



The **Donation of Constantine** is a **forged Roman imperial decree** by which the 4<sup>th</sup>-century emperor Constantine the Great supposedly transferred authority over Rome and the western part of the Roman Empire to the **Pope**. Forged probably in the **8<sup>th</sup> century**, it is a document which has always been produced in support of **claims of political authority by the papacy**. **Lorenzo Valla**, an Italian Catholic priest and Renaissance humanist, is credited with first exposing the forgery with solid philological arguments in **1439–1440**, although the document's authenticity had been repeatedly contested since 1001. Lorenzo Valla argued in his philological study of the text that the language used in the manuscript could not be dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The language of the text suggests that the manuscript can most likely be dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Valla believed the forgery to be so obvious that he leaned toward believing that the Church had knowledge that the document was inauthentic. Valla further argued that **papal usurpation of temporal power had corrupted the church, caused the wars of Italy, and reinforced the "overbearing, barbarous, tyrannical priestly domination."**

Click on the Pictures for the **EBOOK** of Valla's Treatise and two **VIDEOS** on this Topic