

ChatGPT Version 5.2 Thinking

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I am looking at a document from 1387, from the Archive of the Crown of Aragon, that mentions a town near Lleida. The problem is that the paleography and naming conventions make it difficult for me to read the name of the town. It is something like Tarrester or Tamester. What I am reading could be a Latin toponym or a medieval Catalan toponym. What are some possibilities for the name of this town?

I'm checking medieval and modern place-name possibilities around Lleida, especially Latinized and Catalan spellings that could plausibly collapse into something like **Tarrester** or **Tamester** in 1387 handwriting.

Thought for 57s

A few good possibilities come to mind. Based on a 1387 ACA document, a place “near Lleida,” and a reading like **Tarrester / Tamester**, I would put these at the top of the list:

1. Tàrrega / Tarraga

This is the strongest candidate if the first part really looks like **Tarre-**. Tàrrega was a major town in the Lleida orbit, in the Urgell region, and very commonly appears in medieval documentation. In Latin and older Romance spellings, you can encounter forms without modern accents, and spellings like **Tarraga / Tarrega** are entirely plausible in medieval material. Tàrrega is also specifically attested as a historic town in the province of Lleida.

Why it could look like your reading: in a cramped cursive hand, **-gga / -ga** can be misread, and a tall **g** or **ç-like** form can tempt the eye toward **-ster** or **-ester**, especially if the word is abbreviated or the ink is weak.

2. Térmens / Termens / de Terminis

If what you are seeing is actually something closer to **Tarmester / Tamester**, then **Térmens** is a serious possibility. It is very near Lleida, on the Lleida–Balaguer axis, and medieval Latin associated with the place can produce forms like **Termens** or even learned/Latinized variants in **-inis / -is**.

Why it could look like your reading: medieval **r/n/m** minim-strokes are notoriously easy to confuse, and **Termens** in a fast hand can drift visually toward something like **Temens / Temester** if there is a flourish after **m** or **n**.

3. Tamarit de Llitera / Tamarit(e)

If the middle really looks like **-me-** rather than **-rre-**, then **Tamarit** is worth considering. Tamarit de Llitera was an important nearby town in the broader western Catalan / Crown of Aragon zone and appears in medieval contexts tied to the Lleida frontier world.

Why it could look like your reading: **Tamarit** in a difficult hand can be pulled toward **Tamarit / Tamerit / Tamerit**, and a final **-it** with flourish can sometimes be mistaken for **-st** or **-ster**.

4. Tarroja de Segarra / Torroja

If the name begins clearly with **Tarr-** but the ending is messy, **Tarroja** is another plausible Lleida-area candidate. It is in today's province of Lleida, in Segarra. Medieval spellings around **Tarroja / Torroja / Terroja** are well known.

Why it could look like your reading: a poorly formed **-oja / -oja de** sequence can be surprisingly deceptive in chancery hands, especially if followed immediately by another word.

My ranking, just from your description, would be:

1. **Tàrrega**
2. **Térmens**
3. **Tamarit**
4. **Tarroja**

The two best “shape matches” are probably these:

- **Tarrester** → **Tàrrega / Tarrega** if your eye is confident on **Tarr-**
- **Tamester** → **Térmens** or **Tamarit** if the middle is built from dense minim-strokes and the ending is unclear

The quickest way to narrow it down is to check three things in the line:

- whether the first vowel group is **Ta-rre-** or **Ta-ma- / Te-me-**
- whether the ending is really **-ns / -nis / -is** rather than **-ster**

- whether the document uses a Latin preposition like **apud / in villa de / castrum de**, which often nudges the scribe toward a more Latinized form

If you paste your transcription of the whole phrase, or upload a crop of the word, I can usually reduce this to one or two much stronger candidates.