

ACA Cancillería — Joan I: Mandate on Batlle General Jurisdiction over Jews and Saracens

Scholarly Edition

Document Summary

Field	Value
Archive	ACA, Cancillería (register TBD)
Folio	60r
Document type	Royal mandate (<i>provisio</i>) with revocation and prohibition
Issuer	Joan I of Aragon
Addressee	García López de Sesse (Garsie Lupi de Sesse), knight, majordomo, Batlle General of the Kingdom of Aragon
Subject	Revocation of all ad hoc commissions to vicars and commissioners regarding Jews and Saracens that encroach on the Batlle General's jurisdiction; command to the Batlle General to assert exclusive competence; prohibition (<i>inhibitio</i>) against all officials from interfering; injunction to the Governor General, Justicia of Aragon, and other officials to observe the revocation
Date	Barcelona, 23 April 1387
Language	Latin
Scribal subscription	Uncertain (see Unresolved Ambiguities)

Reconciled Transcription

Nos Johanes dei gracia Rex Aragonum Valencie Maioricarum Sardinie et Corsice Comesque Barchinone Rossilionis et Ceritanie. Attendentes per nos fuisse factas comissiones diuersas tam vicariis quam comissariis de negociis Judeorum et Sarracenorum collectis administracionibus et aliis et tam ad inquirendum contra dictos Judeos et Sarracenos que spectant et spectare

consueuerunt et debent ad officium Baulie Generalis in turbacione dicti officii baulie nostre iurium detrimentum. Idcirco volentes dictum officium Baulie Generalis in sua integritate conseruare et ne officiales premissos ambos conturbet. Reuocamus huiusmodi serie de certa sciencia et expresse quascunque comissiones quibuscunque personis siue vicariis comissariis ut aliis quibusuis sub quacunque verborum forma factas de negociis collectis administracionibus uel aliis quibuslibet omnino [?] ad officium baulie generalis predictae spectantibus et que spectare consueuerunt quouis modo. Vobis dilecto consiliario et domestico nostro maiordomo Garsie Lupi de Sesse militi baiulo regni Aragonum generali dicimus et mandamus firmiter et expresse quatenus de dictis negociis causis collectis administracionibus inquisicionibus et aliis quibuscunque et qualescunque sint ad dictum uestrum officium spectantibus et que ad ipsum spectare consueuerunt retroactis temporibus et de quibus alii baiuli generales preteriti usi fuerunt uos intromittatis et primitus [?] uos curetis non permitendo alium ut alios quoscunque de eisdem se intromittere quouis modo. Nos enim per hanc eandem mandamus ac etiam inhibemus uicariis comissariis et aliis quibuscunque officialibus et subditis nostris presentibus et futuris quod de predictis et aliis quibuscunque negociis pertinentibus uel spectantibus ad uestrum officium baulie generalis se nullatenus intromittant uigore quarumcunque comissionum eis quomodolibet per nos factarum seu literarum in nostra curia obtentarum quas ut premittitur penitus duximus reuocandas. Iniungendo per hanc eandem Gubernatori generali in regno Aragonum eiusque uicesgerenti in dicto officio necnon Iusticie Aragonum aliisque officialibus eiusdem Regni ac comissariis nostris quibusuis per nos pro nunc [?] deputatis et de cetero deputandis quod concessionem et ordinationem nostras predictas firmas habeant et obseruent et nullatenus contraueniant aliqua ratione siue causa. Cum sic ex certa sciencia et expresse fieri concedimus et uolumus. In cuius rei testimonium hanc fieri iussimus nostro sigillo munitam. Data Barchinone xxiii die Aprilis Anno natiuitatis domini Millesimo CCC lxxx septimo. +[scribal subscription]+

Annotated English Translation

We, Joan, by the grace of God King of Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, Sardinia, and Corsica, and Count of Barcelona, Roussillon, and Cerdanya.(1)

Considering that various commissions have been made by us, both to vicars(2) and to commissioners, regarding the affairs of Jews and Saracens — tax collections,(3) administrations, and other matters — and also for inquiring against the said Jews and Saracens, [all of] which pertain and have customarily pertained and ought to pertain to the office of the Batlle General, (4) to the disturbance of the said office of the batllia and to the detriment of our rights:

Therefore, wishing to preserve the said office of the Batlle General in its integrity and lest this state of affairs disturb both the aforesaid officials —

We revoke by this present instrument, from certain knowledge and expressly, whatsoever commissions made to whatsoever persons — whether vicars, commissioners, or any others

whomsoever — under whatever form of words, regarding affairs, tax collections, administrations, or any other matters whatsoever entirely(6) pertaining to the office of the aforesaid Batlle General and which have customarily pertained [to it] in any manner.

To you, our beloved councillor and household member,(7) majordomo(8) García López de Sesse, (9) knight, Batlle General of the Kingdom of Aragon, we say and command firmly and expressly that regarding the said affairs, causes, tax collections, administrations, inquisitions, and all other matters whatsoever — of whatever kind they may be — pertaining to your said office and which have customarily pertained to it in past times, and in which other past Batlles General have exercised [jurisdiction],(10) you should involve yourself; and likewise(11) you should take care not to permit any other person or persons whatsoever to involve themselves in the same in any manner.

