**Great Pyramid of Giza**

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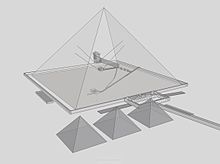
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| [Kheops-Pyramid.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kheops-Pyramid.jpg) | |
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| **Ancient name** | Khufu's Horizon |
| **Type** | [True Pyramid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramid) |
| **Height** | 146.5 metres (481 ft), *ancient*  138.8 metres (455 ft), *contemporary* |
| **Base** | 230.4 metres (756 ft) |

The **Great Pyramid of Giza** (also known as the **Pyramid of Khufu** or the **Pyramid of Cheops**) is the oldest and largest of the three [pyramids](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_pyramids) in the [Giza Necropolis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giza_Necropolis) bordering what is now [El Giza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_G%C3%AEza), [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt). It is the oldest of the [Seven Wonders of the Ancient World](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Wonders_of_the_Ancient_World), and the only one to remain largely intact.

Based on a mark in an interior chamber naming the work gang and a reference to [fourth dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_dynasty_of_Egypt) [Egyptian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egypt) Pharaoh [Khufu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khufu),[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-archive.org-1)[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-bbc.co.uk-2) [Egyptologists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptologists) believe that the pyramid was built as a tomb over a 10 to 20-year period concluding around 2560 BC. Initially at 146.5 metres (481 feet), the Great Pyramid was the [tallest man-made structure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tallest_buildings_and_structures_in_the_world#History) in the world for over 3,800 years. Originally, the Great Pyramid was covered by casing stones that formed a smooth outer surface; what is seen today is the underlying core structure. Some of the casing stones that once covered the structure can still be seen around the base. There have been varying scientific and alternative theories about the Great Pyramid's construction techniques. Most accepted construction hypotheses are based on the idea that it was built by moving huge stones from a [quarry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quarry) and dragging and lifting them into place.

There are three known chambers inside the Great Pyramid. The lowest chamber is cut into the bedrock upon which the pyramid was built and was unfinished. The so-called[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza" \l "cite_note-3) Queen's Chamber and King's Chamber are higher up within the pyramid structure. The Great Pyramid of Giza is the only pyramid in Egypt known to contain both ascending and descending passages. The main part of the Giza complex is a setting of buildings that included two [mortuary temples](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mortuary_temples) in honour of Khufu (one close to the pyramid and one near the Nile), three smaller pyramids for Khufu's wives, an even smaller "satellite" pyramid, a raised causeway connecting the two temples, and small [mastaba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mastaba) tombs surrounding the pyramid for nobles.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:007_Khufu.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf11/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:007_Khufu.jpg)

Transparent view of Khufu's pyramid from SE. Taken from a 3d Model

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It is believed the pyramid was built as a tomb for [Fourth Dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_dynasty_of_Egypt) [Egyptian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egypt) pharaoh [Khufu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khufu) and was constructed over a 20-year period. Khufu's [vizier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vizier_(Ancient_Egypt)), [Hemon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hemon), or [Hemiunu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hemiunu), is believed by some to be the architect of the Great Pyramid.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-4) It is thought that, at construction, the Great Pyramid was originally 280 Egyptian [cubits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cubits) tall, 146.5 metres (480.6 ft) but with [erosion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erosion) and absence of its [pyramidion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramidion), its present height is 138.8 metres (455.4 ft). Each base side was 440 [cubits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cubits), 230.4 metres (755.9 ft) long. The mass of the pyramid is estimated at 5.9 million [tonnes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonne). The volume, including an internal hillock, is roughly 2,500,000 cubic metres (88,000,000 cu ft).[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-5) Based on these estimates, building this in 20 years would involve installing approximately 800 tonnes of stone every day. Similarly, since it consists of an estimated 2.3 million blocks, completing the building in 20 years would involve moving an average of more than 12 of the blocks into place each hour, day and night. The first precision measurements of the pyramid were made by [Egyptologist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptology) [Sir Flinders Petrie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flinders_Petrie) in 1880–82 and published as *The Pyramids and Temples of Gizeh*.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-6) Almost all reports are based on his measurements. Many of the casing stones and inner chamber blocks of the Great Pyramid were fit together with extremely high precision. Based on measurements taken on the north eastern casing stones, the mean opening of the joints is only 0.5 millimetres wide (1/50th of an inch).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-7)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PyramidDatePalms.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf11/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PyramidDatePalms.jpg)

Great Pyramid of Giza from a 19th-century [stereopticon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereopticon) card [photo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photo)

The pyramid remained the [tallest man-made structure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tallest_buildings_and_structures_in_the_world#History) in the world for over 3,800 years,[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-oxford1-8) unsurpassed until the 160-metre-tall (520 ft) spire of [Lincoln Cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lincoln_Cathedral) was completed c. 1300. The accuracy of the pyramid's workmanship is such that the four sides of the base have an average error of only 58 millimetres in length.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-9) The base is horizontal and flat to within ±15 mm (0.6 in).[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-10) The sides of the square base are closely aligned to the four cardinal compass points (within four [minutes of arc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minute_of_arc))[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-11) based on [true north](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_north), not [magnetic north](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnetic_north),[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-12) and the finished base was squared to a mean corner error of only 12 [seconds of arc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_of_arc).[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-13) The completed design dimensions, as suggested by Petrie's survey and subsequent studies, are estimated to have originally been 280 [cubits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cubits) high by 440 cubits long at each of the four sides of its base. The ratio of the perimeter to height

### Construction theories[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Great_Pyramid_of_Giza&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Construction theories)]

*Main article:* [*Egyptian pyramid construction techniques*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_pyramid_construction_techniques)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Khufu_seal.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf11/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Khufu_seal.jpg)

Clay seal bearing the name of Khufu from the great pyramid. On display at the [Musée du Louvre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mus%C3%A9e_du_Louvre).

Many alternative, often contradictory, theories have been proposed regarding the pyramid's construction techniques.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-23) Many disagree on whether the blocks were dragged, lifted, or even rolled into place. The [Greeks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greeks) believed that slave labour was used, but modern discoveries made at nearby workers' camps associated with construction at Giza suggest it was built instead by tens of thousands of skilled workers. Verner posited that the labour was organized into a [hierarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hierarchy), consisting of two *gangs* of 100,000 men, divided into five *zaa* or *phyle* of 20,000 men each, which may have been further divided according to the skills of the workers.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-24)

One mystery of the pyramid's construction is its planning. [John Romer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Romer_(Egyptologist)) suggests that they used the same method that had been used for earlier and later constructions, laying out parts of the plan on the ground at a 1-to-1 scale. He writes that "such a working diagram would also serve to generate the architecture of the pyramid with precision unmatched by any other means."[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-25) He also argues for a 14-year time span for its construction.[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-Romer81-26)

A modern construction management study, in association with [Mark Lehner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Lehner) and other Egyptologists, estimated that the total project required an average workforce of 14,567 people and a peak workforce of 40,000. Without the use of pulleys, wheels, or iron tools, they used [critical path analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_path_analysis) to suggest the Great Pyramid was completed from start to finish in approximately 10 years.[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Giza#cite_note-civilengineer-27)

# Erechtheion

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| **Erechtheum** | |
| Ἐρέχθειον **(Greek)** | |
| [Erechtheum, Acropolis (3472295971).jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Erechtheum,_Acropolis_(3472295971).jpg) | |
| **General information** | |
| **Type** | * Ancient Temple ([Ancient Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fifth-century_Athens) and [Roman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Greece) Period) * Church ([Byzantine Period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Greece)) * Palace ([Frankish Period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankokratia)) * Residence of the Turkish commander's harem ([Ottoman Period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Greece)) |
| **Architectural style** | [Ionic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ionic_order) |
| **Location** | [Athens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens), [Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece) |
| **Current tenants** | Museum |
| **Construction started** | 421 BC[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-LangmeadGarnaut2001-1) |
| **Completed** | 406 BC[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-LangmeadGarnaut2001-1) |
| **Owner** | [Greek government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Greece) |
| **Design and construction** | |
| **Architect** | may have been [Mnesicles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mnesicles) |

The **Erechtheion** ([Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language): Ἐρέχθειον) is an ancient [Greek temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_temple) on the north side of the [Acropolis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acropolis_of_Athens) of [Athens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athens) in [Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece) which was dedicated to both [Athena](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athena) and [Poseidon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poseidon).

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## Architecture[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Erechtheion&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: Architecture)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Grece_athenes_erechtheion2.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Grece_athenes_erechtheion2.jpg)

Érechthéion, detail

The temple as seen today was built between 421 and 406 BC. Its [architect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architect) may have been [Mnesicles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mnesicles), and it derived its name from a shrine dedicated to the legendary [Greek hero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_hero) [Erichthonius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erichthonius_of_Athens). The sculptor and mason of the structure was [Phidias](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phidias), who was employed by [Pericles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pericles) to build both the Erechtheum and the [Parthenon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parthenon). Some have suggested that it may have been built in honor of the legendary king [Erechtheus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheus), who is said to have been buried nearby. Erechtheus was mentioned in [Homer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer)'s [*Iliad*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iliad) as a great king and ruler of Athens during the [Archaic Period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaic_Greece), and Erechtheus and the hero Erichthonius were often [syncretized](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syncretism). It is believed to have been a replacement for the [Peisistratid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peisistratid) temple of [Athena Polias](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athena_Polias) destroyed by the [Persians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire) in 480 BC. [[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-Garland1992-2)

The need to preserve multiple adjacent sacred precincts likely explains the complex design. The main structure consists of up to four compartments, the largest being the east [cella](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cella), with an [Ionic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ionic_order) [portico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portico) on its east end. Other current thinking[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-3) would have the entire interior at the lower level and the East porch used for access to the great altar of Athena Polias via a balcony and stair and also as a public viewing platform.

The entire temple is on a slope, so the west and north sides are about 3 m (9 ft) lower than the south and east sides. It was built entirely of [marble](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marble) from [Mount Pentelikon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentelikon), with [friezes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frieze) of black limestone from [Eleusis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleusis) which bore sculptures executed in relief in white marble. [[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-Watkin2005-4) It had elaborately carved doorways and windows, and its columns were ornately decorated (far more so than is visible today); they were painted, gilded and highlighted with gilt bronze and multi-colored inset glass beads. The building is known for early examples of [egg-and-dart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egg-and-dart), and [guilloche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guilloche) [ornamental moldings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ornamental_molding).[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-5)

### The Porch of the Caryatids[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Erechtheion&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: The Porch of the Caryatids)]

On the north side, there is another large porch with six Ionic columns, and on the south, the famous "Porch of the Maidens", with six draped female figures ([caryatids](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caryatid)) as supporting columns. The porch was built to conceal the giant 15-ft beam needed to support the southwest corner over the [metropolis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolis), after the building was drastically reduced in size and budget following the onset of the [Peloponnesian war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peloponnesian_war).

## Religious functions[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Erechtheion&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Religious functions)]

The Erectheum was associated with some of the most ancient and holy relics of the Athenians: the [Palladion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palladion), which was a [xoanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xoanon) (defined as a wooden effigy fallen from heaven - not man-made) of [Athena Polias](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athena_Polias) (Protectress of the City); the marks of [Poseidon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poseidon)'s [trident](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trident) and the salt water well (the "salt sea") that resulted from Poseidon's strike; the sacred olive tree that sprouted when [Athena](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athena) struck the rock with her [spear](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spear) in her successful rivalry with Poseidon for the city; the supposed burial places of the mythical kings [Cecrops](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecrops_I) and [Erechtheus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheus); the sacred precincts of Cecrops' three daughters, [Herse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herse), [Pandrosus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandrosus) and [Aglaurus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aglaurus); and those of the tribal heroes [Pandion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandion) and [Boutes](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Boutes&action=edit&redlink=1).

The eastern part of the building was dedicated to Athena Polias, while the western part served the cult of Poseidon-Erechtheus and held the altars of Hephaistus and Voutos, brother of Erechtheus. [[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-Hurwit1999-6) [[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-7) According to the myth, Athena's sacred snake lived there.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-8) The snake was fed honey-cakes by [Canephorae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canephorae), the priestesses of Athena [Polias](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polias), by custom the women of the ancient family of [Eteoboutadae](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Eteoboutadae&action=edit&redlink=1), the supposed descendants of the hero Boutes. The snake's occasional refusal to eat the cakes was thought a disastrous [omen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omen)[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)].

## Late antiquity and the Middle Ages[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Erechtheion&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Late antiquity and the Middle Ages)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Erechtheum1.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Erechtheum1.JPG)

Erechtheion, from the south

The Erechtheion underwent extensive repairs and reformation for the first time during the 1st century B.C., after its catastrophic burning by the Roman general [Sulla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucius_Cornelius_Sulla).[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-9) The intact Erechtheum was extensively described by the [Roman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Rome) geographer [Pausanias](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pausanias_(geographer)) (1.26.5 - 27.3), writing a century after it had been restored in the 1st century AD. [[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-Jenkins2006-10)The building was altered decisively during the early [Byzantine period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire), when it was transformed into a church dedicated to the [Theometor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theotokos). With this alteration many architectural features of the ancient construction were lost, so that our knowledge of the interior arrangement of the building is limited.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-11)[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-12) It became a palace under [Frankish rule](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankokratia) and the residence of the Turkish commander's harem in the [Ottoman period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Greece).[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-13) [[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-14)

## Modern times[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Erechtheion&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Modern times)]

In 1801 one of the caryatids and the north column of the east porch together with the overlying section of the entablature were removed by [Lord Elgin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Bruce,_7th_Earl_of_Elgin) in order to decorate his Scottish mansion, and were later sold to the [British Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Museum) (along with the pedimental and frieze sculpture taken from the Parthenon). [[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-LangmeadGarnaut2001-1)[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-Smith1892-15) [[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-16)Athenian legend had it that at night the remaining five Caryatids could be heard wailing for their lost sister. Elgin attempted to remove a second Caryatid; when technical difficulties arose, he tried to have it sawn to pieces. The statue was smashed, and its fragments were left behind. It was later reconstructed haphazardly with cement and iron rods. During the [Greek War of Independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_War_of_Independence) the building was bombarded by the Ottomans and severely damaged, [[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-17) the ceiling of the north porch was blown up and a large section of the lateral walls of the cella was dismantled.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-18)

The Erechtheum went through a period of restoration from 1977 to 1988. [[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-Goette2001-19)

Previous attempted restorations by Greece damaged the roof of the Caryatids' porch with concrete patches, along with major damage caused by pollution in Athens.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-daily_mail-20) In 1979, the five original Caryatids were moved to the [Old Acropolis Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Acropolis_Museum) and replaced *in situ* by exact replicas. Scientists were working in 2005 to repair the damage using [laser](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laser) cleaning.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-daily_mail-20)

The restoration of Erechtheion received the [Europa Nostra award](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union_Prize_for_Cultural_Heritage_/_Europa_Nostra_Awards).[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-21)

## Recent events[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Erechtheion&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: Recent events)]

One of those original six figures, removed by Lord Elgin in the early 19th century, is now in the British Museum in London. The Acropolis Museum holds the other five figures, which are replaced onsite by replicas. The five originals that are in Athens are now being exhibited in the new Acropolis Museum, on a special balcony that allows visitors to view them from all sides. The pedestal for the Caryatid removed to London remains empty. As of 2011, they are being cleaned by a specially constructed laser beam, which removes accumulated soot and grime without harming the marble's patina. Each Caryatid is cleaned in place, with a television circuit relaying the spectacle live to museum visitors. Although of the same height and build, and similarly attired and coiffed, the six Caryatids are not the same: their faces, stance, draping, and hair are carved separately; the three on the left stand on their right knee, while the three on the right stand on their left knee. Their bulky, intricately arranged hairstyles serve the crucial purpose of providing static support to their necks, which would otherwise be the thinnest and structurally weakest part.

The Caryatids [have been transferred](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Acropolis_Museum#Move_of_the_Marbles) from the [old Acropolis Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Acropolis_Museum) to the [New Acropolis Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Acropolis_Museum). [[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-MeagherNeave2007-22) The first was carried over safely on December 9, 2007, via an elaborate system of aerial cranes.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-23)[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-24) Within the new museum, the statue was reunited with its long-missing [sandalled](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandal) left foot, which was identified among rubble in the 1980s. The reassembled Caryatid, along with the four others remaining in Athens, are having their decayed [patina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patina) thoroughly restored by laser, and are on display in the new museum.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-25) Visitors today can see this process being carried out via camera in the gallery where the Caryatids are displayed in the museum. The [Acropolis Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acropolis_Museum) was awarded for its innovative program of the conservation and the restoration of the Caryatids by the [International Institute for Conservation (IIC)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Institute_for_Conservation) in Vienna, with the Keck Award 2012.[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-26)[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erechtheion#cite_note-27)

**St. Peter's Basilica** ([Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language): *Basilica Sancti Petri*; [Italian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language): *Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano*) is a [Late Renaissance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Renaissance) church located within [Vatican City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_City).

Designed principally by [Donato Bramante](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donato_Bramante), [Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo), [Carlo Maderno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Maderno) and [Gian Lorenzo Bernini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gian_Lorenzo_Bernini), St. Peter's is the most renowned work of [Renaissance architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance_architecture)[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-BF1-1) and remains one of the [largest churches in the world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_church_buildings_in_the_world).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-size-2) While it is neither the [mother church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_church) of the [Roman Catholic Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) nor the [cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral) of the [Bishop of Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocese_of_Rome), St. Peter's is regarded as one of the holiest Catholic sites. It has been described as "holding a unique position in the Christian world"[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-3) and as "the greatest of all churches of [Christendom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christendom)".[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-BF1-1)

By Roman Catholic tradition, the basilica is the burial site of its namesake [Saint Peter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter), one of the [twelve apostles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostle_(Christian)) of Jesus and, also according to tradition, the first Bishop of Rome and therefore first in the line of the [papal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal) succession. Tradition and some historical evidence hold that [Saint Peter's tomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter%27s_tomb) is directly below the altar of the basilica. For this reason, many Popes have been interred at St. Peter's since the Early Christian period. There has been a [church on this site](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_St._Peter%27s_Basilica) since the time of [Constantine the Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_the_Great). Construction of the present basilica, replacing the [Old St. Peter's Basilica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_St._Peter%27s_Basilica) of the 4th century, began on 18 April 1506 and was completed on 18 November 1626.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-cathency-4)

St. Peter's is famous as a place of [pilgrimage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrimage), for its [liturgical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liturgy) functions. Because of its location in the Vatican, the Pope presides at a number of services throughout the year, drawing audiences of 15,000 to over 80,000 people, either within the Vatican Basilica, or in St. Peter's Square.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-5) St. Peter's has many strong historical associations, with the [Early Christian church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Christian_church), the papacy, the [Protestant Reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation) and [Counter-reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter-reformation), and with numerous artists, most significantly [Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo). As a work of architecture, it is regarded as the greatest building of its age.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-BF-6) St. Peter's is one of the four churches of Rome that hold the rank of [Major Basilica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_basilica). Contrary to popular misconception, it is not a cathedral as it is not the seat of a bishop; the [*cathedra*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedra) of the Pope (as Bishop of Rome) is located in the [Archbasilica of St. John Lateran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbasilica_of_St._John_Lateran).

