

THE PAPAL STATES

The Papal States were also known as the States of the Church and the Patrimony of St. Peter.

4th-5th Century - The Donation of Constantine -- The concept of the Papal States is traced to the "Donation of Constantine" a forged statement supposedly issued by Constantine the Great to Pope Sylvester in the 4th century. It was said to have granted to the popes spiritual authority over all Christendom and temporal power over all of Rome and the Western Roman Empire. It included extensive land grants in Italy, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily and Africa. The document is recognized as a fabrication and was probably written in the 5th century. This document was held to be genuine until the 14th century and was used to support the political position of the papacy. Its original purpose was probably to strengthen the popes against the Byzantine Empire in Italy.

Constantine allowed the Church to own property and over the centuries the Church had acquired extensive lands in Italy and Sicily from Constantine himself and from wealthy Romans throughout the centuries. The Church was to become the largest land owner in Italy.

8th Century - The Donation of Pepin 756 -- Around 750 Pope Stephen II asked for aid from the Franks against the Lombards. After defeating the Lombards, Pepin III The Short, father of Charlemagne and founder of the Carolingian Dynasty, gave the lands between Rome and Ravenna to the pope, rather than return it to the Byzantine emperors. The pope reciprocated by giving approval of the deposition of the last Merovingian king of the Franks and recognition of the Carolingian Dynasty.

14th Century -- When Pope Clement V left Rome, he established the papacy in Avignon, France. The period of 1309-1377 has been called the Avignon Papacy. It became part of the papal states when Clement VI purchased it from Joanna I, queen of Naples in 1348.

16th Century -- After a period of decline, Julius II became pope (1503-13) and greatly strengthened the papal holdings, often through violent means.

19th Century -- After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars Rome was seized in 1808 and the papal states were annexed to the French Empire in 1809.

Under pressure from the process of Italian unification, by 1860 only Rome was left to Pius IX and his safety had to be guaranteed by French troops.

When French troops withdrew from Rome in 1870, the troops of Victor Emmanuel moved on Rome. The Pius IX retreated to the Vatican to become a voluntary "prisoner of the Vatican", refusing to surrender his claim a rightful ruler of Rome, leaving Italy without clear title to their capital city.

In an attempt to solve the crisis, the Italian government in 1870 issued the Law of Guarantees. The pope was granted the rights of a king - immunity from arrest, inviolability of his person. It also provided that the pope could have his own personal guard, he could freely communicate with bishops and foreign countries, he was granted his own postal and telegraph service and he was given exclusive use (not ownership) of the Vatican, the Lateran palaces and Castel Gandolfo. Finally, he was given a cash grant of about \$600,000 per year.

Pius IX refused to accept the Guarantees because they were unilateral and would only accept a bilateral agreement in the form of a treaty between two sovereign powers. The "Roman Question" was not settled until 1929 by the terms of the Lateran Treaty signed between the Holy See and the government of Mussolini which restored ownership of Vatican City. This agreement also compensated the Church for the loss of the papal states to the tune of 750 million lire in cash and 1 billion lire in 5% government, negotiable bonds.

21th Century - The Vatican City State -- It is the smallest sovereign state in the world (108.7 acres). It is completely surrounded by the city of Rome. It contains St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican Palace where the pope resides, Vatican Museum, Library (70,000 manuscripts and 800,000 volumes), Vatican Radio, Television, Observatory, Press, the Vatican Gardens, art galleries, archives, post office, bank, newspaper, and railroad.

The Vatican also controls other properties - major basilicas including St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major and St. Paul. It also has office buildings for the Curia (Vatican bureaucrats) and the papal villa, Castel Gandolfo 15mi. outside of Rome.

Normal population about 1,000 with 4,000 employees. (When asked how many people worked in the Vatican, Pope John XXIII replied - about half)

The term Holy See and Vatican City State are not synonymous. The Holy See is the sovereign spiritual and diplomatic authority exercised by the pope. The Vatican City State is the political entity and territory in which the Holy See is located and that guarantees the Holy See's independence. Over 100 nations have formal diplomatic relations with the Holy See, not with the Vatican City State.