For we by this same [letter] command and also prohibit(12) vicars, commissioners, and all other officials and subjects of ours, present and future, that they in no way involve themselves in the aforesaid and any other affairs whatsoever pertaining or belonging to your office of the Batlle General, by virtue of any commissions whatsoever made to them by us in any manner, or of letters obtained in our curia,(13) which, as stated above, we have decided to entirely revoke.

Enjoining by this same [letter] the Governor General in the Kingdom of Aragon(14) and his viceregent in the said office, and also the Justicia of Aragon,(15) and other officials of the said kingdom, and our commissioners whatsoever presently appointed by us and henceforth to be appointed, that they hold firm and observe our aforesaid concessions and ordinances,(16) and in no way contravene [them] for any reason or cause. Since thus from certain knowledge and expressly we grant and wish [this] to be done.

In witness whereof we have ordered this [letter] to be made, fortified with our seal. Given at Barcelona, the 23rd day of April,(17) in the year of the Lord's birth 1387.

Scribal subscription

Footnotes

1. Standard intitulation of the Crown of Aragon following Joan I's accession on 5 January 1387 after the death of Pere III (IV of Aragon) on that date. The territorial enumeration follows the established Aragonese royal style.
2. Lat. *vicariis*. These are the *veguers* (Catalan *veguers*, Aragonese *vegueros*), the chief royal territorial administrators of the *veguerías*, the primary administrative districts of the Crown of Aragon. In the Kingdom of Aragon proper, the equivalent officers were sometimes styled *sobrejunteros*. Their inclusion here indicates that ordinary territorial officials — not only ad hoc commissioners — had been receiving commissions encroaching on the Batlle General's jurisdiction.

3. Lat. *collectis*. The term refers to the *collectae* — fiscal exactions and tax collections from Jewish and Saracen communities, which fell under the Batlle General's jurisdiction. These communities' fiscal administration was a core function of the *batllia general*, encompassing direct taxes, special levies, and the management of communal contributions to the crown.
4. The *Batlle General (baiulus generalis)* of the Kingdom of Aragon was the chief financial and judicial officer responsible for administering the royal patrimony within Aragon, with particular jurisdiction over Jewish and Saracen communities (*aljamas*). This included oversight of their internal governance, fiscal obligations, legal disputes, and inquisitorial proceedings. The office was distinct from the parallel Batlles General of Valencia and Catalonia, each of whom held similar competences within their respective territories.
5. The subject of "conturbet" (3rd person singular subjunctive) is grammatically ambiguous. It likely refers to the general state of jurisdictional confusion described in the *narratio* — the proliferation of commissions that disturbs the institutional order. "Officiales premissos ambos" (both the aforesaid officials) is accusative, meaning both types of officials (vicars and commissioners) are themselves harmed by the confusion. An alternative reading — nominative "premissi" with plural "conturbent" — would make the officials the agents of disturbance rather than its victims. The ms should be checked for the verb ending and case of "premissos/premissi."
6. Lat. *omnino* [?]. This reading is conjectural; see Unresolved Ambiguities below. The HTR read "in nullo" (in no way), which creates a logical contradiction with the immediately following relative clause "et que spectare consueuerunt" (and which have customarily pertained [to the BG's office]). "Omnino" (entirely) resolves the contradiction: the revocation covers matters that *entirely* pertain to the BG.
7. Lat. *domestico nostro*. Member of the royal household (*domus regia*). The designation signals that García López de Sesse held a position within the king's immediate entourage in addition to his territorial office.
8. The *maiordomo* (majordomo) was a senior officer of the royal household responsible for overseeing domestic administration. García López de Sesse's simultaneous tenure as majordomo and Batlle General of Aragon exemplifies the combination of household and territorial offices characteristic of Joan I's early administrative arrangements. The dual designation in the address formula — *domestico nostro maiordomo* followed by *baiulo regni Aragonum generali* — distinguishes his household rank from his territorial jurisdiction.
9. García López de Sesse (*Garsie Lupi de Sesse*), knight. His family, the López de Sesse, were prominent Aragonese nobility. His service as Batlle General of the Kingdom of Aragon placed him at the center of the crown's administration of Jewish and Saracen communities within Aragon, and the present mandate confirms Joan I's early reliance on him to consolidate that office's authority against encroachment.