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[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vatican_City_at_Large.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vatican_City_at_Large.jpg)

St. Peter's Basilica from *ponte Umberto I*, on [River Tiber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Tiber). The iconic dome dominates the skyline of Rome.

St. Peter's is a church in the Renaissance style located in the Vatican City west of the [River Tiber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Tiber) and near the [Janiculum Hill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janiculum_Hill) and [Hadrian's Mausoleum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Mausoleum). Its central [dome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dome) dominates the skyline of Rome. The basilica is approached via [St. Peter's Square](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter%27s_Square), a forecourt in two sections, both surrounded by tall colonnades. The first space is oval and the second trapezoid. The façade of the basilica, with a [giant order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant_order) of columns, stretches across the end of the square and is approached by steps on which stand two 5.55 metres (18.2 ft) statues of the 1st century apostles to Rome, Saints [Peter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter) and [Paul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Paul).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Pinto-7)[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-8)

The basilica is [cruciform](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cruciform) in shape, with an elongated nave in the [Latin cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_cross) form but the early designs were for a centrally planned structure and this is still in evidence in the architecture. The central space is dominated both externally and internally by one of the largest domes in the world. The entrance is through a [narthex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narthex), or entrance hall, which stretches across the building. One of the decorated bronze doors leading from the narthex is the [Holy Door](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Door), only opened in [Holy Years](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Year).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Pinto-7)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:0_Place_Saint-Pierre_-_Vatican_(4).JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:0_Place_Saint-Pierre_-_Vatican_(4).JPG)

St Peter's, Bernini's colonnade and Maderno's fountain

The interior is of vast dimensions when compared with other churches.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-cathency-4) One author wrote: "Only gradually does it dawn upon us – as we watch people draw near to this or that monument, strangely they appear to shrink; they are, of course, dwarfed by the scale of everything in the building. This in its turn overwhelms us."[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-9)

The nave which leads to the central dome is in three bays, with piers supporting a barrel-vault, the highest of any church. The nave is framed by wide aisles which have a number of chapels off them. There are also chapels surrounding the dome. Moving around the basilica in a clockwise direction they are: The [Baptistery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptistery), the Chapel of the [Presentation of the Virgin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presentation_of_the_Virgin), the larger Choir Chapel, the [Clementine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Clement_I) Chapel with the altar of [St Gregory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregory_the_Great), the [Sacristy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacristy) Entrance, the left [transept](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transept) with altars to the [Crucifixion of St Peter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter), [St Joseph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Joseph) and [St Thomas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_the_Apostle), the altar of the [Sacred Heart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_Heart), the Chapel of the Madonna of Colonna, the altar of St. Peter and the Paralytic, the apse with St. Peter's [Cathedra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedra), the altar of St. Peter raising Tabitha, the altar of the [Archangel Michael](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archangel_Michael), the altar of the [Navicella](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navicella_(mosaic)), the right transept with altars of [St Erasmus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Erasmus), Saints Processo and Martiniano, and [St Wenceslas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wenceslaus_I,_Duke_of_Bohemia), the altar of [St Basil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Basil), the Gregorian Chapel with the altar of the Madonna of Succour, the larger Chapel of the [Holy Sacrament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Sacrament), the Chapel of [St Sebastian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Sebastian) and the Chapel of the Pietà.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Pinto-7) At the heart of the basilica, beneath the high altar, is the *Confessio* or *Chapel of the Confession*, in reference to the confession of faith by St. Peter, which led to his martyrdom. Two curving marble staircases lead to this underground chapel at the level of the Constantinian church and immediately above the burial place of Saint Peter.

The entire interior of St. Peter's is lavishly decorated with marble, reliefs, architectural sculpture and gilding. The basilica contains a large number of tombs of popes and other notable people, many of which are considered outstanding artworks. There are also a number of sculptures in niches and chapels, including [Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo)'s [*Pietà*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet%C3%A0_(Michelangelo)). The central feature is a [baldachin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baldachin), or canopy over the Papal Altar, designed by [Gian Lorenzo Bernini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gian_Lorenzo_Bernini). The [sanctuary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanctuary) culminates in a sculptural ensemble, also by Bernini, and containing the symbolic *Chair of Saint Peter*.

One observer wrote: "St Peter's Basilica is the reason why Rome is still the center of the civilized world. For religious, historical, and architectural reasons it by itself justifies a journey to Rome, and its interior offers a palimpsest of artistic styles at their best..."[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-10)

The American philosopher [Ralph Waldo Emerson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Waldo_Emerson) described St. Peter's as "an ornament of the earth ... the sublime of the beautiful."[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-11)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vatican_StPeter_Square.jpg)

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6b/Magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vatican_StPeter_Square.jpg)

Panorama of St. Peter's Square

**Status[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Status)]**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Konzilseroeffnung_2.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Konzilseroeffnung_2.jpg)

Bishops at [Vatican Council II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_Council_II) in 1961

St. Peter's Basilica is one of four [Papal Basilicas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_Basilica) or [Major Basilicas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_basilica) of Rome[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-12) the others being the [Basilica of St. John Lateran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_of_St._John_Lateran), [Santa Maria Maggiore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Maria_Maggiore) and [St. Paul outside the Walls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Paul_outside_the_Walls). It is the most prominent building in the [Vatican City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_City). [Its dome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter%27s_Basilica#Dome) is a dominant feature of the skyline of Rome. Probably the largest church in [Christendom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christendom),[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica" \l "cite_note-size-2) it covers an area of 2.3 hectares (5.7 acres). One of the holiest sites of Christianity in the Catholic Tradition, it is traditionally the burial site of its titular [Saint Peter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter), who was one of the [twelve apostles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_apostles) of Jesus and, according to Catholic Tradition, also the first [Bishop of Antioch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop_of_Antioch) and later first [Bishop of Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop_of_Rome), the first Pope. Although the New Testament does not mention Peter's martyrdom in Rome, Catholic tradition, based on the writings of the [Fathers of the Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fathers_of_the_Church),[[*clarification needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Please_clarify)] holds that his tomb is below the [baldachin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baldachin) and altar; for this reason, many Popes have, from the early years of the Church, been buried there. Construction of the current basilica, over the old Constantinian basilica, began on 18 April 1506. At length on 18 November 1626, [Pope Urban VIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Urban_VIII) solemnly dedicated the church.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-cathency-4)

St. Peter's Basilica is neither the Pope's official seat nor first in rank among the Major Basilicas of Rome. This honour is held by the Pope's cathedral, the [Archbasilica of St. John Lateran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbasilica_of_St._John_Lateran) which is the [mother church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_church) of all churches and parishes in communion with the [Roman Catholic Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church). However, St. Peter's is most certainly the Pope's principal church, as most Papal ceremonies take place there due to its size, proximity to the Papal residence, and location within the Vatican City walls. The "[Chair of Saint Peter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chair_of_Saint_Peter)" or [cathedra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedra), an ancient chair sometimes presumed to have been used by Saint Peter himself, but which was a gift from [Charles the Bald](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_the_Bald) and used by various popes, symbolises the continuing line of [apostolic succession](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_succession) from Saint Peter to the present pope. It occupies an elevated position in the apse, supported symbolically by the [Doctors of the Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctors_of_the_Church), and enlightened symbolically by the [Holy Spirit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Spirit).[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-13)

**History[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: History)]**

**Saint Peter's burial site[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Saint Peter's burial site)]**

*Main article:* [*Saint Peter's tomb*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter%27s_tomb)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Crepescular_rays_in_saint_peters_basilica.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Crepescular_rays_in_saint_peters_basilica.JPG)

[Crepuscular rays](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crepuscular_rays) are regularly seen in St. Peter's Basilica at certain times each day.

After the [crucifixion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion) of Jesus in the second quarter of the 1st century AD, it is recorded in the Biblical book of the [Acts of the Apostles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles) that one of his twelve disciples, Simon known as Saint Peter, a fisherman from [Galilee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galilee), took a leadership position among Jesus' followers and was of great importance in the founding of the [Christian Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity). The name Peter is "Petrus" in Latin and "Petros" in Greek, deriving from "*petra*" which means "stone" or "rock" in [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language).

It is believed by a long tradition that Peter, after a ministry of about thirty years, travelled to Rome and met his [martyrdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrdom) there in the year 64 AD during the reign of the [Roman Emperor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Emperor) [Nero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero). His execution was one of the many martyrdoms of Christians following the [Great Fire of Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Fire_of_Rome). According to [Origen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origen), Peter was crucified head downwards, by his own request because he considered himself unworthy to die in the same manner as Jesus.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-14) The crucifixion took place near an ancient Egyptian obelisk in the [Circus of Nero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circus_of_Nero).[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15) The obelisk now stands in [Saint Peter's Square](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter%27s_Square) and is revered as a "witness" to Peter's death. It is one of several ancient [Obelisks of Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obelisks_of_Rome).[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-16)

According to tradition, Peter's remains were buried just outside the Circus, on the [Mons Vaticanus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_Hill) across the [Via Cornelia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Cornelia) from the Circus, less than 150 metres (490 ft) from his place of death. The Via Cornelia (which may have been known by another name to the ancient Romans) was a road which ran east-to-west along the north wall of the Circus on land now covered by the southern portions of the Basilica and Saint Peter's Square. Peter's grave was initially marked simply by a red rock, symbolic of his name.[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed" \o "Wikipedia:Citation needed)*] A shrine was built on this site some years later. Almost three hundred years later, [Old St. Peter's Basilica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_St._Peter%27s_Basilica) was constructed over this site.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

In 1939, in the reign of Pope Pius XII, 10 years of archaeological research began, under the crypt of the basilica, an area inaccessible since the 9th century. Indeed, the area now covered by the [Vatican City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_City) had been a cemetery for some years before the Circus of Nero was built. It was a burial ground for the numerous executions in the Circus and contained many Christian burials, perhaps because for many years after the burial of [Saint Peter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter) many Christians chose to be buried near him. The excavations revealed the remains of shrines of different periods at different levels, from Clement VIII (1594) to [Callixtus II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Callixtus_II) (1123) and [Gregory I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_I) (590–604), built over an [aedicula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aedicula) containing fragments of bones that were folded in a tissue with gold decorations, tinted with the precious [murex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murex) purple. Although it could not be determined with certainty that the bones were those of Peter, the rare vestments suggested a burial of great importance. On 23 December 1950, in his pre-Christmas radio broadcast to the world, [Pope Pius XII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_XII) announced the discovery of [Saint Peter's tomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter%27s_tomb).[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-17)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Basilica_di_San_Pietro_1450.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Basilica_di_San_Pietro_1450.jpg)

A conjectural view of the [Old St. Peter's Basilica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_St._Peter%27s_Basilica) by H. W. Brewer, 1891

**Old St. Peter's Basilica[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Old St. Peter's Basilica)]**

*Main article:* [*Old St. Peter's Basilica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_St._Peter%27s_Basilica)

Old St. Peter's Basilica was the fourth-century church begun by the Emperor [Constantine the Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_the_Great) between 319 and 333 AD.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Cultures_and_Values-18) It was of typical basilical [Latin Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_Cross) form with an apsidal end at the chancel, a wide nave and two aisles on either side. It was over 103.6 metres (340 ft) long, and the entrance was preceded by a large colonnaded [atrium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atrium_(architecture)). This church had been built over the small shrine believed to mark the burial place of St. Peter. It contained a very large number of burials and memorials, including those of most of the popes from St. Peter to the 15th century. Like all of the earliest churches in Rome, both this church and its successor had the entrance to the east and the apse at the west end of the building.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-19) Since the construction of the current basilica, the name *Old St. Peter's Basilica* has been used for its predecessor to distinguish the two buildings.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-met-20)

**The plan to rebuild[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: The plan to rebuild)]**

By the end of the 15th century, having been neglected during the period of the [Avignon Papacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avignon_Papacy), the old basilica was in bad repair. It appears that the first pope to consider rebuilding, or at least making radical changes was [Pope Nicholas V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Nicholas_V) (1447–55). He commissioned work on the old building from [Leone Battista Alberti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leone_Battista_Alberti) and [Bernardo Rossellino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernardo_Rossellino) and also had Rossellino design a plan for an entirely new basilica, or an extreme modification of the old. His reign was frustrated by political problems and when he died, little had been achieved.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15) He had, however, ordered the demolition of the [Colosseum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosseum) and by the time of his death, 2,522 cartloads of stone had been transported for use in the new building.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-21)

[Pope Julius II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Julius_II) planned far more for St Peter's than Nicholas V's program of repair or modification. Julius was at that time planning his own tomb, which was to be designed and adorned with sculpture by [Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo) and placed within St Peter's.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-22) In 1505 Julius made a decision to demolish the ancient basilica and replace it with a monumental structure to house his enormous tomb and "aggrandize himself in the popular imagination".[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-BF-6) A competition was held, and a number of the designs have survived at the [Uffizi Gallery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uffizi_Gallery). A succession of popes and architects followed in the next 120 years, their combined efforts resulting in the present building. The scheme begun by Julius II continued through the reigns of [Leo X](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Leo_X) (1513–1521), [Hadrian VI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Hadrian_VI) (1522–1523). [Clement VII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Clement_VII) (1523–1534), [Paul III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Paul_III) (1534–1549), [Julius III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Julius_III) (1550–1555), [Marcellus II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Marcellus_II) (1555), [Paul IV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Paul_IV) (1555–1559), [Pius IV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_IV) (1559–1565), [Pius V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_V) (saint) (1565–1572), [Gregory XIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_XIII) (1572–1585), [Sixtus V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Sixtus_V) (1585–1590), [Urban VII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Urban_VII) (1590), [Gregory XIV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_XIV) (1590–1591), [Innocent IX](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Innocent_IX) (1591), [Clement VIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Clement_VIII) (1592–1605), [Leo XI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Leo_XI) (1605), [Paul V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Paul_V) (1605–1621), [Gregory XV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_XV) (1621–1623), [Urban VIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Urban_VIII) (1623–1644) and [Innocent X](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Innocent_X) (1644–1655).

**Financing with indulgences[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: Financing with indulgences)]**

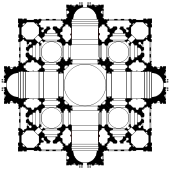
One method employed to finance the building of St. Peter's Basilica was the granting of [indulgences](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indulgences) in return for contributions. A major promoter of this method of fund-raising was [Albrecht, Archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albrecht_of_Mainz), who had to clear debts owed to the [Roman Curia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Curia) by contributing to the rebuilding program. To facilitate this, he appointed the German [Dominican](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominican_Order) preacher [Johann Tetzel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Tetzel), whose salesmanship provoked a scandal.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-23)

A German [Augustinian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustinian) priest, [Martin Luther](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther), wrote to Archbishop Albrecht arguing against this "selling of indulgences". He also included his "Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences", which came to be known as [*The 95 Theses*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_95_Theses).[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-24) This

This became a factor in starting the [Reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_reformation), the birth of Protestantism.

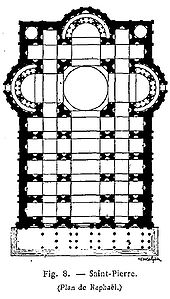
## Architecture[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: Architecture)]

### Successive plans[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=9" \o "Edit section: Successive plans)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SaintPierre.svg)

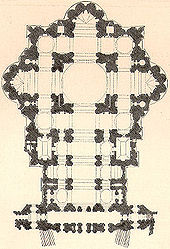
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Bramante's plan

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SaintPierreRaphael.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SaintPierreRaphael.JPG)

Raphael's plan

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PetersdomGrundriss.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PetersdomGrundriss.jpg)

Michelangelo's plan, extended with Maderno's nave and façade

Pope Julius' scheme for the grandest building in Christendom[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica" \l "cite_note-BF-6) was the subject of a competition for which a number of entries remain intact in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence. It was the design of [Donato Bramante](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donato_Bramante) that was selected, and for which the foundation stone was laid in 1506. This plan was in the form of an enormous [Greek Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Cross) with a dome inspired by that of the huge circular Roman temple, the [Pantheon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantheon,_Rome).[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-BF-6) The main difference between Bramante's design and that of the Pantheon is that where the dome of the Pantheon is supported by a continuous wall, that of the new basilica was to be supported only on four large piers. This feature was maintained in the ultimate design. Bramante's dome was to be surmounted by a [lantern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roof_lantern) with its own small dome but otherwise very similar in form to the Early Renaissance lantern of [Florence Cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Cathedral) designed for Brunelleschi's dome by [Michelozzo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelozzo).[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Hartt-25)

Bramante had envisioned that the central dome be surrounded by four lower domes at the diagonal axes. The equal chancel, nave and transept arms were each to be of two bays ending in an apse. At each corner of the building was to stand a tower, so that the overall plan was square, with the apses projecting at the cardinal points. Each apse had two

large radial buttresses, which squared off its semi-circular shape.[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-26)

When Pope Julius died in 1513, Bramante was replaced with [Giuliano da Sangallo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuliano_da_Sangallo), [Fra Giocondo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Giocondo) and [Raphael](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raphael). Sangallo and Fra Giocondo both died in 1515, Bramante himself having died the previous year. The main change in Raphael's plan is the nave of five bays, with a row of complex apsidal chapels off the aisles on either side. Raphael's plan for the chancel and transepts made the squareness of the exterior walls more definite by reducing the size of the towers, and the semi-circular apses more clearly defined by encircling each with an ambulatory.[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-27)

In 1520 Raphael also died, aged 37, and his successor [Baldassare Peruzzi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baldassare_Peruzzi) maintained changes that Raphael had proposed to the internal arrangement of the three main apses, but otherwise reverted to the Greek Cross plan and other features of Bramante.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-28) This plan did not go ahead because of various difficulties of both Church and state. In 1527 Rome was sacked and plundered by [Emperor Charles V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor_Charles_V). Peruzzi died in 1536 without his plan being realized.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-BF-6)

At this point [Antonio da Sangallo the Younger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_da_Sangallo_the_Younger) submitted a plan which combines features of Peruzzi, Raphael and Bramante in its design and extends the building into a short nave with a wide façade and portico of dynamic projection. His proposal for the dome was much more elaborate of both structure and decoration than that of Bramante and included ribs on the exterior. Like Bramante, Sangallo proposed that the dome be surmounted by a lantern which he redesigned to a larger and much more elaborate form.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Fletcher_1996_p.3D722-29) Sangallo's main practical contribution was to strengthen Bramante's piers which had begun to crack.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

On 1 January 1547 in the reign of Pope Paul III, Michelangelo, then in his seventies, succeeded Sangallo the Younger as "Capomaestro", the superintendent of the building program at St Peter's.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-30) He is to be regarded as the principal designer of a large part of the building as it stands today, and as bringing the construction to a point where it could be carried through. He did not take on the job with pleasure; it was forced upon him by Pope Paul, frustrated at the death of his chosen candidate, [Giulio Romano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giulio_Romano) and the refusal of [Jacopo Sansovino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacopo_Sansovino) to leave Venice. Michelangelo wrote "I undertake this only for the love of God and in honour of the Apostle." He insisted that he should be given a free hand to achieve the ultimate aim by whatever means he saw fit.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

### Michelangelo's contribution[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=10" \o "Edit section: Michelangelo's contribution)]

[Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo) took over a building site at which four piers, enormous beyond any constructed since ancient Roman times, were rising behind the remaining nave of the old basilica. He also inherited the numerous schemes designed and redesigned by some of the greatest architectural and engineering minds of the 16th century. There were certain common elements in these schemes. They all called for a dome to equal that engineered by [Brunelleschi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filippo_Brunelleschi) a century earlier and which has since dominated the skyline of Renaissance Florence, and they all called for a strongly symmetrical plan of either Greek Cross form, like the iconic [St. Mark's Basilica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Mark%27s_Basilica) in Venice, or of a Latin Cross with the transepts of identical form to the chancel, as at [Florence Cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Cathedral).

