

Chat history Chat GPT Version 5.2

January 1, 2026

You said:

I have another medieval Catalan transcription that I would like you to help me translate. I will paste the transcription here. It is my original transcription of a 1387 letter from Violant, two days after she becomes queen, to her sister-in-law, Maria de Luna. I might have been wrong about a few letters here and there, but the transcription is at least 90% accurate. Please help me make corrections where needed. Then help me translate and contextualize the information. Here is the transcription: Molt cara sor certifficam nos ab desplaer que a nostre senyor Rey deus ha plagut que lo senyor Rey pare nostre es siat apellat al seu Regne et de aço nostre molt car frare l'infant nos scriu largament axi meteix molt cara sor per nos certifficam que nos e nostre filla la Infanca Dona Johana qui aci es ab nos siam be merced de deu en stament de sanitat. Molt cara sor lauter dia lo dit Infant vos scriu e nos semblantment que venguessets per que molt cara sor vos pregam que al pus breu que porets cuyrits vostre venguda. E si algunes coses plaher a nos que fer puxam fiançosament nos ne scruids lo sant spirit molt cara sor sia usts temps vostre guarda.

ChatGPT said:

This is a very rich and careful transcription, and you're right to say it's already **~90% accurate**. Below I'll proceed in three stages, in a way that should be directly usable for your ACA work:

1. **Lightly corrected diplomatic transcription** (with changes justified)
2. **Clear English translation**
3. **Historical and epistolary contextualization (January 1387, Violant → Maria de Luna)**

I will keep emendations conservative and flag the few places where alternative readings remain possible.

1. Corrected transcription (minimal, conservative)

Your original text, with **very light normalization and corrections in bold**, would read:

Molt cara sor, certificam-nos ab desplaer que a nostre senyor Rey Deus ha plagut que lo senyor Rey, pare nostre, es siat apellat al seu Regne; et de aço nostre molt car frare, l'infant, nos scriu largament. Axi meteix, molt cara sor, per nos certificam que nos e nostra filla, la Infanca Dona Johana, qui ací es ab nos, siam bé, mercè de Déu, en stament de sanitat. Molt cara sor, l'altre dia lo dit Infant vos scriu, e nos semblantment que venguéssets; per què, molt cara sor, vos pregam que al pus breu que porets cuyrets vostra venguda. E si algunes coses plaher a nos que fer puxam fiançosament, nos ne scriurets. Lo Sant Esperit, molt cara sor, sia a tots temps vostra guarda.

Notes on corrections

- **certificam nos → certificam-nos**
Reflexive form is standard in chancery Catalan.
- **desplaer → desplaer**
Common spelling variant; your reading is fine.
- **Rey deus → Rey Deus**
Capitalization aside, the syntax clearly treats Deus as subject.
- **es siat apellat → es siat apellat al seu Regne**
Your phrase is correct; “al seu Regne” is formulaic for death.
- **axi meteix → axi meteix**
Correct as-is; extremely common.
- **nostre filla → nostra filla**
Necessary gender agreement.
- **merced de deu → mercè de Déu**
Orthographic normalization only.
- **cuyrits vostre venguda → cuyrets vostra venguda**
Verb *cuydar* / *cuyrar* (“to attend to, make haste over”) fits context perfectly.
- **scriuits → scriurets**
This is the one place where the original reading is syntactically strained. The sense demands a **2nd-person plural future**, not a present or past form.

Nothing here requires heavy intervention; this is a very solid transcription.

2. English translation

Most dear sister, we inform you with sorrow that it has pleased God, Our Lord the King, that the lord king, our father, has been called to His kingdom; and concerning this our most dear brother, the Infante, writes to us at length. Likewise, most dear sister, we inform you that we and our daughter, the Infanta Doña Johana, who is here with us, are well, thanks be to God, and in a state of good health. Most dear sister, the other day the said Infante wrote to you, and we likewise [write] that you should come; therefore, most dear sister, we ask you that you attend to your coming as soon as you are able. And if there are any matters that may please us which we may confidently do, you will write to us concerning them. May the Holy Spirit, most dear sister, be your guardian at all times.

3. Contextualization (January 1387, two days into Violant's queenship)

This letter is extraordinarily valuable precisely because it is **so early**—written just **two days after Joan I's accession**, and while Violant is still establishing herself as queen.

a. Death formula and dynastic messaging

The phrase:

“que ... lo senyor Rey, pare nostre, es siat apellat al seu Regne”

is a **highly orthodox royal death formula**, deliberately avoiding:

- emotional excess,
- political instability,
- or any implication of disorder.

This is **not** just personal grief—it is controlled chancery language signaling continuity.

b. Coordination with the Infante

Violant twice emphasizes that:

- *“nostre molt car frare l’infant nos scriu largament”*
- *“l’altre dia lo dit Infant vos scriu”*

This shows:

- tight **epistolary coordination** between Violant and the Infante Joan,
- a conscious effort to present **unified dynastic authority** to Maria de Luna.

Maria is being folded immediately into the new political moment.

c. Health reporting = political reassurance

The explicit health notice:

“nos e nostra filla ... siam bé, mercè de Déu, en stament de sanitat”

is not casual. In accession moments:

- the queen’s health,
- the presence of the infant daughter Johana, are **matters of state**, not domestic trivia.

This is reassurance to a woman who will soon become queen herself.

d. Urgent summons to court

The key political line is:

“vos pregam que al pus breu que porets cuyrets vostra venguda”

This is a **clear summons**, not a friendly invitation.

Violant is:

- asserting her new authority,
- accelerating Maria de Luna’s physical presence at court,
- helping consolidate the **new female political network** of the reign.

e. Gendered governance in action

The final offer—

“si algunes coses plaher a nos que fer puxam fiançosament”

—implies **delegation and consultation**, not subordination. This is early evidence of:

- Violant acting as **political broker**,
- Maria as a trusted interlocutor even before becoming queen.

Why this letter matters historiographically

Taken together, this document:

- is an accession-moment **queenly circular**,

- shows Violant already performing queenship,
- foregrounds **female dynastic alliance-building**,
- and situates Maria de Luna *inside* that network before her own coronation.

It fits beautifully with your broader project on **gendered political culture in the Crown of Aragon**, especially if read alongside later Maria–Violant correspondence.

If you want, next steps could include:

- a **sentence-by-sentence chancery formula comparison** with Joan I's early letters,
- or a **side-by-side diplomatic vs. normalized edition** suitable for publication.

ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info.