

ChatGPT Version 5.2

January 19, 2026

You said:

I am now working on another Latin document written by Joan I in 1387. This document contains the place name "Dertusen" or "Dercusen" with a macron over the second half of the word. Possibly the macron stands for an m, and the name is Dercumsen, but that is just one possibility. Can you help me find the Catalan version of this toponym?

ChatGPT said:

Thought for 13s

This one is almost certainly **Tortosa** (Catalan), whose Latin/medieval Latin name is **Dertosa / Dertusa**.

Why your form looks like “Dertusen / Dercusen” (with a macron)

In medieval Latin records you very often see an *ethnic/adjectival* form meaning “of Tortosa”:

- **Dertusensis / Dertosensis** = “Tortosan; of Tortosa”
- and scribes abbreviate it as **Dertuseñ / Dertusen**. (with the macron indicating omitted letters, typically the **-sis** ending). This exact “Dertusen(...)=Dertusensis” usage is attested in scholarly contexts (e.g., *Collectio Dertusensis*).

So your “Dertusen” is very plausibly **Dertuseñ = Dertusen(sis)** (“of Tortosa”), rather than something like *Dercumsen*.

Quick practical check in your document

If the word is modifying something like **civitas, ecclesia, episcopus, diocesis, territorium**, etc., then reading it as **Dertusensis** (“Tortosa/Tortosan”) will usually make the syntax click.

If you paste the *full phrase* where it appears (3–8 words on either side), I can tell you the most likely grammatical case and a normalized expansion you can use in your edition.

You said:

Yes, thank you for this answer. I checked and this is indeed Tortosa. Now maybe you can help me find more information about the people in this document. The document has a header title, Bishop of Tortosa. The person named in the first line of the letter is Arnaldo

Torrelles. Later in the letter a person is mentioned whose name is Raymundo Barbera. Can you find anything in the secondary literature about these people in connection with Tortosa around the year 1387?

ChatGPT said:

Thought for 1m 23s

Yes — and the header “bishop of Tortosa” is a really useful anchor, because in **1387** the bishopric is **Hug de Llupià i Bages** (often dated 1387–1398 in Catalan episcopal lists).

1) “Arnaldo Torrelles” (Arnau/Arnaldo de Torrelles?) — what the secondary literature *can* tell us quickly

Even if your letter is dated 1387 (so *not* during his episcopate), the surname **Torrelles** is strongly associated with the Tortosa see because:

- **Guillem de Torrelles i Marquet** was **bishop of Tortosa 1369–1379** (immediately before Hug de Llupià).
- The Torrelles family entry in *Enciclopèdia.cat* lays out the **Torrelles i Marquet** kin group and explicitly identifies Guillem’s career (canonries at Girona/Barcelona; bishop of Osca, Barcelona, then Tortosa).
- The Viquipèdia biography of Guillem de Torrelles i Marquet also names his close family (including a brother **Arnau**), which is one plausible place your “Arnaldo Torrelles” could be coming from in a late-14th-c. document.

Caution: none of these sources (that I’ve found so far) *directly* identify an “Arnaldo/Arnau Torrelles” active at Tortosa in **1387** by that exact name/title. What they *do* establish is that “Torrelles” is not a random surname in Tortosa ecclesiastical paperwork: the family had very recent, very high-level connection to the see.

Best next move (fastest way to pin him down): look at the *word or two after his name* in your letter. If it’s something like *canonicus* / *archidiaconus* / *vicarius generalis* / *officialis*, we can target the right prosopographical lane (cathedral chapter vs. diocesan administration vs. lay noble).

2) “Raymundo Barbera” = very likely Ramon Barberà, a Tortosa civic notable in the 1380s

Here the secondary literature gives a much clearer Tortosa-context signal:

- A Tortosa-focused study on late medieval defensive works records that in **May 1383** the Tortosa procurator Bernat Garidell, accompanied by “**els honrats micer**

Gonçalbo e d'en Ramon Barberà,” went to inspect/assess defensive structures (tower/walls) — explicitly framed in the text around **fear of raids (“per por de moros”)**.

That snippet is extremely compatible with how your chancery letter might mention him:

- **“micer”** typically flags a **high-status professional** (often jurist/learned man) and **“honrat”** points to a **prohom / elite urban standing** in a municipal context.
- Separate scholarship about medieval Tortosa also lists a **Ramon Barberà** among named urban actors (alongside Astruch d’Almenar and Guillem Mercader), again suggesting he’s a recognizable civic figure rather than an obscure one-off.

3) How this fits your 1387 Joan I letter

- If your document is addressed to/concerned with the **bishopric of Tortosa** under **Hug de Llupià**, but it names **Torrelles**, you may be seeing either:
 1. a **chapter/curia official** who happens to be from the Torrelles family network; or
 2. someone being referenced because of the **recent Torrelles episcopate** (institutional continuity, benefices, debts, appointments, etc.).
- A **Ramon/Raymundo Barberà** appearing in the same text would make sense in matters where the crown interacts with **Tortosa’s civic elites** (defense, provisioning, fiscal issues, disputes, commissions).

If you paste (1) the **exact incipit line** with *Arnaldo Torrelles* and (2) the **full clause** where *Raymundo Barbera* appears, I can usually tell you which “role vocabulary” is present (canonry vs. municipal office vs. legal representation) and then I can do a much tighter, name-variant search (Arnaldus/Arnau/Arnaldo; Barberà/Barbera/Barberano; with “micer,” “honrat,” “jurisperitus,” etc.).

ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info.