10. The phrase "retroactis temporibus" (in past times) and the reference to "alii baiuli generales preteriti" (other past Batlles General) establish a claim of prescriptive right: the BG's jurisdiction is not newly asserted but rooted in customary practice stretching back through previous holders of the office. This historical appeal strengthens the legal basis for the revocation.
11. Lat. *primitus* [?]. The reading is uncertain; the word is not standard classical or medieval Latin. It may be a scribal form for *pariter* (likewise, equally), *primitus* (firstly, in the first place), or *similiter* (similarly). The sense is clear from context: the BG is commanded both to assert his own jurisdiction and to prevent others from encroaching on it.
12. Lat. *inhibemus*. The *inhibitio* is a specific and forceful legal instrument in Aragonese royal practice, carrying stronger coercive force than a simple *mandamus*. By combining "mandamus ac etiam inhibemus" (we command and also prohibit), the king deploys the full range of royal directive authority: an affirmative command to the BG to act, coupled with a negative prohibition against all others.
13. The phrase "seu literarum in nostra curia obtentorum" (or of letters obtained in our curia) closes a significant legal loophole. Officials might otherwise claim that letters patent or other written instruments obtained directly from the royal court — as opposed to formal commissions — authorized their interference in BG affairs. By revoking both commissions *and* any such letters, the king eliminates all documentary pretexts for encroachment.
14. The *Governor General* (*gubernator generalis*) of the Kingdom of Aragon was the chief representative of royal authority in the territory, exercising broad judicial and executive powers. The viceregent (*vicesgerens*) served as his deputy. Their inclusion as addressees of the *iniunctio* indicates that even the highest territorial officials are bound by this order.
15. The *Justicia of Aragon* (*Iusticia Aragonum*) was a uniquely Aragonese constitutional officer who served as mediator between the king and the nobility, and as guarantor of the *fueros* (customary laws) of the kingdom. The Justicia's inclusion alongside the Governor General underscores the comprehensive scope of the injunction: all major institutional actors in the Kingdom of Aragon are commanded to respect the BG's exclusive jurisdiction.
16. Lat. *concessionibus et ordinacionibus nostris predictis*. The "concessions and ordinances" referred to are the present instrument itself — the king's act of conceding exclusive jurisdiction to the BG and ordaining the revocation of competing commissions. The use of the plural "concessionibus et ordinacionibus" may also encompass prior royal acts confirming the BG's jurisdiction that the present mandate reinforces.
17. 23 April 1387. This date places the document roughly three and a half months into Joan I's reign (accession 5 January 1387). The mandate is consistent with the administrative reorganization typical of the opening months of a new reign, when a new king would

reassert or reconfigure the jurisdictional boundaries of royal offices. The issuing location of Barcelona aligns with Joan I's known itinerary in early 1387.

18. The scribal subscription is illegible or garbled in both the initial transcription and the HTR output. See Unresolved Ambiguities.
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Unresolved Ambiguities

1. **"omnino [?]" (line 6 of ms)**. The word between "quibuslibet" and "ad officium baulie generalis" remains conjectural. Claude read "ambo"; the HTR read "in nullo." Neither is satisfactory: "ambo" is syntactically opaque in this position, and "in nullo" creates a logical contradiction with the following relative clause. "Omnino" (entirely) is proposed as a working reading on grounds of contextual plausibility and paleographic possibility (the minim sequence could support it), but archival verification is essential.
2. **"primiter [?]" (line 9-10 boundary of ms)**. The adverb connecting "vos intromittatis" and "vos curetis" is not standard Latin. Plausible candidates: *pariter* (likewise), *primitus* (firstly), *similiter* (similarly). The sense is unaffected, but the correct form matters for understanding the scribe's linguistic register.
3. **"premissos ambos conturbet" (line 4 of ms)**. The grammatical structure is ambiguous. If "conturbet" is 3rd person singular (as adopted here), the clause lacks an explicit subject and treats "officiales" as the object of disturbance. If the ms actually reads "premissi ambo conturbent" (nominative + plural), the officials are the agents of disturbance. The legal implications differ: the former implies the king is protecting officials from institutional confusion; the latter implies he is restraining officials from causing it. Archival verification of the verb ending and the case of "premissos/premissi" would resolve this.
4. **"pro nunc [?]" (line 14 of ms)**. The HTR reads "p[er] nunc," producing an unusual double "per" ("per nos per nunc deputatis"). The reconciled text adopts "pro nunc" (for now / presently) as more standard, but the ms reading is uncertain.
5. **"concedimus et uolumus [?]" (line 16 of ms)**. The tenses and moods of the verbs in the reinforcing *clausula* are uncertain. The HTR reads "concessimus et velimus" (perfect indicative + present subjunctive), which is an awkward pairing. The reconciled text adopts present indicative "concedimus et volumus" as formulaically more standard, but this should be verified.
6. **Date: "xxiii" (line 16 of ms)**. The HTR reads the 23rd; Claude's Stage 1 reading was uncertain between xxii and xxiiij. Minim-counting in Gothic numerals is inherently unreliable. Adopted as xxiii pending verification.

7. **Scribal subscription (lines 17-18 of ms).** The HTR reads "+d[omenicus] mascho / i off[uit] arag[onem]," which appears garbled. "Domenicus Mascho" is not a scribe readily identifiable in Joan I's chancery in April 1387, and "i offuit aragonem" is not a recognizable formula. The ms likely contains a standard *iussio* clause (e.g., "+Dominus Rex mandavit mihi [scribe name]+" or "+Per mandato+") followed by a scribal mark, *vidit* notation, or registration note. This requires direct archival examination.