

Melchiades (d. 314) and his successor, Sylvester I. were identified as the recipients of the "Donation of Constantine", an act whereby Constantine supposedly gave "Rome" and the western world to the authority of the Roman Bishop. The document was proven to be a forgery in the 15th century by the papal secretary, Valla, and confirmed by the scholastic, Pico della Mirandola. But you can see how the claim was building.

Damasus, (d. 384) was a competent bishop albeit somewhat worldly (we are told) and was instrumental in the claims in that he received from Theodosius I a famous document "De Fide Catholica" in which the emperor pledged the empire to the catholic faith as it was understood in Rome.

Innocent I (d. 471) made sweeping claims for his authority over all Christendom.. arguing on the basis of apostolic succession and seeing Rome as head of the western church, en toto.

Leo I (d. 461) as a powerful motivator was responsible for the celibate degrees for western clergy and for having Valentinian III give an edict placing all western clergy under his jurisdiction. Leo is one of the five greatest of the Roman Bishops.

Felix III (d. 492) made considerable inroads on the authority of Constantinople when he succeeded in having Arcadius, bishop of Constantinople, condemned as a monophysite. His successor, Gelasius (d. 496) argued that only God was above the Roman Bishop..no imperial power could go contrary to the Bishop's will.

Symmachus (d. 514) expressed very forcibly that the Roman Bishop is above all men and cannot be judged by any other than God. This would apply to personal conduct as well as to office conduct. It was a sweeping claim anticipating the dogma of papal infallibility that would be formally announced at the the First Vatican Council.