Even though the work had progressed only a little in 40 years, Michelangelo did not simply dismiss the ideas of the previous architects. He drew on them in developing a grand vision. Above all, Michelangelo recognized the essential quality of Bramante's original design. He reverted to the Greek Cross and, as Helen Gardner expresses it: "Without destroying the centralising features of Bramante's plan, Michelangelo, with a few strokes of the pen converted its snowflake complexity into massive, cohesive unity."[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Gardner-31)

As it stands today, St. Peter's has been extended with a nave by [Carlo Maderno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Maderno). It is the chancel end (the ecclesiastical "Eastern end") with its huge centrally placed dome that is the work of Michelangelo. Because of its location within the [Vatican State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_State) and because the projection of the nave screens the dome from sight when the building is approached from the square in front of it, the work of Michelangelo is best appreciated from a distance. What becomes apparent is that the architect has greatly reduced the clearly defined geometric forms of Bramante's plan of a square with square projections, and also of Raphael's plan of a square with semi-circular projections.[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-32) Michelangelo has blurred the definition of the geometry by making the external masonry of massive proportions and filling in every corner with a small vestry or stairwell. The effect created is of a continuous wall-surface that is folded or fractured at different angles, but lacks the right-angles which usually define change of direction at the corners of a building. This exterior is surrounded by a [giant order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant_order) of Corinthian pilasters all set at slightly different angles to each other, in keeping with the ever-changing angles of the wall's surface. Above them the huge cornice ripples in a continuous band, giving the appearance of keeping the whole building in a state of compression.[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Mignacca-33)

### Dome – successive and final designs[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=11" \o "Edit section: Dome – successive and final designs)]

### Dome – successive and final designs[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=11" \o "Edit section: Dome – successive and final designs)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Roma_S.Pietro_in_Vaticano_(zzf).jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Roma_S.Pietro_in_Vaticano_(zzf).jpg)

Bramante's dome

The dome of St. Peter's rises to a total height of 136.57 metres (448.1 ft) from the floor of the basilica to the top of the external cross. It is the tallest dome in the world.[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-34) Its internal diameter is 41.47 metres (136.1 ft), slightly smaller than two of the three other huge domes that preceded it, those of the [Pantheon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantheon,_Rome) of [Ancient Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Rome), 43.3 metres (142 ft), and [Florence Cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Cathedral) of the [Early Renaissance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance_architecture), 44 metres (144 ft). It has a greater diameter by approximately 30 feet (9.1 m) than Constantinople's [Hagia Sophia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagia_Sophia) church, completed in 537. It was to the domes of the Pantheon and Florence duomo that the architects of St. Peter's looked for solutions as to how to go about building what was conceived, from the outset, as the greatest dome of Christendom.

#### Bramante and Sangallo, 1506 and 1513[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=12)]

The dome of the [Pantheon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantheon,_Rome) stands on a circular wall with no entrances or windows except a single door. The whole building is as high as it is wide. Its dome is constructed in a single shell of concrete, made light by the inclusion of a large amount of the volcanic stones tuff and pumice. The inner surface of the dome is deeply [coffered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffering) which has the effect of creating both vertical and horizontal ribs, while lightening the overall load. At the summit is an ocular opening 8 metres (26 ft) across which provides light to the interior.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-BF-6)

Bramante's plan for the dome of St. Peter's (1506) follows that of the Pantheon very closely, and like that of the Pantheon, was designed to be constructed in tufa concrete for which he had rediscovered a formula. With the exception of the lantern that surmounts it, the profile is very similar, except that in this case the supporting wall becomes a [drum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drum_(architecture)) raised high above ground level on four massive piers. The solid wall, as used at the Pantheon, is lightened at St. Peter's by Bramante piercing it with windows and encircling it with a [peristyle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peristyle).

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Roma_S.Pietro_in_Vaticano_(zzg).jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Roma_S.Pietro_in_Vaticano_(zzg).jpg)

Sangallo's design

In the case of [Florence Cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Cathedral), the desired

visual appearance of the pointed dome existed for many years before [Brunelleschi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filippo_Brunelleschi) made its construction feasible.[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-35) Its double-shell construction of bricks locked together in herringbone pattern (re-introduced from Byzantine architecture), and the gentle upward slope of its eight stone ribs made it possible for the construction to take place without the massive wooden formwork necessary to construct hemispherical arches. While its appearance, with the exception of the details of the lantern, is entirely Gothic, its engineering was highly innovative, and the product of a mind that had studied the huge vaults and remaining dome of Ancient Rome.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Hartt-25)

Sangallo's plan (1513), of which a large wooden model still exists, looks to both these predecessors. He realised the value of both the coffering at the Pantheon and the outer stone ribs at Florence Cathedral. He strengthened and extended the peristyle of Bramante into a series of arched and ordered openings around the base, with a second such arcade set back in a tier above the first. In his hands, the rather delicate form of the lantern, based closely on that in Florence, became a massive structure, surrounded by a projecting base, a peristyle and surmounted by a spire of conic form.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Fletcher_1996_p.3D722-29) According to James Lees-Milne the design was "too eclectic, too pernickety and too tasteless to have been a success".[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

#### Michelangelo and Giacomo della Porta, 1547 and 1585[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=13)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Petersdom_von_Engelsburg_gesehen.jpg)

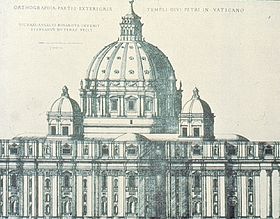
[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Petersdom_von_Engelsburg_gesehen.jpg)

St. Peter's Basilica from [Castel Sant'Angelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castel_Sant%27Angelo) showing the dome rising behind Maderno's façade.

[Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo) redesigned the dome in 1547, taking into account all that had gone before. His dome, like that of [Florence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence), is constructed of two shells of brick, the outer one having 16 stone ribs, twice the number at Florence but far fewer than in Sangallo's design. As with the designs of Bramante and Sangallo, the dome is raised from the piers on a drum. The encircling peristyle of Bramante and the arcade of Sangallo are reduced to 16 pairs of Corinthian columns, each of 15 metres (49 ft) high which stand proud of the building, connected by an arch. Visually they appear to buttress each of the ribs, but structurally they are probably quite redundant. The reason for this is that the dome is ovoid in shape, rising steeply as does the dome of Florence Cathedral, and therefore exerting less outward thrust than does a hemispherical dome, such as that of the Pantheon, which, although it is not buttressed, is countered by the downward thrust of heavy masonry which extends above the circling wall.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-BF-6)[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

The ovoid profile of the dome has been the subject of much speculation and scholarship over the past century. Michelangelo died in 1564, leaving the drum of the dome complete, and Bramante's piers much bulkier than originally designed, each 18 metres (59 ft) across. Following his death, the work continued under his assistant [Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacopo_Barozzi_da_Vignola) with [Giorgio Vasari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giorgio_Vasari) appointed by Pope Pius V as a watchdog to make sure that Michelangelo's plans were carried out exactly. Despite Vignola's knowledge of Michelangelo's intentions, little

happened in this period. In 1585 the energetic Pope Sixtus appointed [Giacomo della Porta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacomo_della_Porta) who was to be assisted by [Domenico Fontana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domenico_Fontana). The five-year reign of Sixtus was to see the building advance at a great rate.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Michdome.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Michdome.jpg)

The engraving by Stefan du Pérac was published in 1569, five years after the death of Michelangelo

Michelangelo left a few drawings, including an early drawing of the dome, and some drawings of details. There were also detailed engravings published in 1569 by Stefan du Pérac who claimed that they were the master's final solution. Michelangelo, like Sangallo before him, also left a large wooden model. Giacomo della Porta subsequently altered this model in several ways, in keeping with changes that he made to the design. Most of these changes were of a cosmetic nature, such as the adding of lion's masks over the swags on the drum in honour of Pope Sixtus and adding a circlet of finials around the spire at the top of the lantern, as proposed by Sangallo. The major change that was made to the model, either by della Porta, or Michelangelo himself before his death, was to raise the outer dome higher above the inner one.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

A drawing by Michelangelo indicates that his early intentions were towards an ovoid dome, rather than a hemispherical one.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Gardner-31) In an engraving in [Galasso Alghisi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galasso_Alghisi)' treatise (1563), the dome may be represented as ovoid, but the perspective is ambiguous.[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-36) Stefan du Pérac's engraving (1569) shows a hemispherical dome, but this was perhaps an inaccuracy of the engraver. The profile of the wooden model is more ovoid than that of the engravings, but less so than the finished product. It has been suggested that Michelangelo on his death bed reverted to the more pointed shape. However Lees-Milne cites Giacomo della Porta as taking full responsibility for the change and as indicating to Pope Sixtus that Michelangelo was lacking in the scientific understanding of which he himself was capable.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

Helen Gardner suggests that Michelangelo made the change to the hemispherical dome of lower profile in order to establish a balance between the dynamic vertical elements of the encircling giant order of pilasters and a more static and reposeful dome. Gardner also comments "The sculpturing of architecture [by Michelangelo]... here extends itself up from the ground through the attic stories and moves on into the drum and dome, the whole building being pulled together into a unity from base to summit."[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Gardner-31)

It is this sense of the building being sculptured, unified and "pulled together" by the encircling band of the deep cornice that led Eneide Mignacca to conclude that the ovoid profile, seen now in the end product, was an essential part of Michelangelo's first (and last) concept. The sculptor/architect has, figuratively speaking, taken all the previous designs in hand and compressed their contours as if the building were a lump of clay. The dome *must* appear to thrust upwards because of the apparent pressure created by flattening the building's angles and restraining its projections.[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Mignacca-33) If this explanation is the correct one, then the profile of the dome is not merely a structural solution, as perceived by Giacomo della Porta; it is part of the integrated design solution that is about visual tension and compression. In one sense, Michelangelo's dome may appear to look backward to the Gothic profile of Florence Cathedral and ignore the [Classicism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classicism) of the Renaissance, but on the other hand, perhaps more than any other building of the 16th century, it prefigures the architecture of the [Baroque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque).[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Mignacca-33)

#### Completion[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=14" \o "Edit section: Completion)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vatikan_Szent_Peter_kupola.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vatikan_Szent_Peter_kupola.jpg)

The dome was brought to completion by Giacomo della Porta and Fontana.

Giacomo della Porta and Fontana brought the dome to completion in 1590, the last year of the reign of [Sixtus V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sixtus_V). His successor, [Gregory XIV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregory_XIV), saw Fontana complete the lantern and had an inscription to the honour of Sixtus V placed around its inner opening. The next pope, [Clement VIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clement_VIII), had the cross raised into place, an event which took all day, and was accompanied by the ringing of the bells of all the city's churches. In the arms of the cross are set two lead caskets, one containing a fragment of the [True Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_Cross) and a relic of [St. Andrew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Andrew) and the other containing medallions of the Holy Lamb.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

In the mid-18th century, cracks appeared in the dome, so four iron chains were installed between the two shells to bind it, like the rings that keep a barrel from bursting. As many as ten chains have been installed at various times, the earliest possibly planned by Michelangelo himself as a precaution, as Brunelleschi did at Florence Cathedral.

Around the inside of the dome is written, in letters 2 metres (6.6 ft) high:

TV ES PETRVS ET SVPER HANC PETRAM AEDIFICABO ECCLESIAM MEAM. TIBI DABO CLAVES REGNI CAELORVM  
(*...you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church. ... I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...* [Vulgate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate), [Matthew 16:18–19](http://tools.wmflabs.org/bibleversefinder/?book=Matthew&verse=16:18–19&src=4).)

Beneath the lantern is the inscription:

S. PETRI GLORIAE SIXTVS PP. V. A. M. D. XC. PONTIF. V.  
(*To the glory of St Peter; Sixtus V, pope, in the year 1590 and the fifth year of his pontificate*.)

#### Discovery of Michelangelo draft[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=15" \o "Edit section: Discovery of Michelangelo draft)]

On 7 December 2007, a fragment of a red chalk drawing of a section of the dome of Saint Peter's, almost certainly by the hand of [Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo), was discovered in the Vatican archives.[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-bbc_sketch-37) The drawing shows a small precisely drafted section of the plan of the entabulature above two of the radial columns of the cupola drum. Michelangelo is known to have destroyed thousands of his drawings before his death.[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-38) The rare survival of this example is probably due to its fragmentary state and the fact that detailed mathematical calculations had been made over the top of the drawing.[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-bbc_sketch-37)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:St_Peter_Basilica_light_streams.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:St_Peter_Basilica_light_streams.jpg)

The nave looking towards the entrance

### The change of plan[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=16" \o "Edit section: The change of plan)]

On 18 February 1606, under Pope Paul V, the dismantling of the remaining parts of the Constantinian basilica began.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15) The marble cross that had been set at the top of the pediment by Pope Sylvester and Constantine the Great was lowered to the ground. The timbers were salvaged for the roof of the Borghese Palace and two rare black marble columns, the largest of their kind, were carefully stored and later used in the narthex. The tombs of various popes were opened, treasures removed and plans made for reinterment in the new basilica.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

The Pope had appointed [Carlo Maderno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Maderno) in 1602. He was a nephew of [Domenico Fontana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domenico_Fontana) and had demonstrated himself as a dynamic architect. Maderno's idea was to ring Michelangelo's building with chapels, but the Pope was hesitant about deviating from the master's plan, even though he had been dead for forty years. The *Fabbrica* or building committee, a group drawn from various nationalities and generally despised by the [Curia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curia) who viewed the basilica as belonging to Rome rather than Christendom, were in a quandary as to how the building should proceed. One of the matters that influenced their thinking was the Counter-Reformation which increasingly associated a Greek Cross plan with paganism and saw the Latin Cross as truly symbolic of Christianity.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

Another influence on the thinking of both the Fabbrica and the Curia was a certain guilt at the demolition of the ancient building. The ground on which it and its various associated chapels, vestries and sacristies had stood for so long was hallowed. The only solution was to build a nave that encompassed the whole space. In 1607 a committee of ten architects was called together, and a decision was made to extend Michelangelo's building into a nave. Maderno's plans for both the nave and the façade were accepted. The building began on 7 May 1607, and proceeded at a great rate, with an army of 700 labourers being employed. The following year, the façade was begun, in December 1614 the final touches were added to the stucco decoration of the vault and early in 1615 the partition wall between the two sections was pulled down. All the rubble was carted away, and the nave was ready for use by [Palm Sunday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palm_Sunday).[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:0_Basilique_Saint-Pierre_-_Rome_(2).JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:0_Basilique_Saint-Pierre_-_Rome_(2).JPG)

Maderno’s façade, with the statues of Sts Peter (left) & Paul (right) flanking the entrance stairs

#### Maderno's façade[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=17" \o "Edit section: Maderno's façade)]

The façade designed by Maderno, is 114.69 metres (376.3 ft) wide and 45.55 metres (149.4 ft) high and is built of [travertine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Travertine) stone, with a giant order of Corinthian columns and a central pediment rising in front of a tall [attic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attic_style) surmounted by thirteen statues: Christ flanked by eleven of the [Apostles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_Apostles) (except Peter, whose statue is left of the stairs) and [John the Baptist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_the_Baptist). [[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-39) The inscription below the [cornice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornice) on the 1 metre (3.3 ft) tall [frieze](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frieze) reads:

IN HONOREM PRINCIPIS APOST PAVLVS V BVRGHESIVS ROMANVS PONT MAX AN MDCXII PONT VII  
(*In honour of the* [*Prince of Apostles*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostle_Peter)*,* [*Paul V*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Paul_V) *Borghese, a Roman, Supreme Pontiff, in the year 1612, the seventh of his pontificate*)

The façade is often cited as the least satisfactory part of the design of St. Peter's. The reasons for this, according to James Lees-Milne, are that it was not given enough consideration by the Pope and committee because of the desire to get the building completed quickly, coupled with the fact that Maderno was hesitant to deviate from the pattern set by Michelangelo at the other end of the building. Lees-Milne describes the problems of the façade as being too broad for its height, too cramped in its details and too heavy in the attic storey. The breadth is caused by modifying the plan to have towers on either side. These towers were never executed above the line of the façade because it was discovered that the ground was not sufficiently stable to bear the weight. One effect of the façade and lengthened nave is to screen the view of the dome, so that the building, from the front, has no vertical feature, except from a distance.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:San_Pietro_in_Vaticano_4.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:San_Pietro_in_Vaticano_4.jpg)

The narthex

#### Narthex and portals[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=18" \o "Edit section: Narthex and portals)]

Behind the façade of St. Peter's stretches a long portico or "narthex" such as was occasionally found in Italian Romanesque churches. This is the part of Maderno's design with which he was most satisfied. Its long barrel vault is decorated with ornate stucco and gilt, and successfully illuminated by small windows between pendentives, while the ornate marble floor is beamed with light reflected in from the piazza. At each end of the narthex is a theatrical space framed by ionic columns and within each is set a statue, an equestrian figure of [Charlemagne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlemagne) by [Cornacchini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agostino_Cornacchini) (18th century) in the south end and [Constantine the Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_the_Great) by Bernini (1670) in the north end.

Five portals, of which three are framed by huge salvaged antique columns, lead into the basilica. The central portal has a bronze door created by [Antonio Averulino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_di_Pietro_Averlino) in 1455 for the old basilica and somewhat enlarged to fit the new space.

