



**THE PAPAL
GRAHAM-PAIGE
TYPE 837**

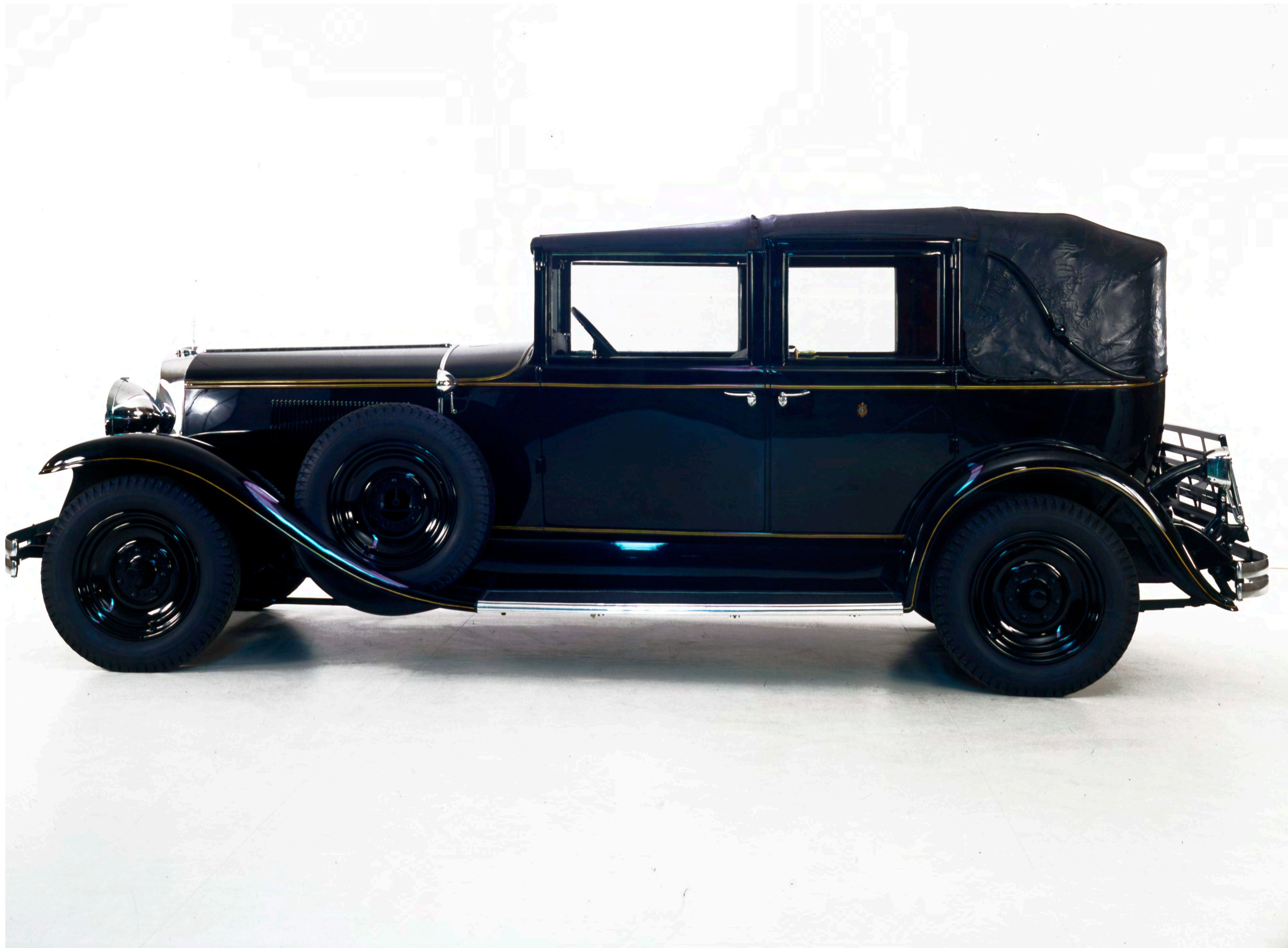
VATICAN MUSEUMS

History of the Vehicle and its Importance

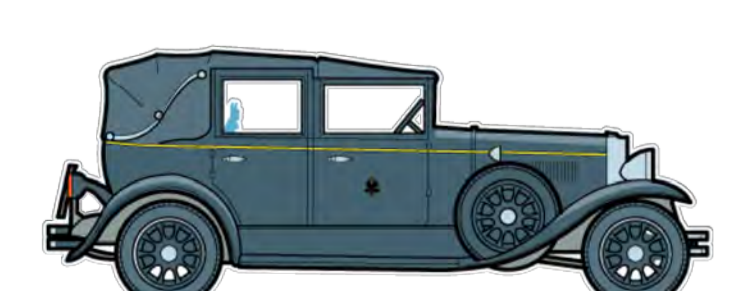
Donated to Pius XI on November 10, 1929 by the brothers Joseph B., Robert C., and Ray A. Graham on the occasion of the Conciliation between the Church and the Italian State, the Graham-Paige 837 was the first Pope-mobile in history to have transported a Pontiff, although the Holy See had in the years preceding acquired other cars used exclusively by the Secretary of State. Historically, in fact, the first time a car was offered as a gift to a Pope was in 1909 by S.E. Mons. John Murphy Farley, the Archbishop of New York at the time. As a welcoming gesture, the bishop offered an Itala 20/30 as a gift to Pope Pius X, which the Pope refused because, not being able to leave the “sacred walls” of the Vatican, he preferred to continue taking his walks in the Vatican Gardens in the old but comfortable and above all “less noisy” Landau carriage of his predecessor Leo XIII.



GP: first automobile used by the Pope!



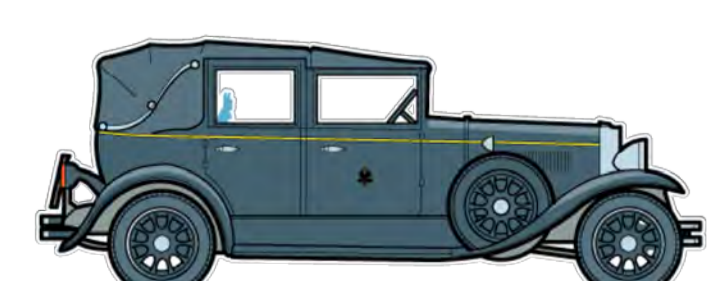
The entry of the first car in the Vatican took place shortly after the beginning of the pontificate of Pope Pius XI, when the Association of Catholic Women of the Archdiocese of Milan gave the Pope a Bianchi Type 15. Given that the question of Vatican sovereignty had not yet been resolved, however, the Pope never made use of the vehicle, and the plaque of the Diplomatic Corps (CD 404) was affixed to the car.



GP: a papal throne

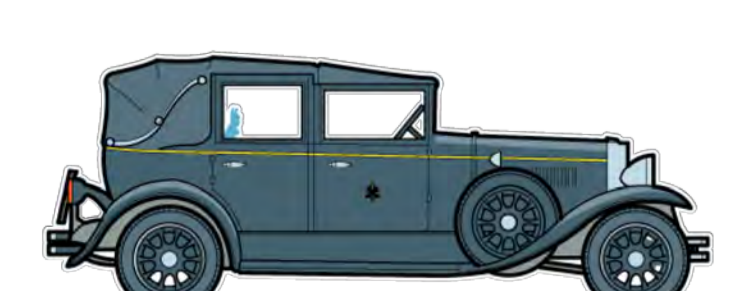


