, 2000) – <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520227576>

### **Famous Quotes**

“Tu excitas ut laudare te delectet, quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.”

(“You arouse us to take joy in praising you, for you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”)

– Augustine, *Confessions* 1.1.1 (New City Press – <https://www.newcitypress.com>)

“Da mihi castitatem et continentiam, sed noli modo.”

(“Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet.”)

– Augustine, *Confessions* 8.7.17

“Dilige et quod vis fac.”  
 (“Love, and do what you will.”)

– Augustine, *In epistulam Joannis ad Parthos* 7.8

### **Major Works / Textual Contents**

*Confessions*:

Books 1–9: Autobiographical (childhood, youth, conversion in Milan garden).

Books 10–13: Philosophical (memory, time, creation exegesis of Genesis).

*City of God*:

Books 1–10: Critique of pagan religion and philosophy.

Books 11–22: Origin, progress, and destiny of the two cities.

*On Christian Doctrine*:

Books 1–3: Signs, interpretation, hermeneutical rules.

Book 4: Rhetoric and preaching.

Source:

Augustine Works Index – New City Press – <https://www.augustinianstudies.org/works>

### **Influences / Intellectual Context**

Manichaeism: Early adherence (373–382); later refuted dualism.

Neoplatonism: Plotinus and Porphyry via Victorinus; enabled intellectual conversion.

Pauline Theology: Romans 7–9 shaped grace and predestination.

Latin Fathers: Ambrose, Cyprian, Tertullian; rhetorical and pastoral models.

Sources:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Augustine – <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/augustine/>

O'Donnell, James J. *Augustine: A New Biography* (HarperCollins, 2005)

### **Legacy and Modern Significance**

Historical Dominance: Official theologian of Western Church; cited in councils (Orange 529, Trent).

Medieval Synthesis: Anselm, Aquinas, Bonaventure built on Augustinian illumination and voluntarism.

Reformation Divide: Luther (Augustinian monk) and Calvin amplified grace; countered by Jesuit Molinism.

Modern Reappraisal: Existential (Kierkegaard), psychological (Freud), linguistic (Wittgenstein), political (Arendt).

Sources:

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self* (Harvard, 1989)

Elshstain, Jean Bethke. *Augustine and the Limits of Politics* (Notre Dame, 1995)

### **Modern Moments / Impact on 21st Century**

1967–2000: Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo* (new ed. 2000) revolutionized biographical and social-contextual study (UC Press – <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520227576>).

1991–Present: New City Press launched 50-volume modern English translation, completed major phases by 2020s.

Ongoing (2000s–Present): Full Latin texts and translations digitized via Library of Latin Texts (Brepols) and Patrologia Latina Database.

Ongoing (2010s–Present): Augustine mandatory in theology, philosophy, and great-books curricula (e.g., Oxford, Notre Dame, Toronto).

Ongoing (2000s–Present): Stanford and Internet Encyclopedias of Philosophy maintain comprehensive, peer-reviewed entries (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/augustine/>, <https://iep.utm.edu/augustine/>).

2010: Vatican sponsored International Augustine Congress in Rome; proceedings published by Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum.

Ongoing (2020s): Augustinian themes of memory, time, and evil cited in cognitive science, AI ethics, and post-secular theory (e.g., APA panels, Royal Institute of Philosophy).

### **Suggested Reading and Resources**

#### **A. Secondary Literature (Scholarship)**

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (new ed.). University of California Press, 2000 – <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520227576>

O'Donnell, James J. *Augustine: Confessions* (3-vol. commentary). Oxford University Press, 1992.

Van Fleteren, Frederick, ed. *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*. Eerdmans, 1999.

Harrison, Carol. *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity*. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Mathews, Gareth B. *Augustine* (Blackwell Great Minds). Wiley-Blackwell, 2005.

#### **B. Archival or Online Sources**

New City Press: *Works of Saint Augustine* (full catalog) – <https://www.newcitypress.com>

Patrologia Latina Database (via Brepols) – <https://www.brepolonline.net/series/pl>

Augustinian Studies Journal (Villanova) – <https://www.augustinianstudies.org>

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Augustine – <https://iep.utm.edu/augustine/>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Augustine – <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/augustine/>