#### Maderno's nave[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=19" \o "Edit section: Maderno's nave)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vatican-StPierre-Int%C3%A9rieur1.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vatican-StPierre-Int%C3%A9rieur1.jpg)

Maderno's nave, looking towards the chancel

To the single bay of [Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo)'s Greek Cross, Maderno added a further three bays. He made the dimensions slightly different to Michelangelo's bay, thus defining where the two architectural works meet. Maderno also tilted

the axis of the nave slightly. This was not by accident, as suggested by his critics. An ancient Egyptian obelisk had been erected in the square outside, but had not been quite aligned with Michelangelo's building, so Maderno compensated, in order that it should, at least, align with the Basilica's façade.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

The nave has huge paired pilasters, in keeping with Michelangelo's work. The size of the interior is so "stupendously large" that it is hard to get a sense of scale within the building.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-40) The four cherubs who flutter against the first piers of the nave, carrying between them two Holy Water basins, appear of quite normal cherubic size, until approached. Then it becomes apparent that each one is over 2 metres high and that real children cannot reach the basins unless they scramble up the marble draperies. The aisles each have two smaller chapels and a larger rectangular chapel, the Chapel of the Sacrament and the Choir Chapel. These are lavishly decorated with marble, stucco, gilt, sculpture and mosaic. Remarkably, there are very few paintings, although some, such as Raphael's "Sistine Madonna" have been reproduced in mosaic. The most precious painting is a small icon of the Madonna, removed from the old basilica.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

Maderno's last work at St. Peter's was to design a crypt-like space or "Confessio" under the dome, where the Cardinals and other privileged persons could descend in order to be nearer the burial place of the apostle. Its marble steps are remnants of the old basilica and around its balustrade are 95 bronze lamps.

### Influence on church architecture[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=20" \o "Edit section: Influence on church architecture)]

The design of St. Peter's Basilica, and in particular its dome, has greatly influenced [church architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_architecture) in [Western Christendom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Christianity). Within Rome, the huge domed church of [Sant'Andrea della Valle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sant%27Andrea_della_Valle) was designed by Giacomo della Porta before the completion of St Peter's, and subsequently worked on by Carlo Maderno. This was followed by the domes of [San Carlo ai Catinari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Carlo_ai_Catinari), [Sant'Agnese in Agone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sant%27Agnese_in_Agone) and many others. [Christopher Wren](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Wren)'s dome at [St Paul's Cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Paul%27s_Cathedral) in London, the domes of [Karlskirche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karlskirche) in Vienna, [St Nicholas Church, Prague](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St_Nicholas_Church,_Prague&action=edit&redlink=1) and the [Pantheon, Paris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantheon,_Paris) all pay homage to St Peter's. The 19th- and early 20th-century architectural revivals brought about the building of a great number of churches that imitate elements of St Peter's to a greater or lesser degree, including [St. Mary of the Angels in Chicago](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Mary_of_the_Angels_in_Chicago), [St. Josaphat's Basilica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Josaphat%27s_Basilica) in [Milwaukee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milwaukee), [Immaculate Heart of Mary in Pittsburgh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immaculate_Heart_of_Mary_in_Pittsburgh) and [Mary, Queen of the World Cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary,_Queen_of_the_World_Cathedral) in [Montreal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montreal), which replicates many aspects of St Peter's on a smaller scale. [Post-Modernism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-Modernism) has seen free adaptations of St Peter's in the [Basilica of Our Lady of Licheń](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_of_Our_Lady_of_Liche%C5%84), and the [Basilica of Our Lady of Peace of Yamoussoukro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_of_Our_Lady_of_Peace_of_Yamoussoukro).

## Bernini's furnishings[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=21" \o "Edit section: Bernini's furnishings)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Chair_of_Saint_Peter_adjusted.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Chair_of_Saint_Peter_adjusted.JPG)

The apse with St. Peter's Cathedra supported by four Doctors of the Church

### Pope Urban VIII and Bernini[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=22" \o "Edit section: Pope Urban VIII and Bernini)]

As a young boy [Gian Lorenzo Bernini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gian_Lorenzo_Bernini) (1598–1680) visited St. Peter's with the painter [Annibale Carracci](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annibale_Carracci) and stated his wish to build "a mighty throne for the apostle". His wish came true. As a young man, in 1626, he received the patronage of [Pope Urban VIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Urban_VIII) and worked on the embellishment of the Basilica for 50 years. Appointed as Maderno's successor in 1629, he was to become regarded as the greatest architect and sculptor of the [Baroque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque) period. Bernini's works at St. Peter's include the baldacchino, the Chapel of the Sacrament, the plan for the niches and loggias in the piers of the dome and the chair of St. Peter.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Gardner-31)

#### Baldacchino and niches[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=23" \o "Edit section: Baldacchino and niches)]

*Main article:* [*St. Peter's Baldachin*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter%27s_Baldachin)

Bernini's first work at St. Peter's was to design the [baldacchino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter%27s_Baldachin), a pavilion-like structure 30 metres (98 ft) tall and claimed to be the largest piece of bronze in the world, which stands beneath the dome and above the altar. Its design is based on the [*ciborium*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciborium_(architecture)), of which there are many in the churches of Rome, serving to create a sort of holy space above and around the table on which the Sacrament is laid for the [Eucharist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucharist) and emphasizing the significance of this ritual. These *ciboria* are generally of white marble, with inlaid coloured stone. Bernini's concept was for something very different. He took his inspiration in part from the [baldachin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baldachin) or canopy carried above the head of the pope in processions, and in part from eight ancient columns that had formed part of a screen in the old basilica. Their twisted [barley-sugar shape](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomonic_columns) had a special significance as they were modelled on those of the Temple of Jerusalem and donated by the Emperor Constantine. Based on these columns, Bernini created four huge columns of bronze, twisted and decorated with laurel leaves and bees, which were the emblem of Pope Urban.

The baldacchino is surmounted not with an architectural pediment, like most baldacchini, but with curved Baroque brackets supporting a draped canopy, like the brocade canopies carried in processions above precious iconic images. In this case, the draped canopy is of bronze, and all the details, including the olive leaves, bees, and the portrait heads of Urban's niece in childbirth and her newborn son, are picked out in gold leaf. The baldacchino stands as a vast free-standing sculptural object, central to and framed by the largest space within the building. It is so large that the visual effect is to create a link between the enormous dome which appears to float above it, and the congregation at floor level of the basilica. It is penetrated visually from every direction, and is visually linked to the *Cathedra Petri* in the apse behind it and to the four piers containing large statues that are at each diagonal.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Gardner-31)

As part of the scheme for the central space of the church, Bernini had the huge piers, begun by Bramante and completed by Michelangelo, hollowed out into niches, and had staircases made inside them, leading to four balconies. There was much dismay from those who thought that the dome might fall, but it did not. On the balconies Bernini created showcases, framed by the eight ancient twisted columns, to display the four most precious relics of the basilica: the spear of Longinus, said to have pierced the side of Christ, the veil of Veronica, with the miraculous image of the face of Christ, a fragment of the [True Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_Cross) discovered in Jerusalem by Constantine's mother, Helena, and a relic of St. Andrew, the brother of St. Peter. In each of the niches that surround the central space of the basilica was placed a huge statue of the saint associated with the relic above. Only St. Longinus is the work of Bernini.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15) (See below)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cathedrapetri%2Bgloria.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cathedrapetri%2Bgloria.jpg)

Bernini's "Cathedra Petri" and "Gloria"

#### Cathedra Petri and Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=24" \o "Edit section: Cathedra Petri and Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament)]

Bernini then turned his attention to another precious relic, the so-called [*Cathedra Petri*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedra_Petri) or "throne of St. Peter" a chair which was often claimed to have been used by the apostle, but appears to date from the 12th century. As the chair itself was fast deteriorating and was no longer serviceable, Pope Alexander VII determined to enshrine it in suitable splendour as the object upon which the line of successors to Peter was based. Bernini created a large bronze throne in which it was housed, raised high on four looping supports held effortlessly by massive bronze statues of four [Doctors of the Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctors_of_the_Church), Saints [Ambrose](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambrose) and [Augustine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine) representing the Latin Church and [Athanasius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athanasius) and [John Chrysostom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Chrysostom), the Greek Church. The four figures are dynamic with sweeping robes and expressions of adoration and ecstasy. Behind and above the Cathedra, a blaze of light comes in through a window of yellow alabaster, illuminating, at its centre, the Dove of the Holy Spirit. The elderly painter, [Andrea Sacchi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrea_Sacchi), had urged Bernini to make the figures large, so that they would be seen well from the central portal of the nave. The chair was enshrined in its new home with great celebration of 16 January 1666.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Gardner-31)

Bernini's final work for St. Peter's, undertaken in 1676, was the decoration of the Chapel of the Sacrament.[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Basilica_Info-41) To hold the sacramental Host, he designed a miniature version in gilt bronze of Bramante's [Tempietto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tempietto), the little chapel that marks the place of the death of St. Peter. On either side is an angel, one gazing in rapt adoration and the other looking towards the viewer in welcome. Bernini died in 1680 in his 82nd year.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

## St. Peter's Piazza[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=25" \o "Edit section: St. Peter's Piazza)]

*Main article:* [*Saint Peter's Square*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter%27s_Square)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Basilica_di_San_Pietro_(notte).jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Basilica_di_San_Pietro_(notte).jpg)

St. Peter's Basilica and the piazza at night

To the east of the basilica is the *Piazza di San Pietro*, ([St. Peter's Square](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter%27s_Square)). The present arrangement, constructed between 1656 and 1667, is the [Baroque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque) inspiration of Bernini who inherited a location already occupied by an Egyptian [obelisk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obelisk) which was centrally placed, (with some contrivance) to Maderno's façade.[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-42) The obelisk, known as "The Witness", at 25.5 metres (84 ft) and a total height, including base and the cross on top, of 40 metres (130 ft), is the second largest standing obelisk, and the only one to remain standing since its removal from Egypt and re-erection at the [Circus of Nero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circus_of_Nero) in 37 AD, where it is thought to have stood witness to the crucifixion of St Peter.[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-43) Its removal to its present location by order of [Pope Sixtus V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Sixtus_V) and engineered by [Domenico Fontana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domenico_Fontana) on 28 September 1586, was an operation fraught with difficulties and nearly ending in disaster when the ropes holding the obelisk began to smoke from the friction. Fortunately this problem was noticed by Benedetto Bresca, a sailor of [Sanremo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanremo), and for his swift intervention, his town was granted the privilege of providing the palms that are used at the basilica each [Palm Sunday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palm_Sunday).[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fountain_of_Carlo_Maderno_night.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fountain_of_Carlo_Maderno_night.jpg)

Two fountains form the axis of the piazza.

The other object in the old square with which Bernini had to contend was a large fountain designed by Maderno in 1613 and set to one side of the obelisk, making a line parallel with the façade. Bernini's plan uses this horizontal axis as a major feature of his unique, spatially dynamic and highly symbolic design. The most obvious solutions were either a rectangular piazza of vast proportions so that the obelisk stood centrally and the fountain (and a matching companion) could be included, or a trapezoid piazza which fanned out from the façade of the basilica like that in front of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. The problems of the square plan are that the necessary width to include the fountain would entail the demolition of

numerous buildings, including some of the Vatican, and would minimise the effect of the façade. The trapezoid plan, on the other hand, would maximise the apparent width of the façade, which was already perceived as a fault of the design.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Gardner-31)

Bernini's ingenious solution was to create a piazza in two sections. That part which is nearest the basilica is trapezoid, but rather than fanning out from the façade, it narrows. This gives the effect of countering the visual perspective. It means that from the second part of the piazza, the building looks nearer than it is, the breadth of the façade is minimized and its height appears greater in proportion to its width. The second section of the piazza is a huge elliptical circus which gently slopes downwards to the obelisk at its centre. The two distinct areas are framed by a colonnade formed by doubled pairs of columns supporting an entabulature of the simple [Tuscan Order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuscan_order).

The part of the colonnade that is around the ellipse does not entirely encircle it, but reaches out in two arcs, symbolic of the arms of "the Roman Catholic Church reaching out to welcome its communicants".[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Gardner-31) The obelisk and Maderno's fountain mark the widest axis of the ellipse. Bernini balanced the scheme with another fountain in 1675. The approach to the square used to be through a jumble of old buildings, which added an element of surprise to the vista that opened up upon passing through the colonnade. Nowadays a long wide street, the [Via della Conciliazione](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_della_Conciliazione), built by Mussolini after the conclusion of the [Lateran Treaties](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lateran_Treaties), leads from the River Tiber to the piazza and gives distant views of St. Peter's as the visitor approaches.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)

Bernini's transformation of the site is entirely Baroque in concept. Where Bramante and Michelangelo conceived a building that stood in "self-sufficient isolation", Bernini made the whole complex "expansively relate to its environment".[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Gardner-31) Banister Fletcher says "No other city has afforded such a wide-swept approach to its cathedral church, no other architect could have conceived a design of greater nobility...(it is) the greatest of all atriums before the greatest of all churches of Christendom."[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-BF-6)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:St_Peter%27s_Square,_Vatican_City_-_April_2007.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:St_Peter%27s_Square,_Vatican_City_-_April_2007.jpg)

View of Rome from the Dome of St. Peter's Basilica

## Treasures[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=26" \o "Edit section: Treasures)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Crypt_air_vent.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Crypt_air_vent.jpg)

Air vents for the crypt in St. Peter's Basilica

### Tombs and relics[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=27" \o "Edit section: Tombs and relics)]

*Main article:* [*List of papal tombs*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_papal_tombs)

There are over 100 tombs within St. Peter's Basilica (extant to various extents), many located in the [*Vatican grotto*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_grotto), beneath the Basilica. These include 91 popes, St. [Ignatius of Antioch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignatius_of_Antioch), Holy Roman Emperor [Otto II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_II), and the composer [Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Pierluigi_da_Palestrina). Exiled Catholic British royalty [James Francis Edward Stuart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Francis_Edward_Stuart) and his two sons, [Charles Edward Stuart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Edward_Stuart) and [Henry Benedict Stuart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Benedict_Stuart), Cardinal Bishop of Frascati, are buried here, having been granted asylum by [Pope Clement XI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Clement_XI). Also buried here are [Maria Clementina Sobieska](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Klementyna_Sobieska), wife of James Francis Edward Stuart, Queen [Christina of Sweden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christina_of_Sweden), who abdicated her throne in order to convert to Catholicism, and Countess [Matilda of Tuscany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matilda_of_Tuscany), supporter of the Papacy during the [Investiture Controversy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investiture_Controversy). The most recent interment was [Pope John Paul II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II), on 8 April 2005. Beneath, near the [crypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crypt), is the recently discovered vaulted fourth-century "[Tomb of the Julii](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb_of_the_Julii)". (See below for some descriptions of tombs)

### Artworks[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=28" \o "Edit section: Artworks)]

#### The towers and narthex[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=29" \o "Edit section: The towers and narthex)]

* In the towers to either side of the façade are two clocks. The clock on the left has been operated electrically since 1931. Its oldest bell dates from 1288.
* One of the most important treasures of the basilica is a mosaic set above the central external door. Called the "Navicella", it is based on a design by [Giotto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giotto) (early 14th century) and represents a ship symbolising the Christian Church.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Pinto-7) The mosaic is mostly a 17th-century copy of Giotto's original.
* At each end of the narthex is an equestrian figure, to the north [Constantine the Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_the_Great) by Bernini (1670) and to the south [Charlemagne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlemagne) by [Cornacchini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agostino_Cornacchini) (18th century).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-Pinto-7)
* Of the five portals from the narthex to the interior, three contain notable doors. The central portal has the Renaissance bronze door by [Antonio Averulino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_di_Pietro_Averlino) (called Filarete) (1455), enlarged to fit the new space. The southern door, the "Door of the Dead", was designed by 20th-century sculptor [Giacomo Manzù](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacomo_Manz%C3%B9) and includes a portrait of Pope John XXIII kneeling before the crucified figure of St. Peter.
* The northernmost door is the "Holy Door" which, by tradition, is walled-up with bricks, and opened only for holy years such as the [Jubilee year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee_(Christian)) by the Pope. The present door is bronze and was designed by [Vico Consorti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vico_Consorti) in 1950. Above it are inscriptions commemorating the opening of the door: PAVLVS V PONT MAX ANNO XIII and GREGORIVS XIII PONT MAX. Recent commemorative plaques read:

PAVLVS VI PONT MAX HVIVS PATRIARCALIS VATICANAE BASILICAE PORTAM SANCTAM APERVIT ET CLAVSIT ANNO IVBILAEI MCMLXXV  
*Paul VI, Pontifex Maximus, opened and closed the holy door of this patriarchal Vatican basilica in the jubilee year of 1975.*

IOANNES PAVLVS II P.M. PORTAM SANCTAM ANNO IVBILAEI MCMLXXVI A PAVLO PP VI RESERVATAM ET CLAVSAM APERVIT ET CLAVSIT ANNO IVB HVMANE REDEMP MCMLXXXIII – MCMLXXXIV  
*John Paul II, Pontifex Maximus, opened and closed again the holy door closed and set apart by Paul VI in 1976 in the jubilee year of human redemption 1983-4.*

IOANNES PAVLVS II P.M. ITERVM PORTAM SANCTAM APERVIT ET CLAVSIT ANNO MAGNI IVBILAEI AB INCARNATIONE DOMINI MM-MMI  
*John Paul II, Pontifex Maximus, again opened and closed the holy door in the year of the great jubilee, from the incarnation of the Lord 2000–2001.*

#### The nave[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=30" \o "Edit section: The nave)]

* On the first piers of the nave are two Holy Water basins held by pairs of cherubs each 2 metres high, commissioned by Pope Benedict XIII from designer [Agostino Cornacchini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agostino_Cornacchini) and sculptor Francesco Moderati, (1720s).
* Along the floor of the nave are markers showing the comparative lengths of other churches, starting from the entrance.
* On the decorative pilasters of the piers of the nave are medallions with relief depicting the first 38 popes.
* In niches between the pilasters of the nave are statues depicting 39 founders of religious orders.
* Set against the north east pier of the dome is a statue of St. Peter Enthroned, sometimes attributed to late 13th-century sculptor [Arnolfo di Cambio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnolfo_di_Cambio), with some scholars dating it to the 5th century. One foot of the statue is largely worn away by pilgrims kissing it for centuries.
* The sunken Confessio leading to the Vatican Grottoes (see above) contains a large kneeling statue by [Canova](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canova) of [Pope Pius VI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_VI), who was captured and mistreated by Napoleon's army.
* In the Confessio is the *Niche of the Pallium* ("Niche of Stoles") which contains a bronze urn, donated by [Pope Benedict XIV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Benedict_XIV), to contain white stoles embroidered with black crosses and woven with the wool of lambs blessed on St. Agnes' day.
* The High Altar is surmounted by Bernini's baldachin. (See above)
* Set in niches within the four piers supporting the dome are the statues associated with the basilica's holy relics: [St. Helena](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helena_of_Constantinople) holding the [True Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_Cross), by [Andrea Bolgi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrea_Bolgi); [St. Longinus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longinus_(Christian_mythology)) holding the spear that pierced the side of Jesus, by Bernini (1639); [St. Andrew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Andrew) with the [St. Andrew's Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saltire), by [Francois Duquesnoy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francois_Duquesnoy) and [St. Veronica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Veronica) holding her veil with the image of Jesus' face, by [Francesco Mochi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Mochi).
* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Helena.jpg)

