

Documents pertaining to the Meeting between Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII at Canossa, January 1077, trans. W.L. North from the edition of L. Weiland, in MGH Legum sectio IV. Constitutiones I (Hannover 1892).

Document 64: Promise of King Henry which he made to Pope Hildebrand, who is also [called] Gregory (October 1076).

Admonished by the counsel of our faithful, I promise to observe the obedience in all things that is due to the Apostolic See and to you, Pope Gregory, and whatever diminution of this see or your honor seems to have arisen because of us I shall take care to emend with devoted satisfaction. But because certain more serious accusations are made about us, I shall either purge myself of whatever I have supposedly decreed against this see and your reverence at a fitting time with the support of my innocence and with God's aid or I shall freely embrace a fitting penance for them.

It befits your sanctity, however, that you not conceal those things said about you that give rise to scandal in the Church but rather that the universal tranquillity of both Church and Kingdom be made firm by your wisdom, once this objection has been struck from the public conscience.

Document 65: General Edict of the King (October 1076)

Henry, king by the grace of God, sends the glorious honor of his own good will to the archbishops, bishops, dukes, margraves, counts, and the rank of any dignity.

Because we have recognized at the suggestion of our faithful that certain persons have subtly influenced our kindness against the Apostolic See and its venerable bishop, the lord Pope Gregory, it has pleased us to alter the prior judgment under the influence of wise counsel and—in the manner of our predecessors and parents—to preserve the obedience due in all things to this sacrosanct see and to the lord Pope Gregory who is known to rule it, and if any serious act of presumption against him has occurred, to resolve it with fitting satisfaction.

We wish also that you, admonished by the example of our serenity, may not hesitate to show solemn satisfaction to the blessed Peter and his vicar, and whoever understand themselves to be bound by his bann, may work to be solemnly absolved by him, that is, by the lord Pope Gregory.

Document 66: The Promise at Canossa (28 January 1077)

With regard to the murmuring and dissension which the archbishops, bishops, abbots, dukes, counts, and other princes of the German kingdom—and others who agree with them in the reason for this dissent—have against me, I, King Henry, shall before the deadline which the lord Pope Gregory has established do justice according to his judgment or create harmony according to his counsel, unless a clear impediment shall prevent either me or him. Once such a thing has passed, I shall be ready to carry it out. Likewise, if the lord Pope Gregory shall wish to go over the mountains or to other regions, on behalf of me and those whom I shall be able to constrain, he shall be safe from any harm to life or limb or from capture—both he personally and whoever shall be in his following or entourage or those who are sent by him from anywhere in the world—in coming, going, or in staying anywhere. Nor shall he have any impediment whatsoever with my consent that is contrary to his honor. And if someone does this, I shall help him in good faith to the extent of my ability. Thus may God and his holy Gospel aid me.

Done at Canossa on 28 January in the fifteenth indiction, in the year of our lord Jesus Christ 1077, in the presence of the bishops Umbert of Preneste and Gerald of Ostia, the Roman cardinals Peter of the titular church of San Crisogono and Cono of the titular church of Santa Anastasia, and the Roman deacons Gregory, Bernard, and the subdeacon Umberto. Likewise, on behalf of the king were present the archbishop of Bremen, the bishops of Vercelli and Osnabrück, the abbot of Cluny, and many noblemen.

