

Claude Opus 4.6

March 2, 2026

I have a Latin letter from the same Archive of the Crown of Aragon register that I have been working with today. This letter has been transcribed by a scholar and I am very confident in its accuracy. The letter is dated March 7, 1387, and written in the persona of the three year-old Prince Jaume, the son of Joan I of Aragon and Violant de Bar. The addressee is the Avignon Pope Clement VII. I will paste the transcription here and I would like you to translate it to English, including footnotes for any ambiguities and historical context. Here is the transcription: Beatissime et clementissime pater. Quanquam in annis teneribus et innocencie constituti ita ut vix proferre possimus A.A.A. verba infantilia ingenue, verumtamen inter ceteros quosdam parvulos, etsi nobis in etate majores, diligimus, qui nobis dudum in cunabulis vagienti et postea obsequiosi fuerant. Et ideo vestre supplicamus humiliter apostolice santitati quatenus rotulum modicum in littera presenti sepultura, quem in favorem predictorum et pro quibusdam ecclesiam civitatis nostre gerundensis tangentibus sanctitati eidem offerimus per manus ambassiatorum serenissimi domini Regis patris et domini nostri carissimi qui ad clemencie vestre pedes impresenciarum accedunt, dignemini benigne admittere et misericorditer exaudire. Hec est enim pater sanctissime prima pagina litteralis que nostre oracionis instanciam puerilem expressit, quamque manibus intentes testigimus et eraissimus, sperantes firmiter quod in vestro paterno piissimoque conspectu suscipietur benigniter ob Illius reverenciam qui clementer parvulos suos vocat et provocat suaviterque exaudit desideria innocentum. Idem Ipse Altissimus benedictam personam vestram conservaré dignetur incolumen Ecclesie sue sancte per tempora longipra. Data Barchinone septima die marcii anno a Nativitate Domini M CCC LXXX septimo. Supplicat S.V. humilis et devotus filius vester, infans Jacobus primogenitus Aragonum ac dalfinus gerundensis quatenus supplicantes infrascriptos dignemini benigne admittere ac misericorditer exaudire cum non obstat apportatio clericalis ac executio ut in forma. Primo namque supplicat ut cum de consuetudine antiquis temporibus usitata necnon et per privilegium speciale ecclesie et capitulo gerundensi indultum, nullus debeat in canonicatu ibidem recipi vel admitti nisi ex stirpe generosa processerit, semper dicte ecclesie deservient canonici ingènues et notabiles de militari gènere prodeuntes, dignemini statuto novo irrefragabili et eterna ordinacione mansuro hoc facere inviolabiliter observari. Cum enim ipsa civitas Dalfinatus nostri caput existat et dicta ecclesia sit de insignioribus, notabilioribus atque dicionibus prelatoris dicionum serenissimi domini Regis, patris et domini ipsius supplicantis, affectat illam predictis et aliis opportunis favoribus honoriffice sublimari.

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9:20 AM

Meticulously parsed medieval Latin letter and prepared scholarly translation

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This is a remarkable document — the conceit of a three-year-old prince dictating a letter to the pope is delightful, especially with the self-conscious "A.A.A." babbling. Let me produce a careful translation with scholarly footnotes.

Abandoned technical approach, opted for conversational translation delivery

Abandoned technical approach, opted for conversational translation delivery

Let me provide the translation directly here, since this is working material for your research. I'll use numbered footnotes.

Translation of the Letter of Infante Jaume to Pope Clement VII (March 7, 1387)

Most blessed and most clement father. Although we are constituted in tender years and innocence, such that we can scarcely utter "A.A.A." — the artless babbling words of infancy¹ — nevertheless, among certain other little ones, even if older than us in age, there are those whom we hold dear, who had been attentive to us while we were formerly wailing in our cradle and afterward.² And therefore we humbly supplicate your apostolic holiness that you deign to kindly admit and mercifully grant the small *rotulus* enclosed with the present letter,³ which we offer to your same holiness in favor of the aforesaid persons and concerning certain matters touching the church of our city of Girona, through the hands of the ambassadors of the most serene lord King, our most dear father and lord, who presently approach the feet of your clemency.⁴ For this is, most holy father, the first written page that has expressed the childish entreaty of our prayer, which we have touched and scrawled upon with eager hands,⁵ firmly hoping that it will be kindly received in your fatherly and most pious sight, out of reverence for Him who mercifully calls and summons His little ones and sweetly grants the desires of the innocent.⁶ May the same Most High deign to preserve your blessed person unharmed for His holy Church for a very long time. Given at Barcelona on the seventh day of March, in the year from the Nativity of the Lord 1387.