St Helena  
by Andrea Bolgi

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Longinus.jpg)

St Longinus  
by Bernini

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Andreas.jpg)

St Andrew  
by Francois Duquesnoy

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_veronica.jpg)

St Veronica  
by Francesco Mochi

#### North aisle[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=31" \o "Edit section: North aisle)]

* In the first chapel of the north aisle is [Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo)'s [*Pietà*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet%C3%A0_(Michelangelo)).[[44]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-44)
* On the first pier in the right aisle is the monument of [Queen Christina of Sweden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Christina_of_Sweden), who abdicated in 1654 in order to convert
* to Catholicism.
* The second chapel, dedicated to [St. Sebastian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Sebastian), contains the statues of popes [Pius XI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_XI) and [Pius XII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_XII). The space below the altar used to be the resting place of [Pope Innocent XI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Innocent_XI) but his remains were moved to the *Altar of the Transfiguration* on 8 April 2011. This was done to make way for the body of [Pope John Paul II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II). His remains were placed beneath the altar on 2 May 2011.
* The large chapel on the right aisle is the *Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament* which contains the tabernacle by Bernini (1664) resembling [Bramante](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donato_Bramante)'s *Tempietto* at [San Pietro in Montorio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Pietro_in_Montorio) supported by two kneeling angels and with behind it a painting of the [Holy Trinity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Trinity) by [Pietro da Cortona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pietro_da_Cortona).
* Near the altar of *Our Lady of Succour* are the monuments of popes [Gregory XIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_XIII) by [Camillo Rusconi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camillo_Rusconi) (1723) and [Gregory XIV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_XIV).
* At the end of the aisle is an altar containing the relics of [St. Petronilla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Petronilla) and with an altarpiece "The Burial of St Petronilla *by* [*Guercino*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guercino) *(Giovanni Francesco Barbieri), 1623.*

#### South aisle[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St._Peter%27s_Basilica&action=edit&section=32" \o "Edit section: South aisle)]

* The first chapel in the south aisle is the baptistry, commissioned by Pope Innocent XII and designed by [Carlo Fontana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Fontana), (great nephew of Domenico Fontana). The font, which was previously located in the opposite chapel, is the red [porphyry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porphyry_(geology)) [sarcophagus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarcophagus) of Probus, the 4th century Prefect of Rome. The lid came from a different sarcophagus, which had once held the remains of the Emperor [Hadrian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian) and in removing it from the Vatican Grotto where it had been stored, the workmen broke it into ten pieces. Fontana restored it expertly and surmounted it with a gilt-bronze figure of the "Lamb of God".
* Against the first pier of the aisle is the [Monument to the Royal Stuarts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monument_to_the_Royal_Stuarts), James and his sons, Charles Edward, known as "Bonnie Prince Charlie" and Henry, Cardinal and Duke of York. The tomb is a [Neo-Classical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoclassical_architecture) design by [Canova](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canova) unveiled in 1819. Opposite it is the memorial of James Francis Edward Stuart's wife, [Maria Clementina Sobieska](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Klementyna_Sobieska).
* The second chapel is that of the *Presentation of the Virgin* and contains the memorials of Pope Benedict XV and Pope John XXIII.
* Against the piers are the tombs of Pope Pius X and Pope Innocent VIII.
* The large chapel off the south aisle is the *Choir Chapel* which contains the altar of the *Immaculate Conception*.
* At the entrance to the Sacristy is the tomb of Pope Pius VIII
* The south transept contains the altars of [St. Thomas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_the_Apostle), [St. Joseph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Joseph) and the *Crucifixion of* [*St. Peter*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter).
* The tomb of Fabio Chigi, [Pope Alexander VII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Alexander_VII), towards the end of the aisle, is the work of Bernini and called by Lees-Milne "one of the greatest tombs of the Baroque Age". It occupies an awkward position, being set in a niche above a doorway into a small vestry, but Bernini has utilised the doorway in a symbolic manner. Pope Alexander kneels upon his tomb, facing outward. The tomb is supported on a large draped shroud in patterned red marble, and is supported by four female figures, of whom only the two at the front are fully visible. They represent Charity and Truth. The foot of Truth rests upon a globe of the world, her toe being pierced symbolically by the thorn of Protestant England. Coming forth, seemingly, from the doorway as if it were the entrance to a tomb, is the skeletal winged figure of Death, its head hidden beneath the shroud, but its right hand carrying an [hourglass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hourglass) stretched upward towards the kneeling figure of the pope.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-JL-M-15)
* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rome_basilica_st_peter_004_adjusted.JPG)

The Holy Door is opened only for great celebrations.

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:0_Monument_fun%C3%A9raire_du_pape_Alexandre_VII_-_St-Pierre_-_Vatican_(1)_brighter.jpg)

The monument of Pope Alexander VIII is one of the most elaborate.[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#cite_note-45)

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rome_basilica_st_peter_011c_adjusted.jpg)

The bronze statue of Saint Peter holding the keys, attributed to [Arnolfo di Cambio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnolfo_di_Cambio)

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo_Pieta_ret_w.jpg)

The *Pietà* by [Michelangelo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo) is in the north aisle.

# Mont Saint Michel Abbey

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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*For the Mont Saint Michel island and city, see* [*Mont Saint Michel*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel)*.*

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| http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/f/f4/Ambox_content.png | |  | | --- | | [[hide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey)]**This article has multiple issues.** Please help [**improve it**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit) or discuss these issues on the [**talk page**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey). | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/f/f2/Edit-clear.svg/40px-Edit-clear.svg.png | This article **may require** [**cleanup**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Cleanup) **to meet Wikipedia's** [**quality standards**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Manual_of_Style). The specific problem is: **translation cleanup and formatting**. Please help [improve this article](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit) if you can. *(May 2013)* |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/9/99/Question_book-new.svg/50px-Question_book-new.svg.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Question_book-new.svg) | This article **needs additional citations for** [**verification**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability). Please help [improve this article](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit) by [adding citations to reliable sources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Introduction_to_referencing/1). Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. *(May 2013)* | | |

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| **Mont-Saint-Michel Abbey** | |
| [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/e8/FranceNormandieLeMontSaintMichelAbbaye.jpg/250px-FranceNormandieLeMontSaintMichelAbbaye.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:FranceNormandieLeMontSaintMichelAbbaye.jpg) | |
| **Basic information** | |
| [**Geographic coordinates**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system) | France/Manche |
| [**Geographic coordinates**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system) | http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[48°38′09″N 1°30′41″W﻿ / ﻿48.635834°N 1.511389°W﻿ / 48.635834; -1.511389](http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&params=48.635834_N_-1.511389_E_type:landmark)[Coordinates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[48°38′09″N 1°30′41″W﻿ / ﻿48.635834°N 1.511389°W﻿ / 48.635834; -1.511389](http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&params=48.635834_N_-1.511389_E_type:landmark) |
| [**Affiliation**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_religions_and_spiritual_traditions) | [Roman Catholic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholicism) |
| **Region** | [Lower Normandy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lower_Normandy) |
| **Municipality** | [Le Mont-Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Mont-Saint-Michel) |
| **Heritage designation** | [Monument historique, 1862](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monument_historique)[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-PA00110460-1) [World heritage site, 1979](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) |
| **Leadership** | [Monastic Fraternities of Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastic_Fraternities_of_Jerusalem) |
| **Architectural description** | |
| [**Architectural style**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architectural_style) | [Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_architecture) |
| **Groundbreaking** | 10th century |
| **Completed** | 1523 |
| **Specifications** | |

The **Mont-Saint-Michel abbey** is located within the [city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City) and [island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Island) of [Mont-Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont-Saint-Michel) in [Lower Normandy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lower_Normandy), in the [department](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A9partement_fran%C3%A7ais) of [Manche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manche_(d%C3%A9partement)).

The abbey is an essential part of the structural composition of the town the feudal society constructed. On top God, the abbey and monastery, below this the [Great halls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_hall), then stores and housing, and at the bottom, outside the walls, fishermen and farmers housing.

The [abbey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey) is protected as a French [monument historique](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monument_historique) since 1862.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-PA00110460-1) Since 1979 the site as a whole, the [Mont Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont-Saint-Michel) and its [bay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_saint_michel_bay), is a [UNESCO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) [world heritage site](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) and is managed by the [Centre des monuments nationaux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centre_des_monuments_nationaux).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-2)

With more than 1.335 million visitors in 2010, the [abbey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey) is among [most visited cultural sites in France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_France#Most_popular_sites_by_number_of_visitors).[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-3)

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## History of the Mont[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: History of the Mont)]

The first text about an [abbey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey) is the 9th-century Latin text *Revelatio ecclesiae sancti Michaelis in monte Tumba*[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey" \l "cite_note-4) written by a [chanoine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanoine) living at the Mont-Saint-Michel or at the [cathédrale d’Avranches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cath%C3%A9drale_Saint-Andr%C3%A9_d%27Avranches). This text was written at a time of power struggle between [Brittany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brittany) and the [County of Normandy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Normandy) against [Francia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francia) as well as during [canon reforms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canon_law) by [western roman emperors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Roman_Empire).[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-5)

When [Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) expanded to this area, around the 4th century, Mont Tombe, the original name of Mont Saint Michel, was part of diocèse d’[Avranches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avranches). By the middle of the 6th century, christianism had a stronger presence in the bay. By this time, Mont Tombe was populated by religious devots, hermits (probably some Celtic monks) resupplied by the [curé](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cur%C3%A9) of [Astériac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beauvoir,_Manche), that took care of the site and led a contemplative life around some oratories. Hermits Saint Pair and Saint Seubilion dedicated one to [Saint Étienne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Stephen), mid-way through the Mont, and one to [Saint Symphorien](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphorian_and_Timotheus), at the foot of the rock.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-6)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Normandie_Manche_Mont3_tango7174.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Normandie_Manche_Mont3_tango7174.jpg)

Saint Aubert

In 710, *Mont-Tombe* is renamed *Mont-Saint-Michel-au-péril-de-la-Mer* (Mont Saint Michel at the peril of the sea) after erecting an oratory to [Saint Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_(archangel)) by [bishop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop) [Saint Aubert of Avranches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aubert_of_Avranches) in 708. According to the legend, Aubert received, during his sleep, three times the order from Saint-Michel to erect an oratory on the Mont-Tombe. The archangel left his finger mark on Aubert's skull. This skull is displayed at the Saint-Gervais d'Avranches basilica was such a scar on it.

This sancturay should be, according to the archangel, a replica of the [Gargano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gargano) in Italy (from the 5th century). Aubert had a local religious artifact removed and instead a circular sanctuary built, made of [dry stones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dry_stone). Around 708, Aubert sent two monks to get some artifacts from the Italian sanctuary [Gargano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gargano) (a rock with his foot print and a piece of tissue from the altar). During this mission, the March 709 tsunami is supposed to have destroyed the Scissy forest and turned the Mont into an island. On October 16 709, the bishop dedicated the church and put twelve [chanoine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanoine) there. The Mont-Saint-Michel was born.

The remains of the oratory were found in the chapel Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre. This sanctuary contained the tomb of Aubert and most likely the artifacts brought from [Gargano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gargano). The chapel Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre is today under the [nave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave) of the abbey-church.

The first buildings became too small and under the [Western Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Roman_Empire) multiple buildings were added. [Charlemagne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlemagne) chose [saint Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_(archangel)) as a protector of his empire during the 9th century and tried to have the place renamed *Mont-Saint-Michel*, but during the middle age it is usually called *Saint-Michel-aux-Deux-Tombes* (Saint Michel with two tombs) (Mons Sancti Michaelis in periculo maris, in reference to [Tombelaine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tombelaine)).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-7)

## History of the abbey[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: History of the abbey)]

### Collegiate church Saint-Michel during 9th and 10th centuries[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Collegiate church Saint-Michel during 9th and 10th centuries)]

The [Mont-Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont-Saint-Michel) [monks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monks), during the first century of their institution, venerated the [archangel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archangel) saint Michel. The mont became a place of praying and study, but the stability period, known as the [Neustria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neustria), during the reign of [Charlemagne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlemagne) ended when he died. As the rest of [Gaule](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaule) was fighting invasions, religion and science found some welcoming in the [diocese of Avranches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Diocese_of_Coutances) and at the [Mont-Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont-Saint-Michel).

At first [pilgrims](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrims) kept coming to the Mont. After the Vikings captured the Mont in 847, the monks left the place. But, as an island, it offered some protection for the local population and thus never stayed empty.

After the signature of the [treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Saint-Clair-sur-Epte), [Rollon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rollon) started repairing the damages inflicted to the religious buildings. He generously financed the Mont and called back the monks displaced by the war, returning the Mont to its previous condition.

The wealth and support that the Mont suddenly obtained from [Rollon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rollon) started to fundamentally affect its inhabitants, taking them away from their solitary, religious life. After [William I of Normandy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_I,_Duke_of_Normandy) took over his father's title in 927, as Duke of Normandy, he expanded his support toward monasteries until his assassination in 942, but his wealth, from which they benefited, further exacerbated their mundane life style. Because of their generous contributions to the Mont, the Dukes of [Brittany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brittany) [Conan 1st](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conan_I_of_Rennes), who died in 992, and [Geoffrey 1st](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_I,_Duke_of_Brittany), died in 1008, were buried in the Mont, as benefactors.

### Benedictine abbey[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Benedictine abbey)]

*See also:* [*List of Mont-Saint-Michel abbots*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Mont-Saint-Michel_abbots)

The rapid growth of wealth of the church-abbey Saint-Michel became an obstacle to its function and nature. The religious used their wealth, coming from the piety of the rich surrounding princes, to satisfy their pleasures. Local nobles tried to obtain the favors of the mount religious inhabitants to spend it in meals, travels and hunting in their company, which became their main occupation.

When [Richard 1st](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_I,_Duke_of_Normandy) « without fear », son of [William 1st](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_I,_Duke_of_Normandy), became [duke of Normandy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_of_Normandy), he tried, using of his authority, to return them to a more monastic life. After failing to do so, and with the approbation of [pope](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope) [John XIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_XIII) and king [Lothair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lothair_of_France), he decided to replace them with a [monastery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastery) of the [Benedict order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict), as mentioned in *Introductio monachorum* (« the installation of the monks »), a treaty written around 1080-1095 by a Mont-Saint-Michel monk trying to defend the independence of the monastery toward the state.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-8)

After getting the approval from the local warlords and religious of the Norman abbeys, the monastery of [Saint-Wandrille](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fontenelle_Abbey), Saint-Taurin-d’Évreux and [Jumièges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jumi%C3%A8ges_Abbey), [Duke Richard I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_I,_Duke_of_Normandy) sent an officer and some soldiers to the [Mont Saint Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel) to announce his order: return to a religious life style and become a member of the [Benedict order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict) or leave the Mont. Only one accepted and all the others left, letting the abbot Maynard 1st, coming from Saint-Wandrille abbey, establish an [Benedict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict) ruling. The installation of the [Benedict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict) monks took place in 966, which is marked as the founding year of the Mont-Saint-Michel [abbey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey). Those [monks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monks) added the double [nave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave) [pre-roman church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Romanesque_art_and_architecture) *Notre-Dame-sous-Terre*.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-Plunkett-9)

[William de Volpiano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_de_Volpiano), the Italian architect who had built the [Abbey of Fécamp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey_of_F%C3%A9camp) in Normandy, was chosen by [Richard II of Normandy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_II_of_Normandy) to build the church of the abbey in 1060. He designed the [Romanesque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanesque_architecture) church of the [abbey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey), placing the [transept crossing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossing_(architecture)) at the top of the mount. Many underground [crypts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crypt) and [chapels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapel) had to be built to compensate for this weight; these forming the basis for the supportive upward structure that can be seen today.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-Plunkett-9)

### A translation center during the 12th century[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: A translation center during the 12th century)]

During the 12th century, [Benedict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict) monks at the [Mont-Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont-Saint-Michel) had, according to multiple authors, a large influence over the intellectual development in Europe by translating [Aristotle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle) directly from Greek to Latin, when translations at the time were done in [Tolède](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_translations_of_the_12th_century#The_Toledo_School_of_Translators) from Arabic, or in [Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_translations_of_the_12th_century#Translators_in_Italy).[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-10)

The Mont-Saint-Michel is at its apex with the [abbot of Torigni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_of_Torigni), private counsel of the [Duke of Normandy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_of_Normandy), [Henry II of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_II_of_England), who reinforced the structure of the buildings and built the main facade of the church.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-Plunkett-9)

### 13th to 15th centuries[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: 13th to 15th centuries)]

In 1204, the [king of France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_French_monarchs) [Philippe-Auguste](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_II_of_France) started to take over the [fiefs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fief) of the Duke of Normandy [John Lackland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John,_King_of_England). His ally, [Guy of Thouars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_of_Thouars), [Duke of Brittany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_rulers_of_Brittany), undertook the siege of the [Mont-Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont-Saint-Michel). After having set fire to the village and massacred the population, he failed to conquer the abbey, protected by stone fortifications. But the fire from the village extended to the abbey buildings and damaged it significantly.

Horrified by the exaction of his [Brittany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brittany) ally [Philippe-Auguste](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippe-Auguste), offered [abbot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbot) [Jourdain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jourdain) a grant for the construction of a new Gothic-style architectural set which included the addition of the refectory and cloister. The "Merveille", built in medieval Norman style, with a circular [capital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_(architecture)), some [spandrels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spandrel) in [Caen stone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caen_stone) and some plant motifs was completed in 1228.

[Charles VI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_VI_of_France) is credited with adding major fortifications to the abbey, building towers, successive courtyards and strengthening the ramparts.

When [Louis XI of France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XI_of_France) founded the [Order of Saint Michael](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Michael) in 1469, he intended that the abbey church of [Mont Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint-Michel) become the [chapel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapel) for the Order, but because of its great distance from [Paris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris), his intention could never be realized.

### Becoming a prison[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: Becoming a prison)]

Even as some [oubliettes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dungeon) have been mentioned since the 11th century, the abbey started to be used more regularly as jail during the [Ancien Régime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancien_R%C3%A9gime), being a state jail during [Louis XI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XI_of_France) reign.

The [Mont Saint Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel) popularity and prestige as a center of [pilgrimage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrimage) waned with the [Reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation), and by the time of the [French Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution) there were scarcely any monks in residence. The abbey was closed in 1791 and converted into a prison, initially to hold clerical opponents of the republican regime (up to 300 priests at some point). The abbey was then nicknamed « bastille des mers » (Bastille of the sea).[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-11)

In 1794, an optical telegraph system, designed by [Claude Chappe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Chappe), was installed on top of the dome, making the Mont-Saint-Michel part of the Paris-Brest telegraph line. In 1817, the numerous modifications of the structure by the prison administration led to the collapse of the hostelry built under [Robert de Torigni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_de_Torigni).

