

Queen Violant de Bar to the Viscount of Roda, 4 March 1387

Document Summary

A letter from Queen Violant de Bar to the Viscount of Roda, written in Catalan and dated 4 March 1387 at Barcelona. The queen acknowledges receipt of the Viscount's letter and expresses her pleasure at an embassy arriving from her uncle, King Charles VI of France.¹ She orders the Viscount to abandon all other business in Avignon or elsewhere and return to her immediately, traveling directly with the ambassadors and without delay. She explicitly overrides any prior letters or mandates that may have instructed him to remain in Avignon to attend to other matters. The letter was issued under the queen's customary secret seal and drafted by the chancery scribe Bartholomeu Sirvent.

Reconciled Latin Text

La Reyna

Vescomte rebuda havem vostra let[ra] responsiva. E plau nos molt l'embaxada que de nostre molt car oncle lo Rey de ffrança ve ací. E volem que no espats altres affers en Avinyó ne en altre part, mes aquells lexats de tot. vos en vinguats a nos drect camí ab los ambaxadors sens tardare / no contrastants qualssevol letres o manaments contraris que hayats hauts d'aturar per fer certes coses en Avinyó o per los quals en altra manera vostra venguda se degues o pogues retardar. Dada en Barcha sots nostre segell secret acostumat a iiij dies de Març de l'any M ccc lxxx vij. Secret[am].

vicecomiti de Roda

Domina Regina mandavit mihi

Bartholomeus Siruent

English Translation

The Queen.

Viscount, we have received your responsive letter.² And it pleases us greatly that the embassy from our very dear uncle the King of France comes here.³ And we wish that you not attend to other affairs in Avignon⁴ nor elsewhere, but leaving all those aside entirely, come from there to us by the direct road with the ambassadors, without delay — notwithstanding any letters or contrary mandates whatsoever that you may have had to remain⁵ in order to carry out certain things in Avignon, or by which in any other way your coming should or could be delayed. Given at Barcelona under our customary secret seal,⁶ on the 4th day of March of the year 1387.⁷

Address: To the Viscount of Roda.⁸

Chancery notation: The Lady Queen commanded this to me, Bartholomeu Sirvent.⁹

Footnotes

Unresolved Ambiguities

"**espats**": While the reading is secure paleographically and the contextual meaning is clear (the queen orders the Viscount not to attend to other business), the exact morphological derivation is worth noting. If from *espatxar*, the expected subjunctive would be *espatxets* or a similar form; *espats* may reflect a contracted or dialectal variant, or it could derive from a different verb (*esperar*?), though the transitive construction with *altres offers* as direct object strongly favors *espatxar* or a synonym meaning "to dispatch/deal with."

"**Secret[am]**": The final word after the date line is read as an abbreviated form of *Secretam* (agreeing with an implied *litteram*) or possibly *Secretum* (agreeing with *sigillum*). The abbreviation marks are consistent with either resolution. The function as a registration gloss is not in doubt.

1. The King of France at this date is Charles VI (r. 1380–1422). Violant de Bar was the daughter of Robert I, Duke of Bar, and Marie de Valois, making Charles VI her first cousin once removed, though the kinship term *oncle* (uncle) was used loosely in royal correspondence to denote senior male relatives on the French side. The embassy likely relates to ongoing diplomatic contact between the Aragonese and French courts in the context of the Avignon papacy and broader Franco-Aragonese relations. The timing is notable: Joan I succeeded Pere III on 5 January 1387, so this letter falls barely two months into the new reign, when embassies confirming alliances and negotiating the new political landscape would have been a priority. ↩
2. *Letra responsiva*: a reply letter, i.e., the Viscount had previously written to the queen and this is her response. ↩
3. *Ve aci*: "comes here," indicating the French embassy was en route to Barcelona or had been announced. The verb *venir* in the present tense conveys immediacy. ↩
4. *Espats*: second-person plural imperative/subjunctive of *espatxar* (to dispatch, deal with, attend to business). The queen is ordering the Viscount not to transact any further business in Avignon. ↩
5. *D'aturar*: from *aturar*, to stay, remain, stop. The clause acknowledges that the Viscount may hold prior instructions requiring him to stay in Avignon for other tasks, but the queen overrides those instructions categorically with the *no contrastants* ("notwithstanding") formula. ↩
6. *Segell secret acostumat*: the queen's customary secret seal, as distinct from the great seal (*segell major*) used for more formal or public acts. The use of the secret seal is consistent with personal correspondence and urgent administrative orders. The final notation *Secret[am]* is a registration gloss confirming the seal type. ↩
7. 4 March 1387. Since the Crown of Aragon used the Nativity style of dating (year beginning 25 December), this date corresponds to 4 March 1387 in the modern calendar without adjustment. ↩
8. The Viscount of Roda. The viscounty of Roda (Roda de Isábena, in the county of Ribagorza) was held at this period by the Pinós family. The Viscount was evidently serving as an ambassador or diplomatic agent for the Aragonese crown in Avignon, likely in connection with the Avignon papacy — Clement VII was pope at this date, and the Crown of Aragon was firmly in the Avignonese obedience. ↩

9. Bartholomeu Sirvent, a chancery scribe (*escrivà*) in Violant de Bar's household. The formula *Domina Regina mandavit mihi* is the standard iussio clause identifying the authority behind the document and the scribe who drafted it. ↩