[Attached rotulus / supplication:]

Your humble and devoted son, the Infante Jaume, firstborn of Aragon and Dauphin of Girona,⁷ supplicates Your Holiness that you deign to kindly admit and mercifully grant the petitioners written below, with the clerical presentation and execution not standing in the way, in the usual form.⁸

First, he supplicates that, since by ancient custom long observed and also by a special privilege granted to the church and chapter of Girona, no one ought to be received or admitted to a canonry there unless he has proceeded from noble stock — canons of noble birth and notable standing, descending from military lineage, having always served the said church — you deign to cause this to be inviolably observed by a new and irrefutable statute and eternal ordinance that shall endure. For since that city is the capital of our Dauphinate, and the said church is among the most distinguished, most notable, and richest prelatures in the dominions of the most serene lord King, father and lord of the supplicant himself, he desires that it be honorably elevated by the aforesaid and other suitable favors.

Notes:

1. The "A.A.A." is a striking literary device: the chancery scribes represent the infant prince's babbling phonetically, simultaneously acknowledging the fiction of the letter's authorship while deploying it as a rhetorical strategy to elicit papal sympathy. Prince Jaume was born c. 1384, making him approximately three years old at the time of this letter.
2. The "certain other little ones" (*quosdam parvulos*) whom the infant prince claims to love are evidently the persons on whose behalf the attached *rotulus* petitions — likely young clerics or dependents of courtiers who had served in the prince's household or nursery. The phrase *in cunabulis vagienti* ("while wailing in the cradle") sustains the charming infantile persona.
3. The Latin reads *sepultura*, which is problematic. The expected sense is "enclosed" or "inserted" (*insepultum*, *insertum*, or perhaps *sepositum*). It may represent a scribal or transcription error for a form of *sepelire* used loosely to mean "buried within" or "enclosed," or possibly a variant of *clausum*. The meaning is clear from context: a small *rotulus* (a petition roll) accompanies the letter.
4. This refers to the embassy Joan I sent to Clement VII at Avignon. The timing is significant: Joan I had only just succeeded his father Pere III (who died January 5, 1387), and this letter, dated March 7, represents very early diplomatic activity of the new reign, using even the infant heir as a vehicle for patronage requests.

5. The Latin here is textually difficult. The transcription reads *intentus testigimus et eraissimus*. I read *intentis tetigimus et erasimus*: "we have touched and scratched/scrawled upon [it] with eager hands." The image is of the toddler handling and scribbling on the physical letter — a vivid and deliberately endearing detail. *Erasimus* (from *eradere*, to scratch or scrape) suits the conceit of an infant scratching at parchment. However, *eraissimus* as transcribed is anomalous and may reflect paleographic difficulty in the original hand.

6. An allusion to Christ's words in Matthew 19:14 (*Sinite parvulos venire ad me*) and Mark 10:14. The chancery deftly merges the scriptural topos of sacred childhood with the political topos of papal paternity, casting Clement VII as a Christ-like figure obligated by spiritual fatherhood to grant the desires of the innocent.

7. The title "Dauphin of Girona" (*dalpinus gerundensis*) is itself a marker of the French cultural influence central to your dissertation. The title was modeled on the French *Dauphin* and had been adopted for the heir to the Crown of Aragon by Pere III in 1351, replacing the earlier title "Duke of Girona." Its use here, in a letter to a French-born Avignon pope, would have carried particular resonance. Violant de Bar, as a French princess and niece of Charles V, was the obvious conduit for this cultural alignment.

8. The formula *cum non obstet apportatio clericalis ac executio ut in forma* is standard curial language indicating that the petition should be processed through the normal administrative channels of the papal curia without procedural obstacles preventing its execution.

This is a fascinating piece of chancery rhetoric — the entire letter is essentially a vehicle for the *rotulus* requesting that Clement VII confirm the nobility requirement for canons of Girona cathedral. The infantile persona is deployed with considerable sophistication: it flatters the pope as a benevolent father figure, makes refusal emotionally awkward, and frames what is really a power-consolidation move (ensuring noble families retain control of Girona's chapter) as the innocent desire of a child. The timing, just two months into Joan I's reign, suggests this was part of a broader diplomatic effort to secure Avignon's goodwill at a politically delicate moment.

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