

Gemini Version 3

March 31, 2026

Conversation with Gemini

You said

I have another letter in Catalan from 1387, written in fourteenth century Gothic Secretarial hand. Please do your best to transcribe.

Gemini said

This is a fascinating document. It is a royal letter issued by **King John I of Aragon** (known as *Joan el Caçador*), dated April 3, 1387. The script is a classic example of **Gothic Secretarial** (or Chancery) hand, characterized by its fluid, loopy "long s," the frequent use of abbreviations (suspensions and contractions), and the specific ductus of the late 14th century.

The letter concerns **Bernadona**, the daughter and heiress of the late Bernat Reus of Salou, and involves a dispute or instruction regarding her custody or inheritance.

Transcription (Diplomatic)

Below is the transcription. Note that I have expanded common abbreviations in brackets [] for clarity.

Heading:

Bernadona filla d'en Bernat Reus q[uon]dam

Body:

1. En Johan per la g[ra]çia de deu Rey d'Arago... als amats e feels n[ost]res moss[en] Garçia de Loriz e en Françesc
2. Vives b[at]lles de p[ar]t Salut e dileccio. Havets sabut p[er] d'altres lletres n[ost]res
3. com vos haja molt recomanada e ab grans precis instat l'on[rat]
4. En Tornador de Salou na Bernadona pubilla filla e hereva de Bernat
5. Reus q[uon]dam sots-b[at]lle de Salou la qual vossaltres tenets en uarda [guarda] e manam[ent]
6. no contrastant q[ue] d'i responguens aquella siats p[er] p[ro]curar de lo d[i]t de
7. uarda [guarda] al qual vos dits fermam[ent] e vos cada any fats tot d'enguany

8. empesa ab p[er]s[on]a o ja p[er] respontre aquella v[ost]re vegada d'enguany
 9. no fossets empero tro d'aquells volguen ens ladeure pena e ali[s]
 10. pens s[er]ve d'uns d'uns d[...] e tot ay tant p[ro]moro no regu[ard]ant
 11. rès alguna cosa que p[er] la n[ost]ra obidiençia e n[ost]res manam[en]ts
 12. d'açí a una s[e]tmana e d'en ssa p[er] encarrerar dita n[ost]re pa[re]
 13. e indignació e pena de m[il] lliures monedes d'oro vista la p[rese]nt lliurets
 14. la dita Bernadona al dit Tornador o a qui ell voldrà tota d'altra mana
 15. certificat vos q[ue] nos mandem al d[i]t Tornador p[er] p[ar]t d'altre lo[...]
 16. car si abans vos fingué e fés p[er] l'autr[e] e be y uadeu [guadeu] vos
 17. trists no nos p[ro]curas q[ue] de v[ost]ra inobidiençia portars la p[er]a [pena]
 18. q[ue] n'esperts que no se s[er]vat p[er] tot lo pens o q[u]e d'aci sia remès
 19. fare f[er]t ab dits bens seus e ingressi vegina q[ue] la dita ho
 20. mès p[er] s[er]ve e g[u]arda atropar e d'altre p[er]mès no penat
 21. s[er]ve. Dada en Barçh[ino]na a III dies d'abril en l'any M CCC LXXX VII
 22. de n[ost]re senyor. El Rey En Johan.
-

Key Contextual Elements

- **The Parties:** The letter is addressed to **Garcia de Loriz** and **Francesc Vives**, who appear to be royal officials (*batlles* or bailiffs).
- **The Subject:** **Bernadona**, identified as the "pubilla" (sole heiress) of **Bernat Reus**, who was the former *sots-batlle* (sub-bailiff) of Salou.
- **The Command:** The King is expressing frustration that his previous letters regarding Bernadona's custody ("uarda") have not been fully complied with. He orders the officials to hand over Bernadona to "En Tornador de Salou" (likely a relative or designated guardian) within one week.
- **The Penalty:** To ensure compliance, the King threatens a massive fine of **1,000 gold pounds** (*mil lliures monedes d'oro*) and royal "indignation"—a serious legal threat in the 14th century.

- **Location:** The letter was "Dada en Barçh[ino]na" (**Barcelona**).

Paleography Notes for You

If you are looking at the script:

- **The "q" with a stroke:** This is the abbreviation for *que* or *quod*.
- **The "p" with a tail:** This usually stands for *per*, *par*, or *pro*.
- **Long s (ſ):** Notice how the "s" looks like an "f" without the crossbar.
- **The Date:** Roman numerals were standard. **MCCCLXXXVII** is $1000 + 300 + 80 + 7 = 1387$

Gemini is AI and can make mistakes.