

Gemini Version 3 Thinking

April 18, 2026

Conversation with Gemini

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

This document is a royal mandate issued by **John I of Aragon** (reigned 1387–1396), dated April 8, 1387. It concerns a "tearful complaint" (*lacrimabili querela*) regarding the abduction and forced baptism of a seven-year-old Jewish child.

Below is the transcription in the original Latin (with abbreviations expanded in brackets), followed by an English translation and historical context.

Transcription

1. **Johannes rex Aragonu[m]** dilecto n[ost]ro Paulo Bunde et ei[us] locumtene[n]ti Saler[n]e [et] gr[aci]am n[ost]ram.
2. Ad nos p[er]venit p[er] ferna[n]du[m] Salerno p[ro]curatore[m] iudeo[rum] d[i]c[t]e civitatis n[ost]ra lacrimabili querela,
3. q[uod] quida[m] filii d[i]c[t]i Capelli dei puiglo[n]det dei paltra [et] quida[m] filiu[s]
4. **Bartholomei Bener** civitatis p[re]dicte viole[n]t[er] corp[or]e p[ro]prio amore capuerunt
5. quenda[m] ei[us] filiu[m] etatis septe[m] annoru[m] et paucu[m] plus et illu[m] abduxeru[n]t
6. p[er] aliquos dies tenueru[n]t [et] p[er] p[ro]priu[m] p[er] vim ut dicit **baptizare feceru[n]t**
7. [et] nu[n]c i[n]tra(?) illu[m] tenent donec p[er] tanto[m] nob[is] dicit [et] manda[m] vob[is]
8. pena qui[n]gentoru[m] flor[enorum] aur[i] mo[n]eta n[ost]ra curiam q[uod] co[n]tra fecerint ip[s]o f[act]o
9. applicandoru[m] quapropter de p[re]missis diligentissime inquiratis [et] si p[er] d[i]c[t]am

10. inquisicione[m] vob[is] delat[u]m rep[er]eritis d[i]c[t]u[m] delinquente[m] de corp[or]e p[ro]prio
11. arrestari vob[is] te[n]e[re] p[os]sitis d[i]c[t]am inquisicione[m] cu[m] p[er] que[m] fuit factu[m]
12. [et] i[n]terlocutorie testimoniu[m] aut ei[us] copia clausa [et] sigillata nob[is]
13. plico t[ra]nsmittatis ut ea recognita valeat in **Curia de iusticia** p[ro]vide
14. iudiciu[m] ad iudicare tunc q[uod] d[i]c[t]u[m] puer[u]m baptizatu[m] facia[tis] teneri p[er]
15. xp[ist]ianos b[on]e fame [et] co[n]v[er]sac[i]onis talis q[uod] occultari nequat sub p[re]textu
16. [et] fine[m] abduci valeat In cuius rei testi[moniu]m p[re]s[er]vantes vob[is] fieri
17. iussim[us] comu[n]iu[m]. Dat[um] Barch[inone] VIII die menses aprilis anno a nat[ivitat]e
18. d[omi]ni mcccclxxx septimo. p[er] f[ra]nc[iscu]m Canet.

English Translation

John, King of Aragon, to our beloved Paulo Bondia and his lieutenant in Salerno, greetings.

It has come to our attention through Fernando Salerno, procurator of the Jews of said city, by a tearful complaint, that certain sons of the said Capell [...] and a certain son of **Bartholomew Bener** of the aforesaid city, violently and by their own [zeal/will] seized a certain son of his [the Jewish petitioner], seven years of age and a little more, and took him away. They held him for some days and by their own force, as it is said, **had him baptized**.

And now they hold him within [...], wherefore we command you, under penalty of **500 gold florins** to be applied to our court should you act to the contrary, that you inquire most diligently into the premises. And if by said inquiry it is reported to you, you shall arrest the said delinquent in person... and the inquiry, including by whom it was done, and the interlocutory testimony or a closed and sealed copy, you shall send to us in a packet.

This is so that, having recognized it, it may be valid in the **Court of Justice** to provide a judgment to be adjudicated... and then that you cause the said baptized boy to be held by **Christians of good reputation** and conduct such that he cannot be hidden under any pretext... In witness whereof we have ordered these presents to be made.

Dated at Barcelona, the 8th day of the month of April, in the year of the Nativity of the Lord
1387. By **Francesc Canet.**

Historical Context & Paleography Notes

- **The Issue:** Forced baptisms of Jewish children were a significant legal and social flashpoint in the late 14th-century Crown of Aragon. While the Church and Crown officially prohibited forced conversion, canon law often held that once the "sacramental character" of baptism was conferred (even under duress), the person was legally a Christian. The King's intervention here aims to investigate the legality of the act and ensure the child is placed in a neutral Christian household rather than being hidden away.
- **The Scribe:** The signature at the bottom right, **Francesc Canet**, identifies him as a prominent royal secretary and scribe of the *Cancillería* under John I.
- **The Script:** This is a classic example of **Gothic Secretarial** (or *procesal* style in a royal context). Notice the "z-shaped" abbreviation for *et* and the long, sweeping descenders on letters like 'q' and 'p'. The use of "xp[ist]ianos" (line 15) uses the Greek *chi-rho* abbreviation common in medieval Latin.
- **Financial Penalty:** The fine of **500 gold florins** (*florenorum auri*) was a substantial sum, indicating the King's serious intent to maintain jurisdictional order over the local officials.

Gemini is AI and can make mistakes.