Immediately afterwards the Italian car manufacturer Bianchi also wanted to donate to Pope Pius XI a Bianchi Type 20, thus obtaining the coveted title of “Suppliers of the Papal Household.” Thus, with the signing of the Lateran Pacts, the main international car manufacturers competed to give away their best cars. Here, on April 21, 1929 the Fiat 525 M arrives, on May 1 the Isotta Fraschini 8, and on November 10 of the same year, the Graham-Paige 837, which unlike other cars is specifically equipped for the exclusive use of the Holy Father, so much so that, as was the case with the carriages, for reasons of protocol the rear passenger compartment has a single seat that echoes a papal throne.



The Graham-Paige 837 also differs from other cars because its donation was not linked to obtaining the coveted title of “Suppliers of the Papal Household” since the Graham brothers had decided to make the donation in recognition of the Holy Father, who had given them the Order of St. Gregory as great financiers of the University of Notre Dame.

Therefore, the Graham-Paige 837 became the first Pope-mobile ever in history to be used exclusively by Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII, of whom the coat of arms remains on the doors. Historically the car is very important because Pope Pius XI used it to go to the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination (December 22, 1929): it was the first time that a Pope left the Vatican from the taking of Rome on September 20, 1870, just as in December 1939 Pope Pius XII used the car to visit the Italian Sovereigns at the Quirinale after their first visit to the Vatican. In that historic visit, the journey from the Vatican to the Quirinale was documented in detail by the cameras of the Istituto Luce.





The Graham-Paige 837 also bears witness to the American bombing of the Roman quarter of San Lorenzo (19 July 1943). In that tragic event, Pope Pius XII, as Bishop of Rome, rushed to bring comfort to his people aboard a Mercedes 230, which broke during the journey. For the return journey the Graham-Paige 837 was then used and continued to be used by the Pope until 1958.