During [Louis-Philippe d'Orléans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Philippe_I), some prisoners started a protest that led to the replacement of the prison director, Martin des Landes. Thanks to a corruption system,[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey" \l "cite_note-12) the richest prisoners could visit the Mont Saint Michel town, others could borrow books from the monk *scriptorium*. Up to 700 prisoners worked in workshop setup in the abbey, making straw hats, which started a fire in 1834 and partially damaged it.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-13)

After some higher profile political prisoners were held there, such as Victor Dubourg de La Cassagne, [Desforges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Jean_Baptiste_Choudard_Desforges), Martin Bernard, [Armand Barbès](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armand_Barb%C3%A8s) and [Auguste Blanqui](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Auguste_Blanqui), some influential figures, including [Victor Hugo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Hugo), launched a campaign to restore what was seen as a national architectural treasure that led to its closure in 1863. The 650 prisoners left were transferred to other prisons.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-Plunkett-9)

### Becoming a monument historique and World Heritage Site[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: Becoming a monument historique and World Heritage Site)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Interieur_abbaye.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Interieur_abbaye.jpg)

Gothic choir of the church-abbey

The prison was finally closed in 1863 and the abbey was rented by the [bishop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop) of Coutances starting that same year, until it was declared a [monument historique](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monument_historique) in 1874.

In 1835, [Viollet-le-Duc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eug%C3%A8ne_Viollet-le-Duc) visited the Mont and later his students, Paul Gout and Édouard Corroyer (the famous Mère Poulard was his maid), were commissioned to restore it. Urgent work to consolidate and restore the abbey, were conducted by Édouard Corroyer. In 1896, a [neogothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_Revival_architecture) spire, rising 170 meters above the sea level, was added.

The archangel Saint Michel at top of the spire (completed in 1898) was made in 1895 by the sculptor [Emmanuel Frémiet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmanuel_Fr%C3%A9miet) at the "ateliers Monduit" that previously did some work for [Viollet-le-Duc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eug%C3%A8ne_Viollet-le-Duc).

In 1898, Paul Gout discovered, during some excavation under the floor of the church, Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre that was completely excavated in 1959, once the architect Yves-Marie Froidevaux had a concrete beam installed.

[Mont Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint-Michel) as a whole and its [bay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay) were added to the [UNESCO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) list of [World Heritage Sites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) in 1979, and it was listed with criteria such as cultural, historical, and architectural significance, as well as human-created and natural beauty.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-UNESCO-14)

### The return of the monks[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=9" \o "Edit section: The return of the monks)]

Starting in 1922, [Christian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian) worship was again practiced in the abbey.

In 1966, with the celebration of the abbey first millennium, a few [Benedict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict) [monasteries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastery) sent a few monks to spend the summer there. At the end of the summer a few stayed, led by Bruno de Senneville, from the [Bec abbey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bec_Abbey), with the approval of the state, owner of the place. They slowly started to leave the place after 1979.

Since 2001, the [Benedict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict) [monks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monks) have been replaced by some from the [monastic fraternities of Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastic_Fraternities_of_Jerusalem), originally from the [Saint-Gervais church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St-Gervais-et-St-Protais) in [Paris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris).

## Architecture[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=10" \o "Edit section: Architecture)]

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:P1000143_(2).JPG)

The cloister

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:P1000144_(2).JPG)

View of the cloister.

Started during the 10th century, the [Benedict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedictine) abbey has numerous architectural marvels from West Roman empire, [roman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanesque_architecture) and [Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_architecture) styles. The Mont-Saint-Michel could, in that sense, be considered a [megastructure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megastructure) were the buildings are on top of each other while trying to accommodate Benedict activities within a tight space.

The abbey can be divided in multiple parts:

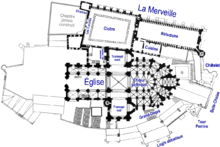
### Church-abbey and chapels[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=11" \o "Edit section: Church-abbey and chapels)]

#### Notre-Dame Sous-Terre (Our Mother Underground)[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=12" \o "Edit section: Notre-Dame Sous-Terre (Our Mother Underground))]

The original church-abbey was founded in 966 but later completely covered by the multiple expansions of the [abbey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey) and was then forgotten for many centuries. Until it was discovered during some excavations at the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century. It has since been restored and offers a beautiful example of pre-roman architecture.

The other church-abbey buildings were erected to the East of the original church, on top of the rock and above the church itself.

#### The church-abbey[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=13" \o "Edit section: The church-abbey)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MtStMichel-PlanNiveau03-Eglise.png)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MtStMichel-PlanNiveau03-Eglise.png)

Floor map at the level of the church-abbey

As more [pilgrims](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrims) came to the [Mont Saint Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel), it was decided to expand the abbey by building a new church-abbey at the site of the monk quarter, which was moved to the North of Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre.

The new church-abbey first had three crypts build: the Trente-Cierges chapel (under the North wing), the choir crypt (to the East) and Saint-Martin chapel (under the South wing) (1031-1047). Then Abbot Ranulphe started the construction of the nave in 1060. In 1080, three levels were built to the North of Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre, including the "salle de l’Aquilon", which served as chaplaincy to host pilgrims, the monk promenade and a dormitory. The wine cellar and chaplaincy for the future "Merveille" were also started.

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PSmichel4277.JPG)

Interior of the church-abbey Saint-Michel.

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fa%C3%A7ade_de_l%27abbatiale_du_Mont_Saint-Michel1.jpg)

Classic facade if the church-abbey Saint-Michel.

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MtStMichel1.jpg)

Pilar in one of the lodging room.

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mont_Saint-Michel_-_Abbaye.jpg)

Nave of the abbey

By then the new buildings fully covered Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre which was still used for religious activities.

**Reconstructions**

Badly built, three spans on the West side of the [nave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave) collapsed in 1103. Abbot Roger II had them rebuilt in 1115-1125. In 1421 the roman choir collapsed. It was rebuilt in Gothic style from 1446 to 1523 (with a construction break from 1450 to 1499).

**The classic front of the abbey-church**

After a fire in 1776 it was decided to destroy the three western spans of the [nave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave) and, in 1780, the current classic front built. The foundations to support it led to the split in two of Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre.

### The "Merveille" and the monk buildings[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=14" \o "Edit section: The \"Merveille\" and the monk buildings)]

The [Mont-Saint-Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont-Saint-Michel) abbey is divided in two parts: the church-abbey and the "Merveille". The "Merveille" was the monk living area. Seen from outside, it has a [gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_architecture) front, on the North side, has three levels and was built over 25 years.

The "Merveille" can be subdivided into two parts: the East and the West sides. The East side was built first (from 1211 to 1218) and has three rooms: the chaplaincy, the hosts room and the dining-hall (from bottom to top). The West side was built seven years later and has three rooms: the wine cellar, the Knights room and the cloister.

### Robert de Torigni buildings[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=15" \o "Edit section: Robert de Torigni buildings)]

The [abbot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbot) [Robert of Torigni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_of_Torigni) had, to the West and South-west, a set of buildings added, containing some lodging, an officiality, a new hostelry, an infirmary and Saint-Étienne [chapel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapel) (1154-1164). He also modified the access ways to Notre-Dame-Sous-Terre, to prevent too many contacts between [monks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monks) and [pilgrims](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrims).

There is also a [treadwheel crane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treadwheel_crane) which served as a [windlass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windlass), installed during the use of the site as a prison, to bring supplies to the prisoners. Some prisoners would walk inside the wheel to rotate it.

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PSmichel4292.JPG)

Treadwheel crane

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Normandie_Manche_Mont2_tango7174.jpg)

Outside view of the windlass

* [](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PSmichel4297.JPG)

Ramp for the windlass

In the remain of the infirmary, that collapsed in 1811, is a mural representation above the door of [the three dead kings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Three_Dead_Kings), showing three noble men caught in a cemetery by three dead, illustrating how short life is.

#### The "Merveille"[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=16)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MtStMichel-CoupeTransversale-1875.gif)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MtStMichel-CoupeTransversale-1875.gif)

Abbey with the "Merveille" to the left

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Normandie_Manche_Mont1_tango7174.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Normandie_Manche_Mont1_tango7174.jpg)

The cloister

The "Merveille", located to the North of the church-abbey, contains a [cloister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloister), a dining-hall, a study room and a [chaplaincy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaplaincy) with an ideal floor plan for going from one to the other.

At the ground level, the [wine cellar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wine_cellar) reinforce the building. Then every floor above has a room smaller at each level up to the top, with [abutments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abutment) on the outside to hold the structure. The local geography thus played a major role in the design of the "Merveille".

The [chaplaincy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaplaincy) was built during [abbot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbot) Roger II leadership, when Abbot Raoul des iles lead the construction of the hosts room (1215-1217), the dining-hall (1217-1220) the [cellar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wine_cellar), the knights room (1220-1225) and the [cloister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloister) (1225-1228).

#### The cloister[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=17" \o "Edit section: The cloister)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mont_Saint-Michel_-_Clo%C3%AEtre_de_l%27Abbaye.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mont_Saint-Michel_-_Clo%C3%AEtre_de_l%27Abbaye.jpg)

The cloister

Contrary to the tradition, this [cloister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloister) was not built at the center of the [monastery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastery), and thus does not link with all the other buildings. Its function was purely spiritual: to bring the [monks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monks) to meditate.

Three arches of the [cloister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloister) are opened to the sea or to the outside. Those openings were the entryway to the [chapter house](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapter_house) that was never built. The columns, arranged in [quincunx](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quincunx), were originally made of [limestone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limestone) from [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England) but were later restored using [puddingstone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puddingstone_(rock)) from [Lucerne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucerne).

The cloister has in the middle a [medieval garden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hortus_conclusus) recreated in 1966 by brother Bruno de Senneville, a [Benedict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict) [monk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monk). The center is made of box tree surrounded by 13 [Damascus roses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosa_%C3%97_damascena). The squares of medicinal plants, aromatic herbs and flowers symbolize the daily needs of [Middle age](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_age) monks. In the middle of the box trees were monsters to remind that in the middle of any marvel evil could still be there.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey#cite_note-15)

#### The "Belle Chaise" room and the South-West buildings[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=18" \o "Edit section: The \"Belle Chaise\" room and the South-West buildings)]

The "Belle Chaise" building and the lodging wing hosted the administrative section of the abbey. Abbot Richard Turstin built, on the East side, the Guards room (that became the abbey entrance) and a new officiality, where judicial decisions were made (1257).

Around 1393, the two Châtelet towers were built, then the Perrine tower and a "Bailliverie". Later, under [abbot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbot) Pierre Le Roy, a lodging wing was added, adding at the same time to the abbey fortifications.

### The city[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=19" \o "Edit section: The city)]

*See also:* [*Mont Saint Michel*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Saint_Michel)

A fortified wall surround the city, located on the South and East side of the mont. Two [bombards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombard_(weapon)), left by the [English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England) during the [Hundred Years' War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hundred_Years%27_War) are visible near one of the fortification door.

## Heraldry[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mont_Saint_Michel_Abbey&action=edit&section=20" \o "Edit section: Heraldry)]

|  |
| --- |
| [Coat of Arms of Mont Saint-Michel abbey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Blason_abbaye_fr_Mont_Saint_Michel_(50).svg) |

The [Coat of Arms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_Arms) of Mont Saint-Michel abbey

# Milan Cathedral

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| [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/ec/876MilanoDuomo.JPG/250px-876MilanoDuomo.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:876MilanoDuomo.JPG)  Milan Cathedral from the Square. | |
| **Basic information** | |
| **Location** | [Milan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan), Italy |
| [**Geographic coordinates**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system) | http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[45°27′51″N 9°11′29″E﻿ / ﻿45.46417°N 9.19139°E﻿ / 45.46417; 9.19139](http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Milan_Cathedral&params=45_27_51_N_9_11_29_E_region:IT_type:landmark)[Coordinates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[45°27′51″N 9°11′29″E﻿ / ﻿45.46417°N 9.19139°E﻿ / 45.46417; 9.19139](http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Milan_Cathedral&params=45_27_51_N_9_11_29_E_region:IT_type:landmark) |
| [**Affiliation**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_religions_and_spiritual_traditions) | [Roman Catholic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic) |
| [**Rite**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rite) | [Ambrosian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambrosian_Rite) |
| **Province** | [Archdiocese of Milan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Milan) |
| **Architectural description** | |
| [**Architectural style**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architectural_style) | [Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_architecture), [Neoclassical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoclassical_architecture), [Neo-Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_Revival_architecture) |
| **Direction of façade** | West |
| **Groundbreaking** | 1386 |
| **Completed** | 1965 |
| **Specifications** | |
| **Capacity** | 40,000 |
| **Length** | 158.5 metres (520 ft) |
| **Width** | 92 metres (302 ft) |
| **Width (**[**nave**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave)**)** | 16.75 metres (55 ft) |
| **Height (max)** | 108 metres (354 ft) |
| **Dome height (outer)** | 65.5 metres (215 ft) |
| [**Spire**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spire)**(s)** | 135 |
| **Spire height** | 108.5 metres (356 ft) |
| [**Materials**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Building_material) | Brick with [Candoglia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candoglia) marble |

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Milano_Duomo_Interno_1.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf9/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Milano_Duomo_Interno_1.jpg)

Plate celebrating the laying of the first stone in 1386.

**Milan Cathedral** ([Italian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language): **Duomo di Milano**; [Lombard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lombard_language): *Domm de Milan*) is the [cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral) church of [Milan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan), [Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy). Dedicated to Santa Maria Nascente (Saint Mary Nascent), it is the seat of the [Archbishop of Milan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Milan), currently [Cardinal Angelo Scola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelo_Scola).

The [Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_architecture) cathedral took nearly six centuries to complete. It is the fifth [largest cathedral in the world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_church_buildings_in_the_world)[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-nytimes_frommer.27s-1) and the largest in the Italian state territory.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-2)

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## History[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milan_Cathedral&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: History)]

Milan's layout, with streets either radiating from the Duomo or circling it, reveals that the Duomo occupies what was the most central site in [Roman Mediolanum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediolanum), that of the public [basilica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica) facing the [forum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forum_(Roman)). [Saint Ambrose](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambrose)'s 'New Basilica' was built on this site at the beginning of the 5th century, with an adjoining basilica added in 836. The old baptistery (Battistero Paleocristiano, constructed in 335) still can be visited under the Milan Cathedral, it is one of the oldest Christian buildings in Europe.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-wondermondo-3) When a fire damaged the cathedral and basilica in 1075, they were later rebuilt as the Duomo.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-4)

### The beginning[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milan_Cathedral&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: The beginning)]

In 1386, Archbishop Antonio da [Saluzzo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saluzzo) began construction of the cathedral. Start of the construction coincided with the accession to power in Milan of the archbishop's cousin [Gian Galeazzo Visconti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gian_Galeazzo_Visconti), and was meant as a reward to the noble and working classes, who had suffered under his tyrannical Visconti predecessor [Barnabò](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barnab%C3%B2_Visconti). Before actual work began, three main buildings were demolished: the palace of the Archbishop, the Ordinari Palace and the Baptistry of St. Stephen at the Spring, while the old church of Sta. Maria Maggiore was exploited as a stone quarry. Enthusiasm for the immense new building soon spread among the population, and the shrewd Gian Galeazzo, together with his cousin the archbishop, collected large donations for the work-in-progress. The construction program was strictly regulated under the "Fabbrica del Duomo", which had 300 employees led by first chief engineer [Simone da Orsenigo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simone_da_Orsenigo). Orsenigo initially planned to

to build the cathedral from brick in Lombard Gothic style.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-wondermondo-3)

Visconti had ambitions to follow the newest trends in European architecture. In 1389, a [French](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_people) chief engineer, [Nicolas de Bonaventure](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nicolas_de_Bonaventure&action=edit&redlink=1), was appointed, adding to the church its Rayonnant Gothic, a French style not typical for Italy. He decided that the brick structure should be panelled with marble. Galeazzo gave the Fabbrica del Duomo exclusive use of the marble from the [Candoglia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candoglia) quarry and exempted it from taxes. Ten years later another French architect, [Jean Mignot](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jean_Mignot&action=edit&redlink=1), was called from Paris to judge and improve upon the work done, as the masons needed new technical aid to lift stones to an unprecedented height. Mignot declared all the work done up till then as in *pericolo di ruina* ("peril of ruin"), as it had been done *sine scienzia* ("without science"). In the following years Mignot's forecasts proved untrue, but anyway they spurred Galeazzo's engineers to improve their instruments and techniques. Work proceeded quickly, and at the death of Gian Galeazzo in 1402, almost half the cathedral was complete. Construction, however, stalled almost totally until 1480, for lack of money and ideas: the most notable works of this period were the tombs of Marco Carelli and [Pope Martin V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Martin_V) (1424) and the windows of the apse (1470s), of which those extant portray *St. John the Evangelist*, by Cristoforo de' Mottis, and *Saint Eligius* and *San John of Damascus*, both by Niccolò da Varallo. In 1452, under [Francesco Sforza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Sforza), the nave and the aisles were completed up to the sixth bay.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Milano_domo_Antonio_Amadeo.JPG)

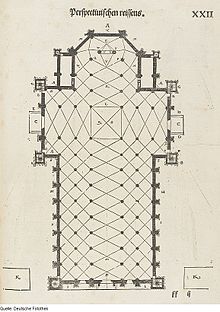
[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf9/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Milano_domo_Antonio_Amadeo.JPG)

[Giovanni Antonio Amadeo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Antonio_Amadeo) on the "Amadeo's Little Spire".

In 1500 to 1510, under [Ludovico Sforza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludovico_Sforza), the octagonal cupola was completed, and decorated in the interior with four series of 15 statues each, portraying saints, prophets, sibyls and other characters of the [Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible). The exterior long remained without any decoration, except for the *Guglietto dell'Amadeo* ("[Amadeo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Antonio_Amadeo" \o "Giovanni Antonio Amadeo)'s Little Spire"), constructed 1507-1510. This is a [Renaissance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance) masterwork which nevertheless harmonized well with the general Gothic appearance of the church.

During the subsequent [Spanish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_people) domination, the new church proved usable, even though the interior remained largely unfinished, and some bays of the nave and the transepts were still missing. In 1552 Giacomo Antegnati was commissioned to build a large organ for the north side of the choir, and [Giuseppe Meda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Meda) provided four of the sixteen pales which were to decorate the altar area (the program was completed by [Federico Borromeo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federico_Borromeo)). In 1562, Marco d' Agrate's [*St. Bartholomew*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stbartholomewmilan.JPG) and the famous [Trivulzio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gian_Giacomo_Trivulzio) candelabrum (12th century) were added.

