

POLITICAL THEORY: brief overview for 17 C. background

Medieval Christianity:

St. Augustine, City of God 413 AD

Latin title: *De civitate Dei contra paganos*

(On the City of God, against the pagans)

410 Sack of Rome by Visigoths (German tribe)

why did “eternal Rome” fall to the barbarians?

City of Man (Rome) versus **City of God** (Heaven)

Rome: only a human creation, therefore mortal & will perish

state as punishment for original sin (of Adam)

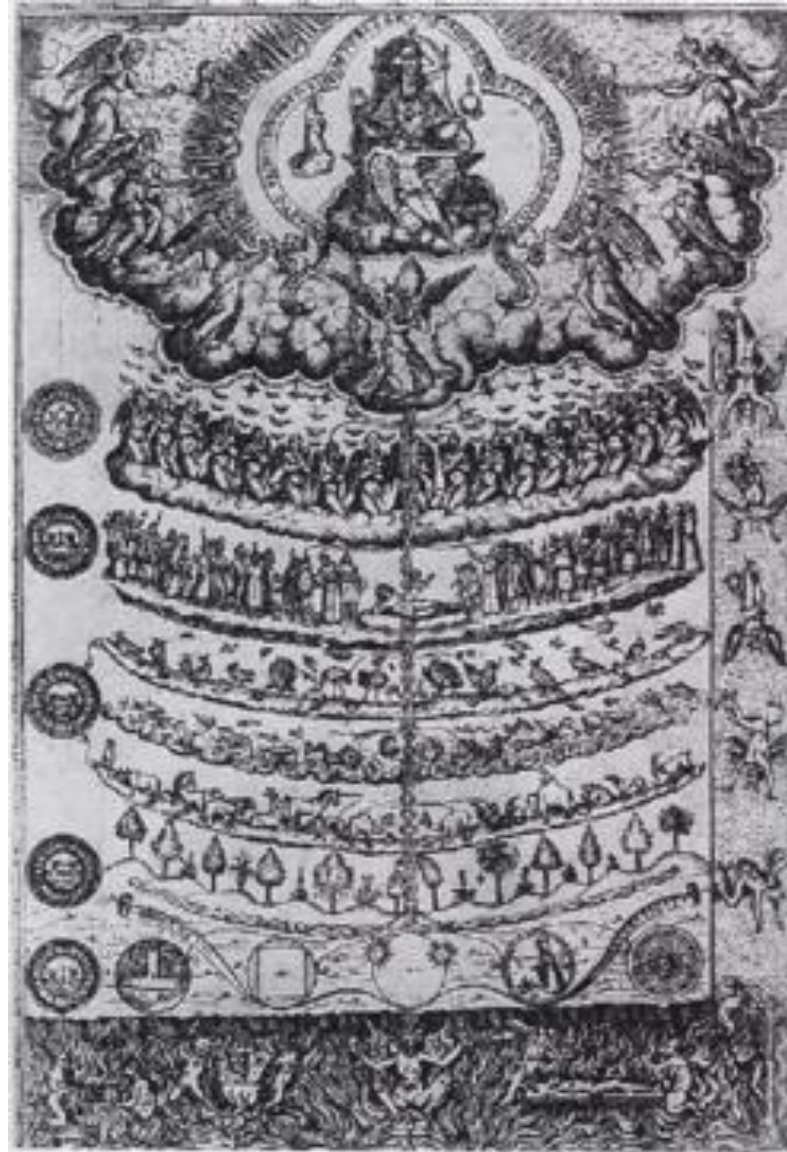
includes injustice, inequality

City of God: eternal, not of this earth, includes only the saved

Medieval philosophy:

Hierarchical universe
“Great Chain of Being”
from God to lesser
forms of being

“Natural law” is of
divine origin



God in Heaven with
the saved

Angels (pure spirits)

Humans

Animals

Plants

Rocks

Hell = evil spirits,
damned souls

Medieval political theory

Germanic kingship: elective -- warriors select the King
Tacitus *Germania* (late 1st century, 98 AD)

Medieval feudal monarchy:

Limitations on power of king by nobles, church

Estates represent corporate social bodies:

clergy, nobility, bourgeoisie (town dwellers)

must consent to taxation, legislation

Medieval genre of advice to princes: idealized image of ruler

Speculum principis, or “mirror for princes”

displays virtues of the “good Christian king”

Renaissance realism:

Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince 1513 Florence, Italy

context of French & Hapsburg invasions of Italy, 1494-1530

beginning of modern political theory:

separation of politics from religious virtue

asserts the autonomy of the political sphere:

traditional morality does not apply to politics

stability of state is the highest political goal:

duty of the Prince is to defend his borders, to stay in power

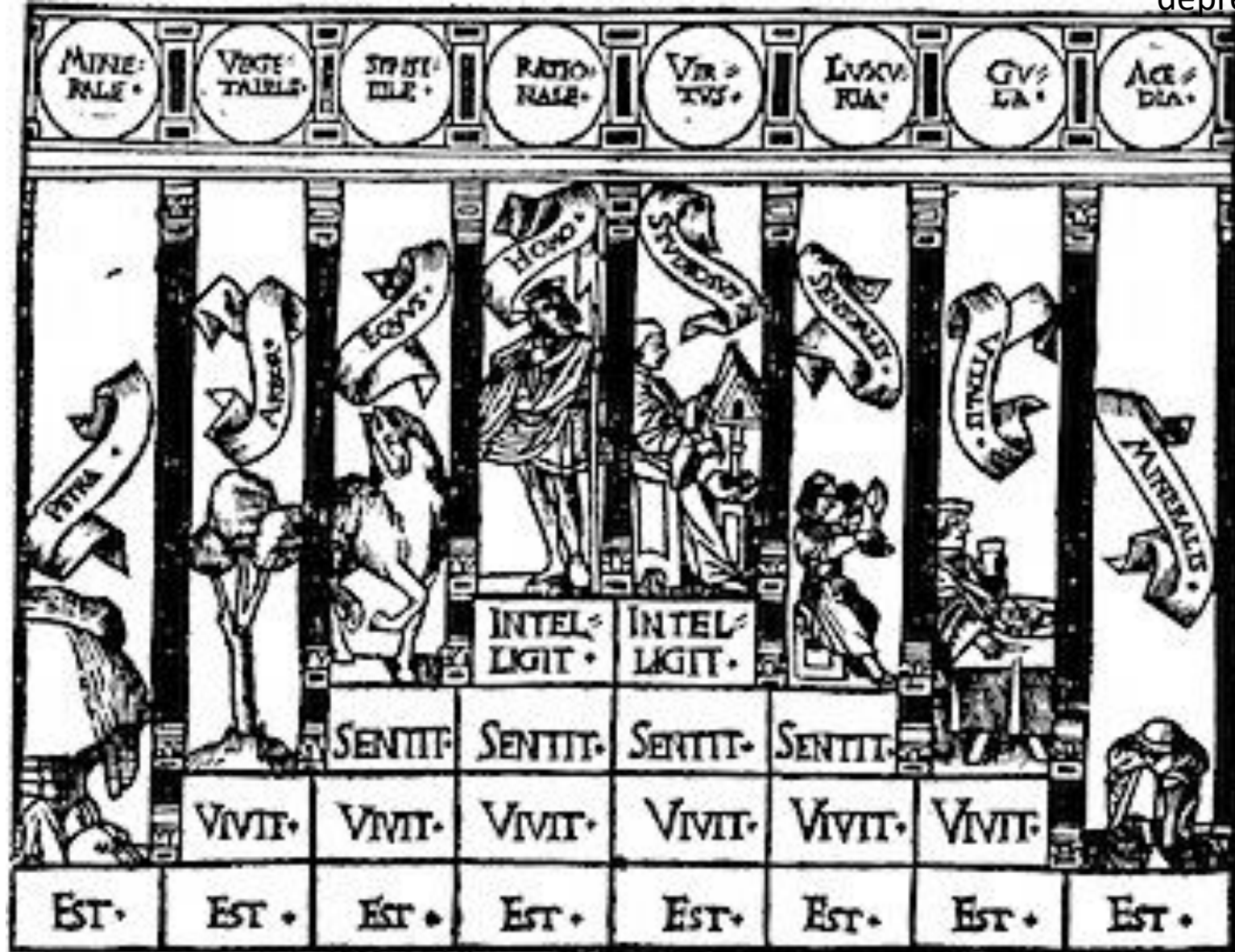
Mineral Vegetable Sensible Rational Virtue Lust/ Gluttony Acedia
 Sensuality (severe depression)

16th C. France

Renaissance
 Humanist version
 of the
 Chain of Being

What's missing?
 God & Angels

Vocabulary:
 Est = it exists, it is
 Vivit = it lives
 Sentit + it feels, has
 sensation, moves
 Intelligit =
 he understands



16th C Reformation:

Martin Luther, Germany:

Princes have the right to choose the religion

1555 Peace of Augsburg: *cuius regio, eius religio*

(whose the reign, his the religion)

no right of resistance to any Prince, Christian, Moslem or pagan
persecuted Christians must choose emigration or martyrdom

Calvin in Geneva: context: in exile fro French Catholic King

Swiss revolt against Holy Roman Empire

“God may raise up hidden avengers from among his people”

Calvinist origins of

17th C: Religious theory of revolution against tyrants

French Huguenots in French Wars of Religion 1562-1589

English Puritans in Civil War 1640-1689

17th C: Divine Right of Kings

traditional descending theory of power from God above is
re-asserted by monarchs (both Protestant & Catholic)

England Stuarts: against Calvinist Puritan revolutionaries (302 Week 2)

France Louis XIV: against Calvinist French Huguenots (302 Week 4)

17th C: Contract theories of government

ascending theory of origin of state by agreement from below

based on theoretical concepts of
state of nature, state of war, social contract

Hobbes, Leviathan 1651 support for absolutism
either Stuart Kings or Cromwell

Locke, Second Treatise of Government 1689
social contract argument for limited, constitutional govt.