### Charles Borromeo[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milan_Cathedral&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Charles Borromeo)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fotothek_df_tg_0000071_Architektur_%5E_Geometrie_%5E_Grundriss_%5E_Mail%C3%A4nder_Dom.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf9/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fotothek_df_tg_0000071_Architektur_%5E_Geometrie_%5E_Grundriss_%5E_Mail%C3%A4nder_Dom.jpg)

Plan of the Cathedral in the 16th century

After the accession of [Carlo Borromeo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Borromeo) to the archbishop's throne, all lay monuments were removed from the Duomo. These included the tombs of [Giovanni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Maria_Visconti), [Barnabò](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barnab%C3%B2_Visconti) and [Filippo Maria Visconti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filippo_Maria_Visconti), [Francesco I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_I_Sforza) and his wife Bianca, [Galeazzo Maria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galeazzo_Maria_Sforza) and [Lodovico Sforza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lodovico_Sforza), which were brought to unknown destinations. However, Borromeo's main intervention was the appointment, in 1571, of [Pellegrino Pellegrini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pellegrino_Pellegrini) as chief engineer— a contentious move, since to appoint Pellegrino, who was not a lay brother of the duomo, required a revision of the Fabbrica's statutes.

Borromeo and Pellegrini strove for a new, Renaissance appearance for the cathedral, that would emphasise its Roman / Italian nature, and subdue the Gothic style, which was now seen as foreign. As the façade still was largely incomplete, Pellegrini designed a "Roman" style one, with columns, obelisks and a large [tympanum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tympanum_(architecture)). When Pellegrini's design was revealed, a competition for the design of the façade was announced, and this elicited nearly a dozen entries, including one by Antonio Barca [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-5)

This design was never carried out, but the interior decoration continued: in 1575-1585 the presbytery was rebuilt, while new altars and the baptistry were added in the

Wooden choir stalls were constructed by 1614 for the main altar by [Francesco Brambilla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Brambilla).

In 1577 Borromeo finally consecrated the whole edifice as a new church, distinct from the old Santa Maria Maggiore and Santa Tecla (which had been unified in 1549 after heavy disputes).

### 17th century[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milan_Cathedral&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: 17th century)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dal_Re,_Marc%27Antonio_(1697-1766)_-_Vedute_di_Milano_-_09_-_Il_Duomo_-_ca._1745.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf9/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dal_Re,_Marc%27Antonio_(1697-1766)_-_Vedute_di_Milano_-_09_-_Il_Duomo_-_ca._1745.jpg)

The cathedral as it appeared in 1745.

At the beginning of the 17th century [Federico Borromeo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federico_Borromeo) had the foundations of the new façade laid by [Francesco Maria Richini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Maria_Richini) and [Fabio Mangone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fabio_Mangone). Work continued until 1638 with the construction of five portals and two middle windows. In 1649, however, the new chief architect Carlo Buzzi introduced a striking revolution: the façade was to revert to original Gothic style, including the already finished details within big Gothic pilasters and two giant belfries. Other designs were provided by, among others, [Filippo Juvarra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filippo_Juvarra) (1733) and [Luigi Vanvitelli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luigi_Vanvitelli) (1745), but all remained unapplied. In 1682 the façade of Santa Maria Maggiore was demolished and the cathedral's roof covering completed.

In 1762 one of the main features of the cathedral, the Madonnina's spire, was erected at the dizzying height of 108.5 m. The spire was designed by [Carlo Pellicani](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Carlo_Pellicani&action=edit&redlink=1) and sports at the top a famous polychrome [Madonnina statue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonnina_(statue)), designed by Giuseppe Perego that befits the original stature of the cathedral.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-6) Given Milan's notoriously damp and foggy climate, the Milanese consider it a fair-weather day when the Madonnina is visible from a distance, as it is so often covered by mist.

### Completion[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milan_Cathedral&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Completion)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Milano_Duomo_1856.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf9/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Milano_Duomo_1856.jpg)

The Cathedral in 1856.

On May 20, 1805, [Napoleon Bonaparte](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_Bonaparte), about to be crowned King of Italy, ordered the façade to be finished by [Carlo Pellicani](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Carlo_Pellicani&action=edit&redlink=1). In his enthusiasm, he assured that all expenses would fall to the French treasurer

who would reimburse the Fabbrica for the real estate it had to sell. Even though this reimbursement was never paid, it still meant that finally, within only seven years, the Cathedral had its façade completed. The new architect, [Carlo Pellicani Junior](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Carlo_Pellicani_Junior&action=edit&redlink=1), largely followed Buzzi's project, adding some neo-Gothic details to the upper windows. As a form of thanksgiving, a statue of [Napoleon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon) was placed at the top of one of the spires. Napoleon was crowned King of Italy at the Duomo.

In the following years, most of the missing arches and spires were constructed. The statues on the southern wall were also finished, while in 1829-1858, new stained glass windows replaced the old ones, though with less aesthetically significant results. The last details of the cathedral were finished only in the 20th century: the last gate was inaugurated on January 6, 1965. This date is considered the very end of a process which had proceeded for generations, although even now, some uncarved blocks remain to be completed as statues. The Duomo's main façade went under renovation from 2003 to early 2009: as of February 2009, it has been completely uncovered, showing again the colours of the Candoglia marble.

In November 2012 officials announced a campaign to raise funds for the cathedral's preservation by asking patrons to adopt the building's gargoyles. The effects of pollution on the 14th-century building entail regular maintenance, and recent austerity cuts to Italy's culture budget has left less money for upkeep of cultural institutions, including the cathedral. To help make up funds, Duomo management launched a campaign offering its 135 gargoyles up for "adoption." Donors who contribute €100,000 (about $128,000 Cdn) or more will have their name engraved under one of the grotesque figures perched on the cathedral's rooftop. The figures serve as drainage pipes.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-7)

## Architecture and art[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milan_Cathedral&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: Architecture and art)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Duomo_Madonnina.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf9/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Duomo_Madonnina.jpg)

The famous "Madonnina" atop the main spire of the cathedral, a baroque gilded bronze statue

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:IMG_3712_-_Milano_-_Duomo_-_Interno_-_Foto_di_Giovanni_Dall%27Orto_-_13-jan-2007.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf9/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:IMG_3712_-_Milano_-_Duomo_-_Interno_-_Foto_di_Giovanni_Dall%27Orto_-_13-jan-2007.jpg)

Interior view of the

The plan consists of a [nave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave) with four side-aisles, crossed by a [transept](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transept) and then followed by [choir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choir_(architecture)) and [apse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apse). The height of the nave is about 45 meters, the highest Gothic vaults of a complete church (less than the 48 meters of [Beauvais Cathedral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beauvais_Cathedral), which was never completed).

The roof is open to tourists (for a fee), which allows many a close-up view of some spectacular sculpture that would otherwise be unappreciated. The roof of the cathedral is renowned for the forest of openwork [pinnacles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinnacle) and [spires](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spire), set upon delicate [flying buttresses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flying_buttresses).

The cathedral's five broad naves, divided by 40 pillars, are reflected in the hierarchic openings of the façade. Even the transepts have aisles. The nave columns are 24.5 metres (80 ft) high, and the apsidal windows are 20.7 x 8.5 metres (68 x 28 feet). The huge building is of brick construction, faced with marble from the quarries which [Gian Galeazzo Visconti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gian_Galeazzo_Visconti) donated in perpetuity to the cathedral chapter. Its maintenance and repairs are very complicated.

Milan’s cathedral has recently developed [a new lighting system](http://milan.wantedworldwide.net/news/7682/milans-duomo-gets-new-lighting.html), based on LED lights.

### Aesthetic judgements[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milan_Cathedral&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: Aesthetic judgements)]

The cathedral was built over several hundred years in a number of contrasting styles and the quality of the workmanship varies markedly. Reactions to it have ranged from admiration to disfavour. The Guida d’Italia: Milano 1998 (Touring Club Editore, p. 154) points out that the early Romantics tended to praise it in “the first intense enthusiasms for Gothic.” As the Gothic Revival brought in a purer taste, condemnation was often equally intense.

[John Ruskin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ruskin) commented acidly that the cathedral steals "from every style in the world: and every style spoiled. The cathedral is a mixture of [Perpendicular](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perpendicular_Period) with [Flamboyant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flamboyant), the latter being peculiarly barbarous and angular, owing to its being engrafted, not on a pure, but a very early penetrative Gothic … The rest of the architecture among which this curious Flamboyant is set is a Perpendicular with horizontal bars across: and with the most detestable crocketing, utterly vile. Not a ray of invention in a single form… Finally the statues all over are of the worst possible common stonemasons’ yard species, and look pinned on for show. The only redeeming character about the whole being the frequent use of the sharp gable … which gives lightness, and the crowding of the spiry pinnacles into the sky.” (Notebooks[M.6L]). The plastered ceiling painted to imitate elaborate tracery carved in stone particularly aroused his contempt as a “gross degradation”.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-8)

While appreciating the force of Ruskin’s criticisms, [Henry James](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_James) was more appreciative: “A structure not supremely interesting, not logical, not … commandingly beautiful, but grandly curious and superbly rich. … If it had no other distinction it would still have that of impressive, immeasurable achievement … a supreme embodiment of vigorous effort.”[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-9)

### Main monuments and sights[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milan_Cathedral&action=edit&section=9" \o "Edit section: Main monuments and sights)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:San_Bartolomeo_Flayed,_Duomo,_Milano_(1562).jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf9/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:San_Bartolomeo_Flayed,_Duomo,_Milano_(1562).jpg)

San Bartolomeo

The interior of the cathedral includes numerous monuments and artworks. These include:

* At the left of the altar is located the most famous statue of all the Cathedral, the San Bartolomeo Flayed (1562), by Marco d'Agrate, the saint shows his flayed skin thrown over his shoulders like a stole.
* The Archbishop Alberto da Intimiano's sarcophagus, which is overlooked by a Crucifix in copper laminae (a replica).
* The sarcophagi of the archbishops [Ottone Visconti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottone_Visconti) and [Giovanni Visconti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Visconti_(archbishop)), created by a [Campionese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campione_d%27Italia) master in the 14th century.
* The sarcophagus of Marco Carelli, who donated 35,000 ducati to accelerate the construction of the cathedral.
* The three magnificent altars by [Pellegrino Pellegrini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pellegrino_Pellegrini), which include the notable [Federico Zuccari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federico_Zuccari)'s *Visit of St. Peter to St. Agatha jailed*.
* In the right transept, the monument to [Gian Giacomo Medici di Marignano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gian_Giacomo_Medici_di_Marignano), called "Medeghino", by [Leone Leoni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leone_Leoni), and the adjacent Renaissance marble altar, decorated with gilt bronze statues.
* The presbytery is a late Renaissance masterpiece composing a choir, a Temple by Pellegrini, two pulpits with giant [atlantes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_(architecture)) covered in copper and bronze, and two large organs. Around the choir the two sacristies' portals, some frescoes and a fifteenth-century statue of Martin V by [Jacopino da Tradate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacopino_da_Tradate)) can be seen.
* The transepts house the Trivulzio Candelabrum, which is in two pieces. The base (attributed to [Nicolas of Verdun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolas_of_Verdun), 12th century), characterized by a fantastic ensemble of vines, vegetables and imaginary animals; and the stem, of the mid-16th century.
* In the left aisle, the Arcimboldi monument by Alessi and Romanesque figures depicting the *Apostles* in red marble and the neo-Classic baptistry by Pellegrini.
* A small red light bulb in the dome above the [apse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apse) marks the spot where one of the [nails](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nail_(relic)) reputedly from the [Crucifixion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion) of Christ has been placed. The Holy Nail is retrieved and exposed to the public every year, during a celebration known as the [Rite of the Nivola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rite_of_the_Nivola).
* In November–December, in the days surrounding the birthdate of Saint Charles Borromeo, a series of large canvases, the [*Quadroni*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quadroni_of_San_Carlo_Borromeo) are exhibited along the nave.
* The 5-manual, 225-rank pipe-organ, built jointly by the Tamburini and Mascioni Italian organbuilding firms on Mussolini's command, is currently the largest organ in all of Italy

## In literature[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milan_Cathedral&action=edit&section=10" \o "Edit section: In literature)]

Poet [Percy Bysshe Shelley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percy_Bysshe_Shelley) read literature inside the Duomo.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-nytimes_frommer.27s-1) [Alfred, Lord Tennyson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred,_Lord_Tennyson) enjoyed the view of the [Alps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alps) from the Duomo f.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Cathedral#cite_note-nytimes_frommer.27s-1)

The American writer and journalist [Mark Twain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Twain) visited Milan in the summer of 1867. He dedicated chapter 18 of [*Innocents Abroad*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Innocents_Abroad) to the Milan Cathedral, including many physical and historical details, and a now uncommon visit to the roof. He describes the Duomo as follows:

What a wonder it is! So grand, so solemn, so vast! And yet so delicate, so airy, so graceful! A very world of solid weight, and yet it seems ...a delusion of frostwork that might vanish with a breath!... The central one of its five great doors is bordered with a bas-relief of birds and fruits and beasts and insects, which have been so ingeniously carved out of the marble that they seem like living creatures-- and the figures are so numerous and the design so complex, that one might study it a week without exhausting its interest...everywhere that a niche or a perch can be found about the enormous building, from summit to base, there is a marble statue, and every statue is a study in itself...Away above, on the lofty roof, rank on rank of carved and fretted spires spring high in the air, and through their rich tracery one sees the sky beyond. ... (Up on) the roof...springing from its broad marble flagstones, were the long files of spires, looking very tall close at hand, but diminishing in the distance...We could see, now, that the statue on the top of each was the size of a large man, though they all looked like dolls from the street... They say that the Cathedral of Milan is second only to St. Peter's at Rome. I cannot understand how it can be second to anything made by human hands.

[Oscar Wilde](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Wilde) visited Milan in June 1875. In a letter to his mother he wrote: "The Cathedral is an awful failure. Outside the design is monstrous and inartistic. The over-elaborated details stuck high up where no one can see them; everything is vile in it; it is, however, imposing and gigantic as a failure, through its great size and elaborate execution."

In [*Italian Hours*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Hours) [Henry James](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_James) describes “a certain exhibition that I privately enjoyed of the relics of St. Charles Borromeus. This holy man lies at his eternal rest in a small but gorgeous sepulchral chapel … and for the modest sum of five francs you may have his shrivelled mortality unveiled and gaze at it with whatever reserves occur to you. The Catholic Church never renounces a chance of the sublime for fear of a chance of the ridiculous--especially when the chance of the sublime may be the very excellent chance of five francs. The performance in question, of which the good San Carlo paid in the first instance the cost, was impressive certainly, but as a monstrous matter or a grim comedy may still be. The little sacristan, having secured his audience, … lighted a couple of extra candles and proceeded to remove from above the altar, by means of a crank, a sort of sliding shutter, just as you may see a shop-boy do of a morning at his master's window. In this case too a large sheet of plate-glass was uncovered, and to form an idea of the étalage you must imagine that a jeweller, for reasons of his own, has struck an unnatural partnership with an undertaker. The black mummified corpse of the saint is stretched out in a glass coffin, clad in his mouldering canonicals, mitred, crosiered and gloved, glittering with votive jewels. It is an extraordinary mixture of death and life; the desiccated clay, the ashen rags, the hideous little black mask and skull, and the living, glowing, twinkling splendour of diamonds, emeralds and sapphires. The collection is really fine, and many great historic names are attached to the different offerings. Whatever may be the better opinion as to the future of the Church, I can't help thinking she will make a figure in the world so long as she retains this great fund of precious "properties," this prodigious capital decoratively invested and scintillating throughout Christendom at effectively-scattered points.”

# Casa Milà

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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*Casa Milà* at dusk

**Casa Milà** (Catalan pronunciation: [[ˈkazə miˈɫa]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_Catalan)), better known as ***La Pedrera*** (pronounced: [[ɫə pəˈðɾeɾə]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_Catalan), meaning the 'The Quarry'), is a building designed by the [Catalan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan_people) [architect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architect) [Antoni Gaudí](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoni_Gaud%C3%AD) and built during the years 1906–1912. It is located at 92, [*Passeig de Gràcia*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passeig_de_Gr%C3%A0cia) (*passeig* is Catalan for promenade) in the [*Eixample*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eixample) district of [Barcelona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barcelona), [Catalonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalonia), [Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain).

It was a controversial design at the time for the bold forms of the undulating stone facade and [wrought iron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wrought_iron) decoration of the balconies and windows, designed largely by [Josep Maria Jujol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josep_Maria_Jujol), who also created some of the plaster ceilings.

Architecturally it is considered an innovative work for its steel structure and [curtain walls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curtain_walls) – the façade is self-supporting. Other innovative elements were the construction of underground car parking and separate lifts and stairs for the owners and their servants.

In 1984, it was declared a [World Heritage site](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_site) by [UNESCO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO). The building is made open to the public by Fundació Catalunya-La Pedrera, which manages the various exhibitions and activities and visits to the interior and roof.

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## History[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: History)]

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*Casa Milà* atrium at dusk

Casa Milà was built for the married couple, Roser Segimon and Pere Milà. Roser Segimon was the wealthy widow of Josep Guardiola, an [*Indiano*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Indiano&action=edit&redlink=1), a term applied locally to the Catalans returning from the American colonies with tremendous wealth. Her second husband, Pere Milà, was a developer who was criticized for his flamboyant lifestyle and ridiculed by the contemporary residents of Barcelona, when they joked about his love of money and opulence, wondering if he was not rather more interested in "the widow’s *guardiola*" ([piggy bank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piggy_bank)), than in "Guardiola’s widow".[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-1)

Gaudi, a Catholic and a devotee of the [Virgin Mary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgin_Mary), planned for the Casa Milà to be a spiritual symbol.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-google224-2) Overt religious elements include an excerpt from the [Rosary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosary) prayer on the cornice and planned statues of Mary, specifically [Our Lady of the Rosary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_the_Rosary), and two [archangels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archangels), [St. Michael](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Michael) and [St. Gabriel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Gabriel).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-google224-2)[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-gaudiclub1906-3) The design by Gaudi was not followed in some aspects. The local government objected to some aspects of the project, fined the owners for many infractions of [building codes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Building_code), ordered the demolition of aspects exceeding the height standard for the city.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-4) The Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Architecture states that the statuary was indeed [Mary the mother of Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_the_mother_of_Jesus), also noting Gaudi's devoutness, and notes that the owner decided not to include it after [Semana Trágica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tragic_Week_(Catalonia)), an outbreak of [anticlericalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anticlericalism) in the city.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-google224-2) After the decision was made to exclude the statuary of Mary and the archangels, Gaudi contemplated abandoning the project but was persuaded not to by a priest.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-gaudiclub1906-3)

*Casa Milà* was in poor condition in the early 1980s. It had been painted a dreary brown and many of its interior color schemes had been abandoned or allowed to deteriorate, but it has since been restored and many of the original colors revived.

### Property changes[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Property changes)]

In 1940 Pere Milà died, and Roser Segimon sold the property in 1946. Monumental Peter shows the employer and the estate to Joseph Balañá Ballvé Pellisé and in partnership with family Pío Rubert Laporta, known for its department stores in the San Antonio round. The transaction resulted in 18 million pesetas for the building and formed the Compañía Inmobiliaria Provence *SA* (CIPS) to administer it. [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-huertas-5) Roser Segimon continued to live on the floor home until her death in 1964.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-cronologia-6) The new property was divided the first floor of Provence in the street five floors instead of the original two. In 1953 they commissioned Juan Francisco Barba Corsini the construction of 13 apartments in the attic, which until then had been the laundry, increasingly used and had become an unsafe place, filled with garbage and rampoines . Barba Corsini respect Gaudí's original volume and structure, the Logis-freedom approach that gave the open space and no right angles. The apartments were located on the outer side of the space, leaving a corridor of the distribution curve of the arches that give central courtyard, leaving the darker area between the two courtyards as dealer floor. Apartments were 2 or 3 pieces, some with a loft living, with a design and furniture typical of the early 1950s, with materials such as brick, ceramic, wood and furniture design similar to that of [Eero Saarinen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eero_Saarinen) [[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-corsini-7) as *Chair Quarry*, among others. The works were supposed installing a chimney inadequate next to Gaudí's.

Installations and activities mixed with the neighboring houses in the early 1960s led to considerable losses in Gaudí's work, especially the decorative elements. In 1966 the home was installed Northern Insurance Company, after which he settled a controversial [bingo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bingo)[[*disambiguation needed*](http://toolserver.org/%7Edispenser/cgi-bin/dab_solver.py?page=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&editintro=Template:Disambiguation_needed/editintro&client=Template:Dn)] that would remain until 1985. He also installed an academy, offices or Inoxcrom cement mills, among others. [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-huertas-5) maintenance costs were very high and their owners, as well as to give shape to more homes, left the building causing age some loosening of stones in 1971. Emergency repairs were made by [Joseph Anton Comas](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph_Anton_Comas&action=edit&redlink=1) respectful to the original, especially the painting of tweaking yards.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-patrimoni-8)

### Restoration[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Restoration)]

The July 24 of 1969 Gaudí's work had received official recognition [Monument](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monument). It was a first step to prevent further destruction. But it was not until 1984, with the appointment of [World Heritage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage), begin when a change in its protection. First the [City Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_Council) tried to rent the main floor to install office for the 1992 Olympic bid. Finally, the day before [Christmas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas) 1986, Safety of Catalonia La Pedrera bought it for 900 million pesetas.

The February 19 of 1987 started the most urgent, the restoration and cleaning of the facade. The task was performed by architects Joseph Emilio Hernandez-Cross and Rafael Vila.

In 1990, as part of the [Cultural Olympiad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Olympiad), opened the renovated main floor of the Milan exhibition [Golden Square](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Square) dedicated to modern architecture in the center of the Eixample.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-huertas-5)

## Design[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Design)]

The building is 1,323 m2 per floor on a plot of 1,620 m2. Gaudí began the first sketches in his workshop in the [Sagrada Familia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sagrada_Familia), where he conceived of this house as a constant curve, both outside and inside, incorporating multiple solutions of formal [geometry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geometry) and elements of a naturalistic nature.

Casa Milà is the result of two buildings, which are structured around two courtyards that provide light to the nine levels: basement, ground

floor, mezzanine, main (or noble) floor, four upper floors, and an attic. The basement was intended to be the garage, the main floor the residence of the Milàs (a flat of all 1,323 m2), and the rest distributed over 20 homes for rent. The resulting layout is shaped like an asymmetrical "8" because of the different shape and size of the courtyards. The attic housed the laundry and drying areas, forming an insulating space for the building and simultaneously determining the levels of the roof.

One of the most significant parts of the building is the roof, crowned with skylights or staircase exits, fans, and chimneys. All of these elements, constructed with timbrel coated with limestone, broken marble or glass, have a specific architectural function, nevertheless, they have become real sculptures integrated into the building.

The building is a unique entity, where the shape of the exterior continues to the interior. The apartments feature ceilings with plaster reliefs of great dynamism, handcrafted wooden doors, windows, and furniture (sadly, now gone), and the design of the hydraulic pavement and different ornamental elements.

The stairways were intended for services, in that access to housing was by elevator except for the noble floor, where Gaudí added a staircase of a particular configuration.

Gaudi wanted the people who lived in the flats to all know each other. Therefore there were only lifts on every second floor so people had to communicate with one another on different floors.

### Structure[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Structure)]

Regarding the structure, Casa Milà is characterized by its self-supporting stone facade, meaning that it is free of the functions of a load-bearing wall, which connects to the internal structure of each floor by means of curved iron beams surrounding the perimeter of each floor. This construction system allows, on one hand, large openings in the facade which give light to the homes, and on the other, free structuring of the different levels, so that all walls can be demolished without affecting the stability of the building. This allows the owners to change their minds at will and to modify, without problems, the interior layout of the homes. [[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-any2002a-9)

### Constructive and decorative items[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: Constructive and decorative items)]

#### Facade[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: Facade)]

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Design

The facade is composed of large blocks of [limestone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limestone) from the [Garraf Massif](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garraf_Massif) to the first floor of the quarry [Villefranche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villefranche-de-Conflent) to the higher levels. The blocks were cut to follow the plot of the projection of the model, later raised to its location on just adjusted to align them in a continuous curvilinear texture to the pieces around them.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CasaMila-Balcons.jpg)

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CasaMila-Balcony

Viewed from the outside are three parts: the main body of the six-story blocks with winding stone floors both floors of a block back with a change of pace in waves similar to waves, with a texture more smooth and white, with small holes that seem [gunboats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Embrasure), and finally the body of the roof.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-permanyer-10)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Casa_Mil%C3%A0_(1914).jpg)

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Design Plan

The original facade of Gaudi gone some of the local bars downstairs. In 1928, the tailor Mosella opened the first store in La Pedrera, he works and eliminate the bars. This did not concern anyone, because in the middle of twentieth century, twisted ironwork had little importance. The ironwork was lost until a few years later, when Americans donated one of them to the [MoMa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_Modern_Art_in_New_York), where it is on display.

Within restoration initiatives launched in 1987, the facade they rejoined him some pieces of stone that had fallen. In order to respect the fidelity of the original, material was obtained from the Quarry Villefranche, even though it was no longer operable. [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-huertas-5)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pedrera.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pedrera.jpg)

overview

#### Hall and courtyards[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: Hall and courtyards)]

The building has a completely original solution in solving the lobby to not being a closed and dark, but also for its open and airy courtyards connection with that equally important in gaining a place of transit and directly visible to the user accessing the building. There are two patios in the round side of the Paseo de Gracia and the elliptical street Provence.

The two halls are fully polychrome with [paintings](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mural_paintings_in_the_lobby_of_the_Casa_Mila&action=edit&redlink=1) oil on plaster surface, showing a repertoire [eclectic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eclecticism) references [mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mythology) and flowers.

Patios, structurally, are key as supporting loads of interior facades. The floor of the courtyard is supported by pillars of [cast iron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cast_iron). In the courtyard elliptical beams and girders adopt a constructive solution traditional, but cylindrical, Gaudí applied an ingenious solution of using two concentric cylindrical beams stretched radial beams, like the spokes of a bicycle, they from a point outside of the beam to two points above and below-the-making functions of the central girder [keystone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keystone_(architecture)) and works in tension and compression simultaneously. Thus supported structure twelve feet in diameter with a piece of maximum beauty and considered "the soul of the building" with a clear resemblance to the Gothic crypts.The centerpiece was built in a shipyard and [Josep Maria Carandell](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Josep_Maria_Carandell&action=edit&redlink=1) assimilates to the wheel of [steering](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steering), interpreting the intent of Gaudi represent the helm of the ship of life.

Access is protected by a massive gate [iron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron) with a design attributed to [Jujol](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Josep_Maria_Jujol_Gibert&action=edit&redlink=1), it was common for people and cars, where access to the garage in the basement, now a in [auditorium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auditorium).

During construction there appeared a problem adapting to the basement garage of cars, the new invention that thrilled the bourgeoisie. The future neighbor Felix Anthony Meadows, owner of Industrial Linera, requested a correction in access because its [Rolls Royce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolls-Royce_Motor_Cars) could not access it. Gaudí agreed to remove a pillar on the ramp that led into the garage. So, Felix, who was establishing sales and factory Fontanella street in [Walls of Valles](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Walls_of_Valles&action=edit&redlink=1) could go to both places with your car from La Pedrera. [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-huertas-5)

For the floors of Casa Milà, Gaudí used a model of [floor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floor) forms of square timbers with two colors, and the [hydraulic pavement](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hydraulic_pavement&action=edit&redlink=1) hexagonal pieces of blue and sea motifs that had originally been designed for the [Batllo house](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Batllo_house&action=edit&redlink=1) but which had not been used and recovered Gaudi the quarry. The wax was designed in gray John Bertrand under the supervision of Gaudí "touched up with their own fingers," in the words of the manufacturer [Josep Bay](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Josep_Bay&action=edit&redlink=1). [[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-bayo20-11)

#### Loft[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=9" \o "Edit section: Loft)]

Like the [Casa Batlló](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Batll%C3%B3), Gaudí shows the application of the [catenary arch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catenary_arch) as a support structure for the roof, a form which had also been used shortly after the owner itself, reinforcement of cooperative wood [Mataró](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matar%C3%B3) known as "The Working Mataronense." In this case, Gaudí used the Catalan technique of timbrel, imported from [Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) in the fourteenth century.

In the attic were located in the laundry room under a translucent roof [Catalan vault](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan_vault) subject to 270 [parabolic](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Parabolic_arc&action=edit&redlink=1) of varying height and about 80 cm apart. including the ribs seem that once an animal as large as a palm roof and an unconventional shape, similar to a landscape of hills and valleys. The shape and location of courtyards makes bows rises higher and lower when space is narrowed when the space expands.

The builder Bayó explained its construction: "First batter and slid wide household. After [Canaleta](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joseph_and_Canaleta_Stables&action=edit&redlink=1) gave the opening of each arc and nailed a nail Bayó each starting point of the arc at the top of the wall. Of these keys dangled a chain so that the lowest point coincided with the arrow to the bow. Then the profile drawn on the wall, for he alone drew the string and this profile did formwork carpenter for the placed and did three rows of tiles placed plan. Gaudí wanted to add a longitudinal axis tile arches linking all the key ".

#### Roof and chimneys[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=10" \o "Edit section: Roof and chimneys)]

The work of Gaudí on the rooftop of La Pedrera was a collective of his experience at [Palau Güell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palau_G%C3%BCell), but with solutions that were clearly more innovative - this time creating shapes and volumes with more body, more prominence, and less polychromasia. <Permanyer, either 1996 or 2008>

On the rooftop there are six skylights/staircase exits (four of which were covered with broken pottery and some that ended in a double cross typical of Gaudí), twenty-eight chimneys in several groupings (like were designed for [Casa Batlló](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Batll%C3%B3)), twisted so that the smoke came out better, two half-hidden vents whose function is to renew the air in the building, crowning the walkway that goes around this dream castle, four cupulins (domes?) that discharged to the facade. The staircases also house the water tanks; some of these are snail-shaped.

The stepped roof of La Pedrera, called "the garden of warriors" by the poet [Pere Gimferrer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pere_Gimferrer) because the chimneys appear to be protecting the skylights, has undergone a radical restoration, removing chimneys added in interventions after Gaudí, television antennas, and other elements that degraded the space. The restoration brought back the splendor to the chimneys and the skylights that were covered with fragments of [marble](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marble) and broken [Valencia tiles](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tile_Valencia&action=edit&redlink=1). One of the chimneys was topped with glass pieces - it was said that Gaudí did that the day after the inauguration of the building, taking advantage of the empty bottles from the party. It was restored with the bases of champagne bottles from the early twentieth century. The repair work has enabled the restoration of the original impact of the overhangs made of stone from [Ulldecona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulldecona) with fragments of tiles. This whole set is more colorful than the facade, although here the creamy tones are dominant. [[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-ruta-12)

#### Furniture[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=11" \o "Edit section: Furniture)]

Gaudí, as he had done in Casa Batlló, designed furniture specifically for the main floor. It was part of the concept artwork itself integral of [modernism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernism) in which the architect assumes responsibility for global issues such as the structure and the facade, as every detail of the decor, design furniture and accessories such as lamps, planters, floors or ceilings.

This was another point of friction with Mrs. Milà, she complained that there was no straight wall to place your Steinway piano, which Roser Segimon played often and quite well.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-orchards-13) Gaudi's response was blunt: "So play the violin." [[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-patrimoni-8)

The result of these disagreements has been the loss of the decorative legacy of Gaudi, as furniture due to climate change and the distribution of the main floor which made the owner when Gaudí died. Some remain in private collections some spare parts like a curtain made of [oak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oak) 4 m. long by 1.96 m. high you can see in the [Museum of Catalan Modernism](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Museum_of_Catalan_Modernism&action=edit&redlink=1); a chair and desktop of Pere Milà and some other complementary element.

Regarding oak doors carved by dint of gouge bachelors Casas and Bard, only became the floor of Milà and the floor show, because when the lady met Milà in the price, was decided that they would do more of this quality.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-bayo20-11)

## Architecture[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=12" \o "Edit section: Architecture)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Catalunya_en_Miniatura-La_Pedrera.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf10/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Catalunya_en_Miniatura-La_Pedrera.JPG)

Scale model at the [Catalunya en Miniatura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalunya_en_Miniatura) park

*Casa Milà* is part of the [UNESCO World Heritage Site](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO_World_Heritage_Site) "Works of [Antoni Gaudí](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoni_Gaud%C3%AD)". It was a predecessor of some buildings with a similar [biomorphic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biomorphism) appearance:

* the 1921 [Einstein Tower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Einstein_Tower) in [Potsdam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potsdam), designed by [Erich Mendelsohn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich_Mendelsohn)
* [Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon_R._Guggenheim_Museum) in [New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York), designed by [Frank Lloyd Wright](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Lloyd_Wright)
* [Chapelle Notre Dame du Haut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapelle_Notre_Dame_du_Haut), [Ronchamp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronchamp), [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France), designed by [Le Corbusier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Corbusier)
* the [Hundertwasserhaus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hundertwasserhaus) and other works by Austrian architect [Friedensreich Hundertwasser](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedensreich_Hundertwasser)
* [Disney Concert Hall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disney_Concert_Hall) in [Los Angeles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angeles), by [Frank Gehry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Gehry)

Free exhibitions often are held on the first floor, which also provides some opportunity to see the interior design. There is a charge for entrance to the apartment on the fourth floor and the roof. The other floors are not open to visitors.

### Constructive similarities[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=13" \o "Edit section: Constructive similarities)]

Inspired Gaudí's La Pedrera on a mountain, but there is no agreement on which was the reference model. Joan Bergós thought it was the rocks of Fray Guerau to [Prades mountains](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prades_mountains). Joan Matamala thought that the model could have been St. Miquel del Fai, while the sculptor Vicente Vilarubias believe was inspired by the cliffs Torrent Pareis to [Menorca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menorca). Other options include the mountains of Uçhisar to [Cappadocia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cappadocia) believes that Juan Goytisolo or Mola to villages by Louis Permanyer, based on which Gaudi visited the area in 1885, fleeing an outbreak of cholera in [Barcelona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barcelona).[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-permanyer-10)

Some people say that the interior layout of the quarry comes from studies that Gaudí made of medieval fortresses. An image that is reinforced by the similarity of rooftop chimneys and "sentinel" with great helmet coming out of the scales. [[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-ruta-12) structure of the iron door in the lobby flees follow any symmetry, straight or repetitive pattern. Rather, his vision evokes bubbles [soap](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soap) that are formed between the hands or structures plant cell.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-cirici-14)

## Criticism and controversy[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Casa_Mil%C3%A0&action=edit&section=14" \o "Edit section: Criticism and controversy)]

The building did not respect the rules of conventional style, which made it the subject of criticism. The nickname "La Pedrera" was assigned by citizens who disapproved of its heterodoxy.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-huertas-5) Satirical magazines were the main arena where criticism was spread. [Joan Junceda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Junceda) presented it as a joke traditional "Easter cake" by means of cartoons in [*Patufet*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patufet). [Joaquim Garcia](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Joaquim_Garcia&action=edit&redlink=1) made a joke about the difficulty of setting the damask wrought iron balconies in his magazine. [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-huertas-5) Homeowners in [Passeig de Gracia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passeig_de_Gracia) became angry with Milà and ceased to say hello to him, arguing that the weird building by Gaudi would lower the price of land in the area.

From the administrative point of view it also caused some controversy in December 1907 when the [City Hall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_Council) stopped work for a pillar occupied part of the sidewalk is not respecting the alignment of facades. The August 17 of 1908 he opened a new file because it surpassed the height predicted and exceeded the volume built on 4,000 square metres (43,000 sq ft). The Council called for a fine of 100,000 [pesetas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peseta) (approximately 25% of the cost of work) or demolish the attic and roof. The dispute was resolved a year and a half later, December 28 of 1909, when the Commission certified that the Eixample was a monumental building and is not required that s 'strict compliance with the bylaws.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-cronologia-6)

The owner introduced him to artistic buildings annual contest of [City Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_Council) where this year chose two works [Sagnier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enric_Sagnier) (Calle Mallorca, 264 and Corsica with [Diagonal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diagonal)), the House Guster, who was a particular house of the architect James Gustin and Perez Samanillo house, designed by Hervás and Arizmendi. Although the most dramatic and clear favorite was the house Milan, the jury ruled stating that "even be finished facades take much to make you fully completed, finalized and perfect state of appreciation." The winner in 1910 was Samanillo Perez, now the *Equestrian Circle*.

Gaudi's relations with Roser Segimon were not very good for different criteria on the construction and the decoration and the finishing of the house. One example was the image monumental [bronze](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronze) a [virgin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgin) del Rosario, which Gaudí wanted the front head in homage to the name of the owner (who had to carve the artist Charles Peanut and Red). The picture did not get to do or place, although registration remains Marian Ave gratia *M* full Dominus tecum at the top of the facade.The continuing disagreement meant that Gaudí took Mila to court for a discussion of fees. The lawsuit was won by Gaudí in 1916, giving the

giving the 105,000 pesetas to charity that won them that "the principles mattered more than money." Milà was having to pay mortgage quarry. [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-huertas-5)

After the death of the architect in 1926, Roser Segimon got rid of most of the furniture that Gaudí had designed and made decorative cover several original redecorate your house to the [Louis XVI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XVI). When la Pedrera was acquired by [Safety of Catalonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Safety_of_Catalonia&action=edit&redlink=1), the hidden elements once again see the light after the restoration done in 1990. [[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-permanyer-10)

When he started the [Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Civil_War) in July 1936, they were on vacation in Milan [Blanes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blanes). Some local ground floor of the quarry were collectivized by the [Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unified_Socialist_Party_of_Catalonia) and Milàs were forced to flee the area Franco leaving home after saving some artwork.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casa_Mil%C3%A0#cite_note-huertas-5)